

T Southern TIDINGS

MARCH 2023



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(All New) Project Reaps
Thousands of Baptisms

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FROM THE RUBBLE
TO THE CLASSROOM

CAROLINA HOSTS NORTH
AMERICAN DIVISION
MINISTRIES CONVENTION

FROM HUMBLE
BEGINNINGS

The Death of Death



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

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces,” Isaiah 25:8.

As the prophet saw it, the day would come when the Lord would destroy the covering thrown over all people, the veil that covers all nations. He saw death as making a victim of all mankind, but he saw its certain end.

When a worker in a Swedish nuclear power station set off the alarm that alerted the world to the Chernobyl disaster, a pall spread over all the Earth. The radioactive cloud carried death with it. But, the fear went further. All saw how easily human error could pollute the whole planet. A veil of death may yet cover all people.

In the agitation that followed Chernobyl, the young looked into the future and saw it bleak and, perhaps, without hope. The words over the entry to the Hades of Greek myth might well apply: “Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.”

But, has hope heard its death knell? The Word of God says no. Rather, the bell has tolled for death. In the farseeing vision of the prophet, God will engulf death.

In Hannover, Germany, you can still see the tomb of an atheist woman. The inscription declares that no resurrection will open that tomb. The seed that spoiled the atheist’s boast has grown large and tall. The Creator’s pine tree mocks those who declare the finality of death.

When Jesus died, hope died. Dreams died. Aspirations died. Plans died. The Church died. Redemption and salvation died when Jesus died. However, when He was resurrected, hope was resurrected. Plans were resurrected. Dreams were resurrected. Aspirations were resurrected. The Church was resurrected. Redemption and salvation were resurrected when Jesus was resurrected. Death died when Jesus rose from the grave. Until Jesus rose, sin could have no other result but the death of the sinner.

The death of death has another message for us. If death can be defeated, then those other situations that appear unalterable may also yield to Christ’s power. Sin has a victor — Jesus Christ. Fear has a victor — Jesus Christ. Doubt has a victor — Jesus Christ. The Lord declares that in Him, all things are possible. The resurrection of Jesus has changed forever what can be done for the sinner.

Who swallows up death in Victory? Jesus Christ, we might answer. But, Paul perceives more clearly than that. The victory is ours. Through Christ, our own death has lost its finality and power. “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,” I Corinthians 15:57. My favorite text comes to mind as I complete this declaration of the power of the Savior’s resurrection: “I am persuaded, that death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” Romans 8: 38-39.

“Faith is a mightier conqueror than death,” *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 62. -RCS ●



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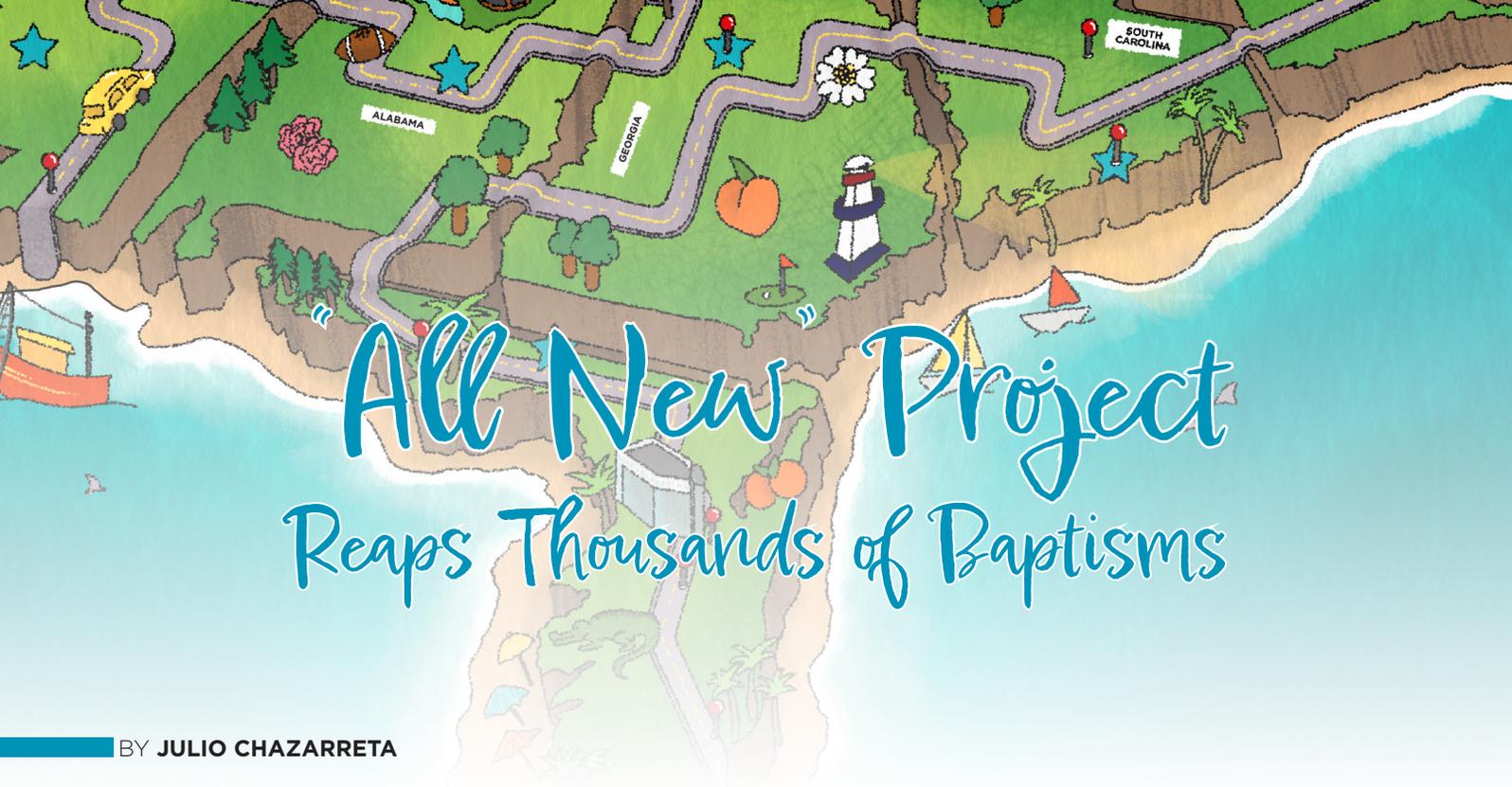
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BY JULIO CHAZARRETA

CARAVANS AND CAMPAIGNS

Last year we witnessed great victories for the Hispanic Ministries Department in the Southern Union. Through various campaigns and caravans, we had almost 3,000 baptisms and professions of faith.

As a department, we held evangelistic meetings in six metropolitan areas where all, or most of, the area Hispanic churches participated. Each congregation had a guest evangelist invited by the Southern Union and united under the theme “Todo Nuevo” (translated to “All New”). The evangelists emphasized the idea that, with God, everything can be new.

The invited evangelists spoke in Kissimmee, Florida; Mt. Olive, North Carolina; Apopka, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; Miami, Florida; and several locations in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference territory.

Additionally, last year, we had eight lay training programs in Miami, Florida; Huntsville, Alabama; Nashville, Tennessee; Goldsboro, North Carolina; Cohutta Springs, Georgia; Nosoca Pines, South Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Raleigh, North Carolina.

We held our youth evangelistic caravan in August 2022. Every day we went to a different church, totaling eight churches. We started on Sabbath, Au-

gust 20, at the Los Peregrinos Church, Miami, Florida, and ended at two of our universities: Friday, August 26, at Oakwood University, and the next day at Southern Adventist University. Through the weeklong caravan, the event was full of young people praising the Lord and making decisions to surrender to Christ through baptism. Hundreds attended in person and thousands followed us on the internet: our Facebook page, the Esperanza TV channel, and YouTube.

In addition to these activities, I personally conducted 12 local campaigns focused on the theme “Todo Nuevo” at various churches: Kissimmee, Florida; The Pilgrims, Florida; Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia; Central Orlando, Florida; Forest City, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Avon Park, Florida; Lexington, Kentucky; Panama City, Florida; Raleigh, North Carolina; Miami, Florida; and Marion Oak, Florida.

TODO NUEVO PROJECT

The event with the most significant impact and reach was called “Proyecto Todo Nuevo” (“Project All New”), named after the Hispanic Ministries 2022 motto.

The project emerged in April with a consensus with our eight conference Hispanic coordinators, and their respective work



Roger Hernandez is the ministerial director at the Southern Union Conference.



Julio Chazarreta is the director of Hispanic ministries at the Southern Union Conference.

and support teams. Inspired by a quote from Ellen G. White, we dared to think that perhaps it was time to be part of the fulfillment of her statement: “More than a thousand people will be converted in a single day, most of them who will attribute their first impressions to reading our publications,” *Evangelism*, p. 503 (1885).

Excited about what God could do, we collaborated with *El Centinela* magazine, a missionary magazine of the North American Division. On this occasion, it was a special issue, a bilingual edition where the authors were pastors from our territory. The magazine was distributed like autumn leaves. As a result, we received lots of interest in Bible studies and maintained connection with the local church.

Thanks to the Venezuelan musical group Melody, we also had a theme song with the title “Todo Nuevo.” It was sung in our territory and continues to be sung in the Hispanic world, imparting a great blessing to the fellowship.

It was impressive to have most of the Southern Union churches in intensive evangelism during April. Ninety percent of the churches participated, and as a result, more than 1,100 people were baptized or had professions of faith for the glory of God. It not only brought others to the feet of the Master, but it also revived churches that, due to the pandemic, had not been fully re-established.

The “Proyecto Todo Nuevo” taught us to trust God more and believe that achieving great things is possible despite adversity. We were the first Union in the North American Division to achieve something of this magnitude in the middle of a pandemic. God gave us amazing results from this project, and we praise Him for it. He allowed us to experience more blessings than we imagined:

1. To achieve this, we had to work for a united purpose; the Lord accomplished that in our field.

2. A very high percentage of our churches got involved, which we can only attribute to God, who used pastors, or, as I always call them, “The heroes of this work.”

3. Todo Nuevo was not only a commit-



Baptismal candidates are taken through their baptismal vows.

ment between coordinators and pastors, but also the members of the churches were enthusiastic.

4. The Church projected itself more aggressively for the benefit of the community.

5. God showed us one more time that He is still in control of our Church.

6. Not only were people baptized, but lives were also transformed.

7. Everyone involved learned to trust Jesus more.

PROJECTION FOR 2023

This year, 2023, we will have significant challenges, and we need your prayers for the upcoming events. These challenges include six metropolitan campaigns with more than 12 preachers: West Palm Beach, Florida; Huntsville, Alabama; Kentucky, Tennessee; Mount Olive, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; and Gulfport, Mississippi. We also seek prayer for our eight lay training programs that will take place in the South Atlantic Conference, Georgia-Cumberland Conference, Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, and at the PELC and EC3 conventions.

In addition, the 2023 caravan will be titled, “Jesus Wins!” The caravan will be held for two weekends with four women speakers. We will use materials from the main speaker, Elizabeth Talbot, speaker/director for the Jesus101 Biblical Institute, who will preach about Jesus at various locations.

During this year, I will lead a total of

eight campaigns in various churches: Tucker East, Georgia; Raleigh, North Carolina; Downtown Tampa, Florida; Miami Ebenezer, Florida; Northwest Miami, Florida; Charlotte, North Carolina; The Pilgrims Miami, Florida; and Atlanta, Georgia.

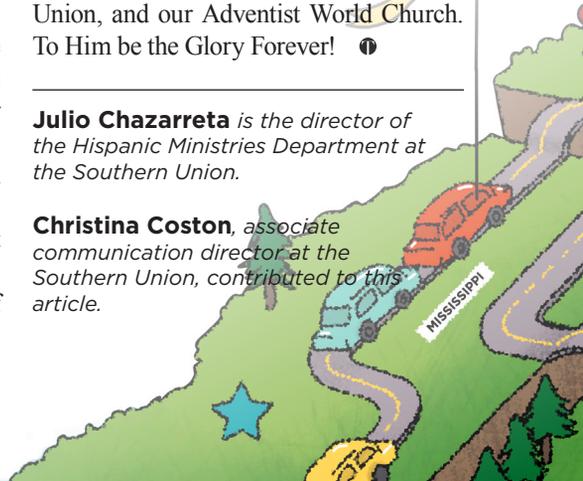
But, our biggest challenge will be leading four campaigns that will start four new congregations. By the grace of God, we will plant churches in Charleston, South Carolina (Carolina Conference); Panama City, Florida (Gulf States Conference); Russellville, Alabama (South Central Conference); and Frankfurt, Kentucky (Kentucky-Tennessee Conference).

The challenges and the task are enormous, but we fully trust the God of the impossible, Who will give us His victory. He has been so good to us in these last days that we need not fear. And today, looking back, we hold onto this quote: “We have nothing to fear from the future unless we forget how God led us in the past,” Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, p. 72.1

For this and much more, we praise Jesus, our Supreme Leader in the Southern Union, and our Adventist World Church. To Him be the Glory Forever! 🕊️

Julio Chazarreta is the director of the Hispanic Ministries Department at the Southern Union.

Christina Coston, associate communication director at the Southern Union, contributed to this article.



Proyecto "Todo Nuevo" Resulta En Miles de Bautismos

BY JULIO CHAZARRETA AND YAIME CORDOVA

CARAVANAS Y CAMPAÑAS

El pasado año fuimos testigos de grandes victorias para el Ministerio Hispano en nuestra Unión del Sur. A través de varias campañas y caravanas, tuvimos alrededor 3,000 bautismos y profesiones de fe.

Como departamento, celebramos reuniones evangelísticas en seis áreas metropolitanas donde participaron todas o la mayoría de las iglesias hispanas del área. Cada congregación recibió un predicador invitado por la Unión del Sur, y unidos bajo el lema: "Todo Nuevo," resaltamos la idea que, con Dios, todo puede ser nuevo.

Durante el desarrollo de estas campañas evangelísticas, contamos con más de 12 predicadores en las áreas de Kissimmee, Florida; Mt. Olive, Carolina del Norte; Apopka, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; Miami, Florida; y varias iglesias en el territorio de Georgia-Cumberland.

A su vez, se desarrollaron ocho programas de entrenamiento laico en Miami, Florida; Huntsville, Alabama; Nashville, Tennessee; Goldsboro, South Carolina; Cohutta Spring, Georgia; Nosoca Pines, Carolina del Sur; Charlotte, Carolina del Norte; y en Raleigh, Carolina del Norte.

Llevamos adelante nuestra Caravana evangelística en el mes de agosto, esta



Estos dos jóvenes están listos para bautizarse.

vez enfocada en los jóvenes. Todos los días durante una semana fuimos a una iglesia diferente. Comenzamos el sábado 20 de agosto en la iglesia de Los Peregrinos en Miami, Florida y terminamos en Oakwood University el viernes 26 de agosto en Oakwood University y el sábado en Southern Adventist University. Desde que comenzó, hasta el último día, el evento estuvo colmado de jóvenes alabando al Señor y tomando decisiones de entrega a Cristo a través del bautismo. Cientos asistieron en persona y miles nos siguieron por internet, en nuestra página de Facebook, el canal de Esperanza TV, y Youtube.

Además de estas actividades del departamento, yo personalmente conduje

12 campañas locales centrado en el tema "Todo Nuevo" en varias iglesias — Kissimmee, Florida; Los Peregrinos, Florida; Atlanta Metropolitana, Georgia; Orlando Central, Florida; Forest City, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Avon Park, Florida; Lexington, Kentucky; Panama City, Florida; Raleigh, North Carolina; Miami, Florida; and Marion Oak, Florida.

PROYECTO TODO NUEVO

El evento de mayor impacto y alcance fue el que llamamos "Todo Nuevo", lema del Ministerio Hispano en el 2022.

El Proyecto Todo Nuevo, surgió en consenso con nuestros ocho coordinadores hispanos y sus respectivos equipos de trabajo y apoyo. Basados en una cita inspirada de la hermana Elena G. White, nos atrevimos a pensar que quizás, ya era hora de ser parte del cumplimiento que encierra esa declaración: "Más de mil personas se convertirán en un solo día, la mayor parte de las cuales adjudicarán sus primeras impresiones a la lectura de nuestras publicaciones. — *El Evangelismo*, p. 503 (1885).

Inspirados en esta cita, desarrollamos el proyecto en nuestro campo, escogiendo el mes de abril para ponerlo en acción. Primero decidimos repartir revistas *El Centinela*, la revista misionera de la División Norteamericana.



En esta ocasión fue una edición especial bilingüe donde los autores serían pastores de nuestra Unión. Como resultado, recibimos mucho interés en los estudios bíblicos y mantuvimos la conexión con la iglesia local.

Gracias al grupo musical venezolano Melody, también tuvimos una canción temática con el título “Todo Nuevo.” Fue cantada en nuestro territorio y continúa con más alcance en el mundo hispano, impartiendo bendición a la hermandad.

Fue impresionante tener a la mayor parte de nuestras iglesias en evangelismo intensivo durante ese mes de abril. El 90% de las iglesias participaron dejándonos como fruto, más de 1,100 almas por medio del bautismo y profesión de fe para la Gloria de Dios. Este proyecto también ayudó a reavivar las iglesias que, por cuestión de la pandemia, no se habían restablecido totalmente.

La “Jornada Todo Nuevo” nos enseñó a confiar más en Dios y a creer que es posible lograr grandes cosas, pese a la adversidad. Fuimos la primera Unión en todo el territorio de la División Norteamericana en lograr algo de esta magnitud en medio de una pandemia. Por la gracia de Dios tuvimos resultados sorprendentes y lo alabamos por eso. Él nos

permitió experimentar muchas más bendiciones de las que imaginamos:

1. En el proceso, nos permitió experimentar más bendición de la que imaginamos
2. Aprendimos a trabajar en unidad de propósito y proyección
3. En un porcentaje muy alto, nuestras Iglesias se involucraron y eso es mérito sólo del Señor, quien utilizó a los pastores (que como siempre digo), son los héroes de esta obra
4. Se alcanzó, no solo un compromiso de los coordinadores, pastores e Iglesias, sino también, un entusiasmo particular y muy gratificante
5. La Iglesia se proyectó más agresivamente en beneficio de la comunidad
6. Dios nos demostró una vez más que Él sigue al control de nuestra iglesia
7. No solo se bautizaron personas; se transformaron vidas
8. Aprendimos a confiar más en Jesús

PROYECCIÓN PARA EL 2023

Este año trae también grandes desafíos, y necesitamos sus oraciones para los próximos eventos. Incluyendo nuestras seis campañas metropolitanas con más de 12 predicadores en West Palm Beach, Florida; Huntsville, Alabama; Kentucky; Tennessee; Mt. Olive, Carolina del Norte;

Atlanta, Georgia; and Gulfport, Mississippi. Además, de ocho programas de entrenamientos laicos en las Conferencias de South Atlantic, Georgia-Cumberland, Kentucky-Tennessee, y en las Convenciones PELC y EC3.

Celebraremos, la caravana 2023 que llevará por título, ¡Jesús Gana! Serán dos fines de semana con cuatro mujeres predicadoras. Usaremos materiales de la oradora principal, Elizabeth Talbot, directora del Instituto Bíblico Jesús 101, quien estará predicando en varios lugares.

Durante este año, estaré conduciendo ocho campañas en diversas iglesias: Tucker East, Georgia; Raleigh, Carolina del Norte; Tampa Central, Florida; Miami Ebenezer, Florida; Northwest Miami, Florida; Charlotte, Carolina del Norte; Los Peregrinos Miami, Florida; and Atlanta, Georgia.

Pero nuestro mayor reto será conducir cuatro campañas que, por la gracia de Dios, darán inicio a cuatro nuevas congregaciones en Charleston, Carolina del Sur (Conferencia Carolina); Panama City, Florida (Conferencia Gulf States); Russellville, Alabama (Conferencia South Central); Frankfort, Kentucky (Conferencia Kentucky-Tennessee).

Los desafíos son enormes y la tarea también, pero confiamos plenamente en el Dios de lo imposible, quien nos dará Su victoria. Él ha sido tan bueno con nosotros en estos últimos días, que no debemos tener miedo. Por eso nos aferramos a esa cita que dice: “No tenemos nada que temer del futuro, a menos que olvidemos cómo Dios nos condujo en el pasado.” *Eventos de los últimos días*, pág. 64.1.

Por eso y mucho más, alabamos a Jesús, nuestro Líder Supremo en la Unión del Sur y en nuestra hermosa Iglesia Adventista mundial. ¡A EL SEA LA GLORIA POR SIEMPRE! ●

Julio Chazarreta es el director de Ministerios Hispánicos

Yaime Cordova es la gerente de promoción de lectura de la revista *Southern Tidings* en la Unión del Sur



“NO LIMITS” PATHFINDER CAMPOREE HELD AT CAMP KULAQUA

BY GREGORY TAYLOR

More than 5,000 Pathfinders throughout the Southern Union came to Camp Kulaqua, High Springs, Florida, October 12-16, 2022, to participate in the Southern Union Pathfinder Camporee. After postponing the camporee due to COVID-19, the time had finally arrived and the Pathfinders could not have been more excited. The theme for the camporee was “No Limits.” Throughout the week, Pathfinders were challenged to live a new life with Jesus, realizing that when we move forward in faith, we are no longer limited by our capabilities, but that with God, all things are possible.

Clubs and conferences created unique entrances and structures promoting the theme and introducing their campsite to those who would pass by. Ken Rogers, former Southern Union youth director; Pedro Perez, Florida Conference club ministries director; and Maria Newlove, Southern Union youth administrative assistant, provided leadership for the camporee alongside an incredible team of Pathfinder volunteers. They did a phenomenal job in collaborating with youth directors, club directors, area coordinators, and Pathfinders to create an incredible event full of memories that would last a lifetime.

At the camporee, Pathfinders had the

opportunity to engage in a great variety of activities. Many Pathfinders spent time participating in the longstanding camporee tradition of pin trading. At each camporee, pins are designed by the local club, conference, and Union, and are created for the purpose of encouraging interaction among Pathfinders as they trade with one another. Every Pathfinder received a backpack and pin as part of the registration fee to help them get started with their collection.

Pathfinders were also given the opportunity to earn multiple honors. There were more than 40 honors to choose from, including Blacksmithing,

Knot Tying, Raptors, Scrapbooking, and much more. Pathfinders were also blessed to learn about early living from the Pioneer Village, which was sponsored by the Carolina Conference. Well over 2,500 Pathfinders earned at least one honor, and many went home with three or more. Pathfinders were also able to explore the lifesize Messiah’s Mansion, which provided a detailed and inspiring teaching of the Sanctuary and its beautiful message.

In addition to the honors, Camp Kulaqua provided many onsite activities for the Pathfinders to enjoy. The River Ranch Waterpark featuring the lazy riv-



PHOTO BY: CHRIS LOU



er and wave pool were a huge hit. Kulaqua also provided activities such as the Tower of Faith, Go-karts, and much, much more. There were also inflatable activities and field games running all day. And, if that was not enough, Pathfinders could also participate in a talent competition, teen hang out, 5K run, and a host of other activities.

The evening programs provided inspiring worship, fun interactions, and heartfelt messages that brought us to the foot of the cross. Each evening, two conference youth directors teamed up to provide creative introductions and interactions that helped to provide a united youth ministry effort. Pathfinders were blessed by the praise music of Magnify Worship from Georgia-Cumberland Academy. In addition to leading praise and worship, Magnify Worship also wrote the theme song, “Nothing is Impossible,” for the camporee, which was greatly enjoyed throughout the week. Pathfinders were given the opportunity to participate in the programming as well, leading in prayer, music, and challenges to service. The programs also featured some notable guests.

Ryan Bomgardner, of Ryan & Friends, provided laughs and fun interactions using his talent of ventriloquy and comedy. Each night he brought a Bible story to life, using some of his puppet friends. Rich Aguilera and Ben Roy shared some of the wonders and beauty of God’s created universe. Our evening speakers included Gregory Taylor, Vandeon Griffin,

Armando Miranda, and Ron Whitehead.

Sabbath at the camporee provided some of the most memorable highlights for the week. Sabbath began with a Pathfinder parade, which traveled throughout the camp and passed the store which served as the review stand. The parade ended at our evening meeting location, where the church service was held.

Early in the Sabbath morning program, the Southern Union youth professionals participated in a special recognition for Ken Rogers, who has served as the Southern Union youth and young adult director for the past 11 years. During the ceremony, memories and appreciations were shared by David Freedman, Phil Younts, Bill Wood, Ron Whitehead, and many others. The recognition ceremony ended with a beautiful tribute of 5,000 Pathfinders saying in unison, “We love you, Pastor Ken!”

Sabbath afternoon provided a beautiful opportunity for several baptisms to take place at the Camp Kulaqua spring. Pathfinders were asked when they registered for the camporee if they might be interested in being baptized while there. Accommodations were made for families and pastors to join those being baptized in a true celebration of how the Lord is working on the Pathfinders’ hearts.

The finale on Saturday night provided even more memories. Ron Whitehead, who serves as the Lake Union youth director and director of the Center for Youth Evangelism on the campus of

Andrews University, gave the closing challenge. At the end of Whitehead’s message, he presented a prayer of dedication for Gregory and Kim Taylor as they assumed the new role of Southern Union youth director and coordinator. With all the lights off and in a beautiful stillness of the Florida night, Gregory Taylor prayed a prayer of dedication over the Pathfinders. Following the prayer, Pathfinders sang the theme song one final time, and then experienced an incredible fireworks show combined with a drum corp presentation.

All in all, the “No Limits” Southern Union Pathfinder Camporee provided opportunities for Pathfinders to make new friends, experience new adventures, and draw closer to Jesus. Pathfinders look forward to the International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming, August 5-11, 2024. More information can be found for this event at camporee.org.

God is truly working through Pathfinder ministries. The Southern Union is blessed with incredible volunteers who pour their hearts and souls into providing opportunities for Pathfinders to not only accept Jesus as their personal Savior, but also to reach out in their communities and to develop practical leadership skills that will benefit them throughout their life. 🕊

Gregory Taylor is the youth director at the Southern Union Conference.

CAROLINA HOSTS NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION MINISTRIES CONVENTION

BY HENRIQUE GOMES

The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists recently hosted the Adventist Ministries Convention in Greensboro, North Carolina, January 8-11, 2023. Instead of focusing solely on networking and replenishing their own strength, the attendees chose to make a difference in the lives of those in need by volunteering their time to prepare 3,000 kits for families in the region.

The Adventist Community Service Department of the North American Division decided to use the convention as an opportunity to give back to the community in a unique way. They collaborated with the Carolina Conference, the South Atlantic Conference, the Volunteer Center of Triad, and the Servant Center to assemble 3,000 kits for families in need. The attendees worked together to prepare the kits which included basic necessities like toothbrushes, toothpaste, and snacks.

Ben Rueda, pastor, who leads three Spanish churches in the area, highlighted the significance of the kits. He said that they not only provide for families in need, but also serve as a way for the Church to connect and support the



Lloyd Scharffenberg, pastor and corporation secretary at the Greater New York Conference, stands beside Oriel Thomas, pastor from the Crossroads Adventist Church in New York, as they work together making kits.



Kit with snacks

PHOTO BY: HENRIQUE GOMES

PHOTO BY: HENRIQUE GOMES

community. The kits allow the Church to reach out and make known to the families in the community that they are there to help.

Barbie Patterson from the Volunteer Center of Triad, also shared her organization's efforts through the Corporate Caring project, which partners with companies to fund organizations that benefit the local community. The project allows companies to make a positive impact on the community while also promoting corporate responsibility.

Adventist Community Services lead-



PHOTO BY: HENRIQUE GOMES

Pictured are David Graham (left), Carolina Conference community services director; Joshua Nelson, South Atlantic Conference community services director; Barbie Patterson, director of programs at The Volunteer Center; and Cedric Parker, faith-based engagement coordinator at United Way.



PHOTO BY: HENRIQUE GOMES

Ben Rueda, pastor, gives one of the kits to a family in the community.

er David Graham, who received more than 750 kits for the Greensboro area, shared his goal of ensuring that every single kit reaches a family in need within the region. He said, “Our goal is to split the kits among each church in the region so they can make the distribution in the following weeks. We want to make sure that every single kit goes to a family in need.”

This initiative by Adventist Community Services is a remarkable example of how small acts of kindness can make a big difference in the lives of those in need. While 3,000 kits may not be enough to fully address the needs of the area, it is a powerful start, and serves as a reminder of the impact that can be made through the collaboration and generosity of individuals and organi-

zations. It’s crucial to remember that a little effort goes a long way in making a difference in the lives of those around us. We all have the ability to make a positive impact in our communities, whether it’s through volunteering, donating, or simply being a kind and supportive presence. 📌

Henrique Gomes is the associate communication director for media ministries at the Carolina Conference.

FROM THE RUBBLE TO THE CLASSROOM

BY AMANDA BLAKE

In the flash of an eye, Joelle Akiki watched her 7-year-old son, James, fly backward. Shards of window glass collapsed onto him, rapidly followed by a heavy curtain rod.

More than 200 people died in Beirut, Lebanon, on that day, August 4, 2020, after a massive explosion in the main shipping port damaged more than half of the city, but James was not one of them. Akiki held him in her arms following the blast, repeatedly calling his name, unable to think while crouched within her home, which was damaged beyond repair. As the minutes passed, however, she realized James was all right; he did not have a single scratch. Outside, the country was in turmoil.

“What I saw — you wouldn’t believe someone could survive,” said Akiki. “James was saved by the angels.”

Through no shortage of miracles, Akiki and her family left the Middle East, and she is now serving as a professor in Southern Adventist University’s School of Business.

Led to Christ

Akiki grew up in a devout Maronite Catholic home in Lebanon. As a teenager, she aspired to become a heart surgeon, but she knew her family could not afford medical school. Her supervisor recognized this, and during a college orientation, he encouraged Akiki to apply to Middle East University, a nearby Seventh-day Adventist school, where she could pursue business.

She followed his advice and met fellow student Larry Barkanian there.



Professor Joelle Akiki (left) and her family felt God’s hand in bringing them to serve at Southern Adventist University.

Barkanian encouraged her to learn more about Adventism, and what might have seemed like a gentle nudge to onlookers was a strong knocking on Akiki’s heart.

“It was a calling,” Akiki described. “I really was lost, and then I was found.”

She began studying the Bible. Her parents questioned her decision to embrace Adventism and approached their priests, curious about the strange religion and wondering how they could stop their daughter from straying.

One priest told Akiki’s dad, “If this is where she has found herself, you need to let go. You shouldn’t stand in her way, because Adventists are very good people. They pray more than we do.”

“After that, my dad became more lenient,” said Akiki. “It was easier.”

Akiki was baptized into the Adventist Church a year later. Her parents declined to attend, but they grew to accept her decision. It helped that they and Akiki’s older brothers got along with Barkanian, whom she eventually married.

Life Turned Upside-Down

Akiki and her husband now have three children: 9-year-old James, 6-year-old Peter, and 4-year-old Katelyn. The youngest was only a year old when the blast destroyed their home in Beirut, which shook the family’s whole world. When Akiki’s mom arrived to pick up her grandchildren following the devastation, it was difficult for Akiki to release them.

“I wouldn’t let go of them because I

was afraid something else would happen, and they wouldn't be close," she described. "The blast happened at 6:08 p.m. Until 11:30, I couldn't move a finger. I didn't know where to start. Glass was everywhere, and we didn't understand what had really happened. Even today, we know nothing."

The boys talked about the blast every night for months. If a door slammed loudly, they would run for cover. At times, the children were miserable in their neighborhood, where their Muslim neighbors often held celebrations involving fireworks and gunshots.

Akiki and her husband knew they couldn't live in Lebanon anymore. It was too unstable.

"A revolution and the devaluation of the currency led to lots of changes. It's constant disaster after disaster," Akiki described.

In May 2022, Akiki's friend told her about an open teaching position at Southern. She prayed deeply about the opportunity and soon decided that she had to try.

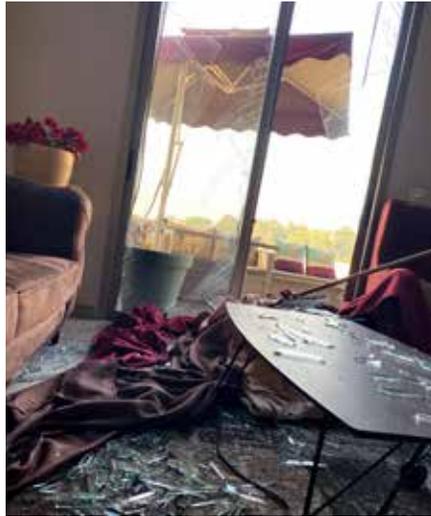
With no expectations, she submitted her application. That same day, she received an email from Stephanie Sheehan, Ph.D., dean of Southern's School of Business, asking to set up an interview. In June, Akiki received the job offer, and the couple immediately began working on travel papers.

"It's hard to get official papers done in Lebanon because riots, the revolution, the pandemic — they caused lots of closures, like at the Ministry of Education," explained Akiki.

The couple struggled in what often felt like a hopeless situation, but God consistently turned the impossible into the possible.

"Things just unfolded in front of our eyes," said Akiki. "We saw miracle after miracle. God overcame."

One day she was discouraged to hear that she couldn't get an interview with the embassy to receive her visa until March 2023, thus preventing her from accepting the job at Southern.



Shards of glass covered Akiki's home in Beirut, Lebanon, following the massive explosion that damaged more than half of the city.

At 8 a.m. the next morning, however, the embassy called her and told her they could shorten the timeframe and interview in October. That was fine, Akiki responded, but then, before hanging up, she told them she'd like to start work in August for the fall 2022 semester instead of waiting until winter. After two very long minutes, the embassy called back and said they'd opened up a spot for her the next morning.

Unknown to Akiki before the interview, the embassy needed almost \$12,000 to expedite the family's visa process. The couple was supposed to pay that day, but the cashier was out of the office, giving the family through the weekend to sell some of their belongings and come up with the exact amount needed.

On July 25, the family received their visas. With 14 suitcases and two backpacks, they traveled to the United States on August 1. If they had left one day later, the children's passports would have expired.

The Right Choice

The family arrived in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at midnight, where they were

picked up and welcomed by Sheehan with hugs and a basket of goodies in their hotel. The next day, Akiki attended Southern's new employee orientation.

"And ever since then, I've been working," said Akiki, laughing.

With 19 aunts and uncles and more than 50 cousins in Lebanon, it was not easy for Akiki to leave the country. But, now that she is part of Southern, she knows that she and Barkanian made the right choice.

"I am growing professionally, and I am growing spiritually," she said. "I pray for my family more. I meditate more. I have time to think of things other than if there's electricity or enough water or if I can do laundry. We have time to ourselves as a family; this change has been a true blessing."

Akiki loves her students and expressed how the cheerful and giving atmosphere in the School of Business has exceeded her expectations. She is thankful for the students and faculty, who have embraced her amid culture shock and shown her exceptional kindness.

"There are very good people in the School of Business," she said. "If I have a question at any time, I can walk into someone's office, and they're always ready to help. I've made good friends."

Akiki, who holds a master's degree in finance and will soon receive a doctorate in business administration, believes her story makes her a better professor. When her classes discuss the economics of developing countries, her perspective as someone who struggled living in the Middle East is invaluable.

"I'm proud of the stories I have; I've been transformed by them," said Akiki. "I remind students of the things they take for granted, and my story gives me the opportunity to initiate such discussions. I always tell them — and it's become my motto — count your blessings." ●

Amanda Blake is a senior journalism major at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

BY GLADYS M. NEIGEL

The first known vestiges of Adventism pervading the Hispanic population in Florida occurred 125 years ago when funds were collected to aid Cuban refugees in Tampa prior to the Spanish-American War. Spanish-language literature was also distributed to cigar factories where people were hired to read to refugees as they worked.

Organization of Hispanic work would not happen until the middle of the next century, though:

1. The first Spanish Sabbath School class was organized by Raquel Genanian at the Miami Temple English Church in Florida in 1950.
2. Miami Spanish Church was the first Spanish church organized in Florida and in the Southern Union on December 20, 1958, under the direction of Ernesto Santos, pastor.
3. Florida Spanish-language Ministries Department was organized in 1978.

Today, there are more than 19,108 Spanish members worshipping the Lord in 118 congregations throughout the Florida Conference. Serving these members are 46 full-time pastors, one part-time pastor, and 38 lay pastors.

“The mission of Florida State Spanish Ministries is based on preparing mature disciples in biblical communities for the coming of Jesus,” says Abdiel Del Toro, vice president of Spanish-language Ministries. “Our vision is to lead and achieve a strong missionary movement, forming authentic disciples in all of our Spanish-speaking churches to effectively

reach people of all ages and cultures for the Kingdom of Heaven.”

These goals are being met in numerous ways and events:

Training

Florida Institute of Evangelism for Laypeople (FIEL) centers around discipleship, family, and church growth. Since the program went viral, 100,000 have participated.

REAL

REAL discipleship and evangelism conventions let church leaders learn about discipleship and church growth.

Pastoral Training Sessions

These are held in 10 areas every year.

Evangelism Impact

Mission to the Cities project has impacted Ft. Myers, Orlando, Broward County, Tampa, Miami, West Palm Beach, Kissimmee, Avon Park, and Poinciana.

Revelación and En Familia Radio Programs

Nine stations in Florida are involved, and programs are heard in more than 37 countries. 🌐

Gladys M. Neigel is the contributing editor for Florida Conference.



PHOTO BY: JESSICA PEREZ

Members of Lake Worth Church in Florida celebrate their Hispanic heritage.

Volunteer Efforts at Community Food Pantry Benefit Hundreds of Families

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an estimated 33.8 million people across the U.S. lack regular access to safe and nutritious food needed for an active and healthy lifestyle. This trend is acutely felt in nine particular states, including Kentucky, where the rate of food insecurity is above the national average.

For the team at AdventHealth Manchester, taking action to address this key challenge is about more than just improving the statistic: it's another way they're contributing to a more than 50-year legacy of providing healing and wholeness to the surrounding communities.

In partnership with the Manchester Seventh-day Adventist Church, AdventHealth Manchester leaders and team members volunteer at the Adventist Community Services food pantry to serve more than 600 families every month. Specific volunteering tasks include sorting, boxing, distributing a variety of food items, and assisting with parking management.

Kenneth Henson, Betty Frazier, and Jamie Hacker are a few of several community members who utilize the pantry on a regular basis. Henson said, "We are out of everything [at home] and this helps us."

Hacker added, "This help gets us through every day."

Tom Kyser, a pastor at the Manchester Seventh-day Adventist Church, said the volunteering efforts of the AdventHealth Manchester team have been pivotal to the operations of the food pantry. "Finding volunteers for our pantry has been the single most difficult thing in running this ministry," said Kyser. "Every volunteer who comes from AdventHealth is super



helpful. They come with a smile on their face and are willing to do any task."

Marlon Robinson, director of pastoral care at AdventHealth Manchester, has been closely involved with coordinating volunteers for this important cause. He also spends a lot of time volunteering at the pantry. "I want to make a lasting difference in this world for Christ," said Robinson. "I've interacted with team members who appreciate the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in our community."

The AdventHealth Manchester team also provides free hot meals to communities through an annual Christmas meal drive. Some of the leaders who volunteer during this event and on pantry days, shared their excitement about opportunities to deliver compassion to people outside the walls of the hospital.

"I love helping others," said Cynthia Hall, office manager at AdventHealth Manchester. Graham Allen, director of business development and operations at AdventHealth Manchester, said, "I find volunteering to be rewarding, and an opportunity to reset my spirits. Volunteering is important to our mission because it allows us the opportunity to meet the communities we serve where they are.

Serving others is a key reason many of us continue to work in health care."

Compassion for those in need is also a strong motivator, according to Debbie Branum, a nurse education manager who frequently volunteers during this event. Brenda Jones, who works as an environmental service manager, added that many people in the community need help, so helping the community is very important.

In 2021, Mary Ann Roberts, home care administrator at AdventHealth Manchester, said she was delivering Christmas dinners to families when she experienced an unforgettable moment. "I had four families break into tears because they had no idea where their food was coming from for Christmas," she said. "They were so thankful for the delivery, and every single one of those families also invited me to eat with them even though they had very little."

In ensuring that hundreds of families never have to see their food run out, the AdventHealth Manchester team continues to play a significant role in helping their communities feel whole. 🍎

BY AMA AKOTO-BOATENG, ADVENTHEALTH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Florida State Grant Helps to Acquire Leading Technologies for Nursing Training

Nursing students at AdventHealth University (AHU) will have access to new and additional simulation equipment that will prepare them to care for patients, thanks to a \$574,445 grant from the Florida Department of Education Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund. AdventHealth University is one of 26 schools in Florida to receive funding through this grant.

“AdventHealth University is honored and grateful to receive these funds to ensure our nursing students are highly skilled, confident, and work-ready when they graduate,” said Edwin I. Hernandez, Ph.D., president and CEO of AdventHealth University. “This grant comes at a pivotal point in our 31-year legacy, as we embark on a robust strategic plan to significantly amplify nursing education at our University.”

In 2022, LINE was established by the Florida Legislature to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and health care partners, aiming to combat the growing nursing shortage in the state.

“These awards will meet a critical need of our state by ensuring we continue to have high-quality nursing graduates, and by creating new opportunities for Floridians interested in healthcare,” Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said in a prepared statement this week. “I am grateful to the colleges and universities who have gone above and beyond to train the next generation of nurses in our state.”

As part of the program, a partnering agency will match the grant amount. In AdventHealth University’s case, the AdventHealth health care system is committed to matching the funds for a total



amount of \$1.14 million. AHU will use grant funds to purchase leading-edge teaching technology that includes birthing, nurse, and SimBaby and SimMan 3G manikins; an additional digital anatomy table; and a medication administration simulator, among other much-needed learning modules.

“Increasing nursing student access to simulation education will help future nurses develop greater competence, confidence, and critical thinking skills,” said Julie Vincent, chief nursing executive at AdventHealth Central Florida Division. “Simulation allows students to practice in a safe environment, learn from their mistakes, and receive immediate feedback from professors and supervisors.”

A report commissioned by the Florida Hospital Association and the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida estimates the state could experience a shortfall of up to 59,100 nurses over the next 14 years.

This grant helps AHU provide innovative solutions to address this shortage, continuing its vital role in the nursing workforce pipeline. In addition to the grant and purchasing much-needed simulation equipment, those efforts to develop highly skilled nursing graduates include:

- Expanding access to nursing education through a new associate degree in nursing, flexible learning options, and financial support for at-risk students.
- Inspiring and radically increasing nursing student enrollment.
- Innovating to recruit highly skilled nursing faculty.
- Enlarging classroom space.
- Accelerating student-to-workforce timeline through three-year bachelor’s degree. 📌

BY JENNIFER AUDETTE, AHU
COMMUNICATION MANAGER

Middle Schoolers Explore Insects at Southern Adventist University

This school year, biology professors at Southern Adventist University hosted an interactive insect field trip for 23 students from Bowman Hills School, a nearby Seventh-day Adventist grade school.

Valerie Hunt teaches seventh- and eighth-graders a unit on arthropods — such as spiders, insects, and crabs — every other year at Bowman Hills. She began partnering with the University's Biology Department to conduct an insect-oriented excursion for her classroom several years ago, and it has become a biannual "Insect Day" tradition.

"We are happy to hold this event because it's a terrific way to share a positive view of a part of God's creation that occasionally has a 'yuck' factor," said Keith Snyder, Ph.D., chair of the Biology Department.

The professors prepared an unprecedented number of activities this year due to the larger than average size of Hunt's class.

Students handled Madagascar hissing cockroaches, a fascinating species that unleashes unique noises during aggres-



sive encounters, and observed them interact on a cardboard raceway. They also competed in a scavenger hunt involving the department's extensive insect collection, studied insects under microscopes, explored the nearby Imagination Station playground to collect insects, and watched a captivating presentation on arachnids by David Nelsen, Ph.D., biology professor. Back at school the next day, one of Hunt's students brought a garden spider to class for everyone to observe.

"I watched the kids' eyes as Dr. Nelsen spoke. Instead of fearing these animals they knew so little about, they're out looking for them now," Hunt said. "Each one was engaged from start to finish, and every chaperone told me they learned along with them. Perhaps eyes were opened to future career opportunities."

One eighth-grader, Madi, wrote in a

card to the professors: "Thank you so much for coordinating this amazing trip! The roach race, the bug hunt, and more were just so fun. It's amazing how our heavenly Father created all these marvelous creatures!"

Rick Norskov, M.D., who taught in the Biology Department at Southern for 15 years, helped with the event and said it reminded him of why he had pursued a teaching career at Southern.

"Pairing God's creation with a fun academic activity that promotes learning is the perfect blend of how I envision Southern's educational mission," he added. "The wonder of the students that day makes me believe we played a small part in changing lives." 🍷

BY AMANDA BLAKE

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Brings School-wide Community Service

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Mount Pisgah Academy students and staff had the opportunity to give back to a community in Asheville, N.C. The whole school went to the Historic Shiloh Community where they were able to help out with several different projects. When they arrived at the community center, they were split up into different groups. Some groups were in charge of

clearing areas like the creek or the gardening area, while others were in charge of photographing the day or canvassing in the neighborhood. Several students were at work raking leaves, cleaning the creek of rocks, or staining the wooden fence that lined the pathways. Though it was cold, many people seemed to enjoy helping out in the community. One freshman, Emmanuel Flores, stated that, “Shiloh is a very

nice community, [and] they have made great progress over the years. It is nice that Pisgah could come here and help out.” Jacob Korolchuk, a junior, also said, “On service day, we get to help people out, and we get to hang out with our friends while helping others.”

Helping the Historic Shiloh Community gave Mount Pisgah Academy students and staff an excellent opportunity to learn about the people of Asheville, while also giving back to the community. Doing volunteer community service allows them to celebrate MLK Day, using the day that honors a man of peace and equality to remember those who have shaped their past. 📍

BY GRACE RUSSELL



PHOTO BY: GRACE RUSSELL



PHOTO BY: GRACE RUSSELL

Students Work During Winter Magabook Program in Charleston

The Magabook program for winter 2022-23 took place from December 6, 2022, to January 11, 2023, in Charleston, S.C. The theme was “I Will Go: Spreading the Three Angels’ Messages,” and it brought together a group of 15 students from across North America and Inter-America to do this special missionary work.

Twice a year, these students gather somewhere in the Carolinas to sell Adventist books door-to-door, and this winter season was a special blessing for the Magabook program. The students impacted the city of Charleston with literature, prayers, and Bible studies, as well



as engaging in the World Church initiative of spreading *The Great Controversy* book in every city of their territory.

One of the students had a particularly

powerful experience while presenting books to a gentleman who wasn’t initially interested. After the student prayed for him and gave him *The Great Controversy*

book, the gentleman recognized it as an Adventist book and asked if the student was Adventist. He said that he had been Adventist some time ago, but had fallen away from the Church. The student appealed to him to come back, and the gentleman, recognizing this as the voice of God, committed himself to returning to his faith.

By the end of the program, by the grace of God, more than 2,100 books, 500 *The Great Controversy* books, more than 4,000 prayers, 5,000 glow tracts, and



10,000 *Steps to Christ* books had been scattered throughout Charleston and nearby towns. In addition, God blessed the

program with more than \$56,000 in total donations, which will help the canvassers cover their school tuition expenses.

Through the Magabook program, God is calling young people to engage in the canvassing field, and work door to door to spread the salvation of Jesus to others. Jesus is coming soon, and it's more important than ever to get engaged in His important work. 📌

BY CALEB MATIAS AYALA

WGFY Radio Station Partners with Mecklenburg County MLK Day March

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County sponsored a march to expand the community's recognition of King. With close to 1,000 people in attendance, the event was packed with a variety of talent, all gathered in celebration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Among the attendees were churches and clergy, hospitals and step teams, and many other groups.

WGFY 1480AM Radio, an affiliate of LifeTalk Radio, was asked to partner with the city to help facilitate check-in of more than 60 different groups. The radio station is owned and operated by the Charlotte Advent Media Corporation (CAMC), a nonprofit 501c3 corporation composed of Seventh-day Adventist members, mostly of the Charlotte Sharon Adventist Church. They had 12 volunteers who willingly gave their time to this important cause.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established in 1983 as a federal holiday, and is observed in more than 100 countries to honor King's legacy. Many communities, organizations, groups, and residents honor King's legacy by participating in acts of service. WGFY Radio is one of these organizations that is dedicated to



WGFY and Charlotte Sharon Church members volunteer to man the registration booth.

PHOTO BY: CONTRIBUTED

promoting this legacy, and is committed to bringing healing and hope in Jesus to Charlotte, N.C., and beyond.

You can listen to WGFY 1480AM Radio from anywhere in the world by going to www.wgfyradio.com and clicking on the "listen now" tab. Or, download the WGFY App from your app store. The station is With Grace For You – WGFY, and is dedicated to spreading positivity and hope through its programs and events.

The march was a successful event that brought the community together to honor the legacy of King. WGFY 1480AM Radio played a vital role in facilitating the

event, and was recognized for its dedication and commitment to the cause. Because of the spirit, professionalism, and devotion of the volunteers, WGFY has been invited back next year to serve in the same role, and to participate in a much larger capacity for the 2024 Martin Luther King Jr. Parade. If you want to be a part of this positive movement, you can tune in to WGFY Radio and listen to their programs and events. 📌

BY BRYAN AALBORG

Students Witness for Christ Amid Sabbath Nature Walks

More than 40 parishioners of Fort Lauderdale Church shared their faith while participating in a Sabbath nature walk at Long Key Natural Area and Nature Center, Davie, Fla. The two-hour Trail Trekkers Walk, which the Family Life Ministries Department sponsored, was organized by Ludlow Bartley, Sr. and Heather Bartley.

The Nature Trek took place on 157 breathtaking acres, managed by the Broward County Parks and Recreation Division. These nature events are continuing once per quarter as part of the church's five-step evangelism plan for 2023: equipping, sowing, taking care, harvesting, and nurturing.

While the group was walking through the tropical park, a female visitor with two young daughters and a dog. When the Adventist young people saw the dog, they approached the woman and got permission to pet it. Immediately, the dog began playing and leaping around.



PHOTO BY: JEFFREY THOMPSON

An encounter with a woman, two daughters, and a dog presented an opportunity for witnessing on the trail.

The woman and daughters were delighted and wanted to find out details about the group's church and faith. The pastor gave the woman a business card with the church's address and website.

Likewise, a new convert's female cousin, who accompanied the church group to the park, approached Heather Bartley and inquired whether she belonged to the church.

"You all seem like a family," said the woman.

"We are," Bartley replied.

"I admire your group a lot for what you are doing and the bond you are displaying," she said.

Bartley learned from this encounter that, "I see how even a nature walk can be a potent witness."

"Families brought snack lunches and ate them before walking through the scenic park. Members had a lot of fun, learned a lot, and were able to witness to others. What a memorable way to spend the Sabbath after the divine hour worship service," said Jeffrey Thompson, Ph.D., senior pastor. 🕊

PHOTO BY: JEFFREY THOMPSON



A highlight of the program was a Nature Scavenger Hunt. At the beginning of the walk, each person got a letter-sized piece of paper showing 25 images of things to look for in nature, such as a bird, nest, flower, color, or an insect.

BY JEFFREY THOMPSON, PH.D.

WholeLife's Connected 2022 Has Huge Impact

Rod was standing by the side of a road off I-4 at the Princeton exit in Orlando, Fla., with a “God loves all” sign. A member of WholeLife Church in Orlando stopped and invited him to come to the church’s Connected 2022 event for the unsheltered community at Exploria Stadium in downtown Orlando. Rod decided to attend, and that decision may have saved his life.

At the Connected 2022 event, a doctor gave Rod a thorough exam and then gave him a referral for X-rays and further diagnostic work. When Rod went for his referral, doctors at Advent-Health discovered he had a blood clot on one of his lungs and two blood clots on his left knee. He was immediately admitted to the hospital where he was able to recuperate.

“That’s what saved me, when I went there to the stadium and told the doctor about my health,” says Rod.

The Connected event, held on a Saturday in November 2022, was planned and run by WholeLife Church with assistance from SALT Outreach, Second Harvest Food Bank of central Florida, and 22 other community organizations. The event provided a wide variety of services to the unsheltered community, including medical exams, eye exams, vaccinations, clothing, haircuts, showers, and other options such as laundry services.

In all, nearly 300 unsheltered persons received services at Connected 2022 from approximately 250 volunteers, and 700 meals were distributed. The event finished with a worship service and lunch where volunteers and the unsheltered community members gathered to praise God and fellowship together.

“If there is one thing that the pandemic has taught us, it is the power of



PHOTO BY: KEN WETMORE

Rod’s invitation to attend Connected by a WholeLife Church member saved his life.

building a connection. In some cases, it is literally lifesaving,” says Anderline Bredy, pastor of justice ministries at WholeLife Church.

It’s a connection Rod feels as he now attends church services at WholeLife Church. Plans are underway to continue Connected as an annual event, and the church recently opened the WholeLife Center which provides a wide variety of services to the Orlando community. ●



PHOTO BY: VAYLEN IVAH PHOTOGRAPHY

Connected 2022 volunteers served nearly 300 members of the unsheltered community.

BY KEN WETMORE

Chinese New Year Celebrated

In Jesus Christ, we are all family” are the words sung each Sabbath morning at the High Point Chinese Church in Ooltewah, Tenn. “These words bring us together, reminding us that despite our cultural differences, we are all brothers and sisters in the heavenly family,” explained one member. The pews are filled with the bright faces of diversity: students attending Southern Adventist University — many of Asian descent — local Chinese families, and others who have been drawn by the hospitality and evangelistic energy of this church. But it is the Chinese culture that sets this little church apart.

For four years now, the High Point Church has hosted a Chinese New Year festival. Chinese New Year, or Lunar New Year, is celebrated in East Asia and welcomes all who wish to join in, regardless of their culture, focusing on appreciation of cultural diversity, connection, unity, and hope. Building on this theme, the church unites culture with the example of Jesus. Beginning with a paraphrase from *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143, Dennis Li, pastor, says, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. He teaches us to mingle with people as one who desires their good. The Chinese New Year festival is not only a cultural presentation; it is community outreach. Hosting the event in a neutral setting away from our church, where people from different denominations and backgrounds can feel more comfortable, allows us to build a connection with them, show people who we are, and win their confidence in us for future outreach.”

At The Commons in Collegedale, Tenn., the Chinese New Year festival, sponsored by the High Point Chinese Church, kicked off with a 5K run, January 22, 2023. Months of prayer, planning, and preparation went into this event. This year, more than 200 volunteers and



32 staff gave of their time and energy. Brandon Starr, a volunteer and Southern student, said, “There were so many volunteers willing to help. That was amazing!” There were various musical performances, including a guzheng, or Chinese plucked zither, traditional Chinese dances, a dragon dance, and three Filipino dances. Hundreds of people lined up to try the delicious vegetarian Asian fare. Seven booths sharing resources on health and spirituality were interspersed throughout the venue, and several others

offering games, face painting, Chinese lettering, origami, and paper lanterns all buzzed with activity.

More than 2,000 people came to the Chinese New Year celebration this past January — almost double the number that attended last year. One visitor, Daryl Illangovan, said, “I was able to experience Chinese [culture]...through performances, artistic talent...[and] their amazing cuisine.... Through this event, the High Point Church was able to witness to those who came by, passing out liter-

ature, and simply having good conversations. In the end, the pastor brought the whole program to a close with a prayer of blessing for the new year.”

Due to high attendance and limited staffing, ticketing booths could not accept more people this year and had to close early. But the High Point Church still remains committed to impacting the community and is seeking ways to reach many more people. There was a great expense laid out for this event in order to reach as many people as possible. God

provided the necessary funds, sponsors, and volunteers this year, and the High Point members know that He will provide for their continued efforts.

Members of the High Point Church have greater plans on how to reach their community. Beyond the Chinese New Year festival, the High Point Church is seeking to purchase the church building they are currently renting. They have also purchased a restaurant that will be turned into a center of influence for the community.

Only Heaven knows the full impact this event has had. With determined hearts, the High Point Chinese Church will continue to reach out to the community in culturally unique ways. They are looking forward to celebrating with their neighbors in the heavenly courts because they believe “in Jesus Christ, and we are all family!” 🕊

BY ARIEL WARREN AND ELAN ANDERSON

Young Retires After 49 Years of Service

After more than 49 years of being a teacher, business manager, and treasurer, Charles Young is retiring from serving as undertreasurer of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Young has been instrumental to both the Georgia-Cumberland Academy (GCA) community and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference during his career.

“Young spent his early years at Georgia-Cumberland Academy and has always been a strong supporter and advocate for Adventist education,” said Kurt Allen, vice president for finance at the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. “He then transitioned into the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Treasury Department, where he served with great distinction by promoting best practices in accounting to maintain financial health in support of the ministries and growth of the Conference.”

In 1986, Young began his career at the Conference as an assistant treasurer, overseeing accounts payable and accounts receivable. His responsibilities and positions have changed over the years, to most recently serving as undertreasurer, a role he began in 2004.

As Young reflects on his years of ser-



vice, some of his highlights include assisting and working with GCA students. Young helped students to be able to receive their Georgia Basic Firefighter Certificate. Upon completion, they were able to be part of the Gordon County Fire Department, which at the time stationed a truck at the school campus.

Additionally, Young worked with Southern Adventist University to create a special summer program so students could continue receiving benefits that they would have otherwise lost.

As Young reflects on his service at

the Conference, he recognizes the investment in young people the administration of the Conference made early on in his career. Within just a few years of each other, four people, including John Swafford, Dave Cress, Carl Anderson, and Young all started working at the Conference. When these men first started, they were all between the ages of 29 and 36. Providing this level of responsibility to such young people was an investment in the future, said Young.

This investment has paid off. While at the Conference, Young has overseen several changes that increase efficiencies, including implementing ACH payments and streamlining reports submitted by churches. This means that the number of people needed to support the growing Conference is significantly less than it otherwise would be without these changes.

Reflecting on Young’s service, Allen said, “His friendship, financial leadership, and passion for ministry will be greatly missed. There is simply no way to adequately summarize over 50 years of distinguished service!” 🕊

BY NATHAN ZINNER

Annual Pastors' Retreat Held at Camp Alamisco



Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood,” Acts 10:28 NKJV.

The Gulf State’s Conference Ministerial Department, led by Josh Murillo, pastor and Conference ministerial director, held the annual Pastors’ Retreat at Camp Alamisco on January 15-17, 2023. Conference administrators and more than 40 pastors throughout Gulf States gathered for training, fellowship, and worship. “Having all the pastors from the field has been a joy, and to have Pastor José Rojas has truly been a blessing,” said Murillo.

This retreat was organized to provide each pastor with a time of refreshing, encouragement, and practical tools and resources to use in their ministry. “The

power of true servant leadership is not measured by how many followers you have, but by how many leaders you inspire, mentor, and mobilize during your lifetime. The Lord is blessing this Conference, and this is the moment for church members to take a stand, for the Lord wants to finish His work. He is mobilizing His people,” said Rojas, keynote speaker at the pastors’ retreat.

Rojas brings more than 35 years of ministerial experience. He served the Church as director of youth and young adults for the North American Division, and later as director of volunteer services for the General Conference. His years of service found him also serving as White House Advisor (Humanitarian Initiatives), amongst other equally noteworthy endeavors.

“Pastor Rojas has really touched my

heart. I appreciated the spiritual messages and the insightful wisdom that he was able to share with us from all his years in ministry,” said Jason Carlsson, pastor of the Floral Crest and Owenby Church districts. We can assert God’s promise here at Gulf States found in Jeremiah 3:15, “I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.”

Camp Alamisco staff, led by Ranger Todd and Shelly Ward, hosted the pastors’ retreat. All attendees were blessed by their kind hospitality and exceptional service. Camp Alamisco is in the middle of a fundraiser to construct a go-kart track and children’s playground, amongst other projects. 📍

BY MARCELO MANSUR, M.DIV.

Bass Memorial Academy Holds Education Fair

Adventist education not only focuses on the student's intellectual development but also on the entire person. "True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come," *Education*, page 13. In the pursuit of developing each student with its multifaceted approach, Bass Memorial Academy (BMA) hosted the 2023 Education Fair, January 29-30.

"The Education Fair is an opportunity for students from other schools to come and show art and science projects; to experience drama, choir, gymnastics; and to share Bible monologues as a group, amongst many other activities. They receive lessons in areas of their interest and have the opportunity to get out of the ordinary classroom setting, and do something exciting in a different environment," said Derrick Collins, BMA principal.

This was the first Education Fair at BMA after COVID-19 affected schools across the North American Division. Teachers and staff from around the Gulf States Conference were eager to provide students with a fertile learning and growing environment. "My favorite part about this education fair is the drama club," said Josiah, a student from Pensacola Junior Academy (PJA). His school principal at PJA, Heather Hauffe, said, "We are excited to be here and to share the fellowship with everybody. It's been quite an experience. We had a chance to celebrate the student's art and STEM projects. The education fair is a huge blessing and an opportunity to worship with a larger group of people."



The BMA Acro Eagles gymnastics team also performed for the education fair with several acrobatic routines, showcasing all their training and handwork. "I like being a part of this team because they always have a kind word to say even when things go wrong, and they are amazing overall," said Sarah, a student and member of the Acro Eagles.

"This is a great opportunity for students to further their learning and make new friends," said Scott Bowes,

Gulf States superintendent of education. Activities during the fair included STEM and art projects, Bible monologues, choir, drama, gymnastics, spelling bee, worship, and academic bowl, among other fun activities. Gulf States educational ministries includes 15 schools and childhood centers within its territory. ●

BY MARCELO MANSUR, M.DIV.

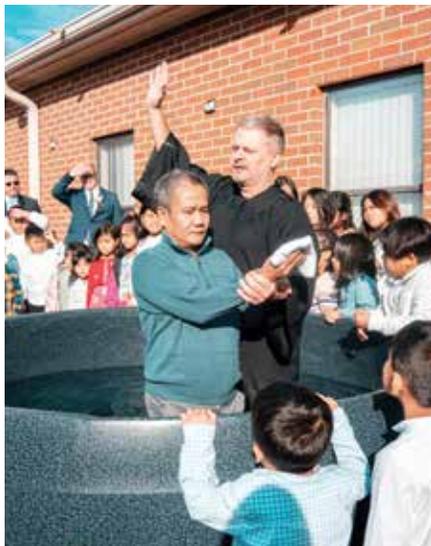
Nashville Zomi Church Celebrates Growth, Church Status

Members of the Nashville Zomi Church, along with friends, and Kentucky-Tennessee Conference officials, rejoiced in a special dedicatory service as the company transitioned to church status on Sabbath, January 28, 2023. More than 200 people joined the celebration.

The Nashville Zomi Church started meeting on January 4, 2014, at the house of Lam Dal, current Nashville Zomi Church treasurer. The church started with only five members, but doubled their numbers within one year.

“We grew up with a Seventh-day Adventist background,” Dal said. “[When we came to the United States], we wanted to continue going to church, but the worship style is very different, and we did not understand English very well at that time. [So], we saw the need to focus on the Zomi community.”

In 2016, they briefly joined with the Atlanta Zomi Group, visiting each other often. However, since the groups were in two different conferences, they could not properly combine as one. Thus, in 2017 the group stayed in Nashville and integrated with the local Karen group.



Mike Hewitt, Kentucky-Tennessee vice president for administration, baptizes one of the four Nashville Zomi Church members, who gave their life to Jesus on Sabbath, January 28, 2023, during the Nashville Zomi Church dedication.

Three years later, January 25, 2020, the Conference officially recognized the group as the Karen-Zomi Company. At this point, the two groups were still meeting at the same place, but working

separately due to a difference in dialects. The Karen Company was led by Eh Moe Chirk, pastor, and the Zomi Company was led by Pau Sian Tuang, elder. In September of 2021, the Conference recognized the Nashville Zomi Company as a church. During this time, they were under the leadership of Pau Suan Khai, who continues to be the current pastor. Currently, the Nashville Zomi Church has 53 baptized members, and averages 65 people in attendance each Sabbath. “Our mission has always been to spread the three angels’ messages to the Zomi community in Nashville,” said Bsniang Hau, Nashville Zomi Church elder. “There are about 2,000 Zomi people in this area, and we want to be able to connect with them.”

The dedicatory service included four baptisms, a special song from the Zomi Bowling Green Church choir, and a church history presentation by Hau. The Conference administration was also present, and had a special prayer for the church’s journey ahead. 🕊

PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Murfreesboro Students Fundraise for Class Trip

Eighth-graders and ninth-graders at the Murfreesboro, Tenn., School found a unique approach to fundraise for their class trip: they decided to make and sell vegan dishes. Led by Murfreesboro Church member Michelle

Milano, students cooked and sold a new recipe every Thursday.

The idea originated at the beginning of the school year when teachers were discussing the health curriculum. According to Milano, they knew they wanted to in-

corporate a healthy cooking component to the class.

“The health message is the right hand to the Gospel, and we wanted to integrate that into their learning,” said Milano. “I think that a lot of people have a mis-

conception that plant-based food is not delicious. So, I wanted to show kids that [vegan dishes] are not only simple to cook, but also very tasty. They're not missing out on anything by changing their lifestyle."

Every Thursday, the students learned a new plant-based recipe. So far, they have learned to make vegan burgers, soups, macaroni and cheese, pizza, and more. The students are selling their dishes and saving the money for their class trip, which is supposed to take place at the end of April.

According to Milano, this project has been a great success. Students, like high

school freshman Rebecca Bouza, have learned a valuable lesson about healthy eating and responsible spending.

"[Because of this class] I give a lot more thought to my diet because I know the foods I eat affect me physically and mentally," said Bouza. "The fact that we're working to pay for our class trip has also helped me build financial skills. I know I can use these skills in the future." 🍎

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Michelle Milano teaches students how to make pumpkin rolls. The eighth and ninth grades of the Murfreesboro, Tenn., School have been learning to make vegan dishes as a way to sponsor their April class trip.

Kentucky-Tennessee Offers Disaster Relief Training Course

The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference offered a five-day disaster relief training course from January 11 to January 15, 2023. The goal of the course was to equip church members to be ready to help communities in times of crisis. Twenty-six people attended and were certified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a Community Emergency Response (CERT) volunteer.

The course covered topics such as search and rescue, medical operations, psychological and spiritual first aid, tornado drills, and more. It was led by 2Serve — a Collegedale, Tenn., based disaster training and response team.

In the past, the Conference has been involved in helping at previous natural disaster relief efforts, including the December 2021 tornado in Mayfield, Ky., and the July 2022 flash flood in eastern Kentucky. According to Mike Hewitt, Kentucky-Tennessee vice president for administration, the Conference wants to have a team of trained and prepared individuals to better assist communities during these major incidents.



PHOTO BY: XANDER ORDINOLA

Two CERT students practice extinguishing a small fire. The acronym PASS is used to remember the steps to using a fire extinguisher: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, and Sweep.

"When you see natural disasters and such happen, it seems inevitable that people step up to help," said Hewitt. "The Church, of all people, ought to be on the forefront, showing love and compassion to our community. I'm hoping that people will be inspired, and really develop a passion for service."

On the last day of the training, participants, some who were middle school and high school students, went through a tornado aftermath simulation to practice the skills learned. To conclude the program, all attendees took and passed the FEMA CERT test.

Savanna Jackson, Highland Academy freshman, said her biggest takeaway was learning how to help others in a manner that is safe for both the victims and the volunteers. She adds that these skills will be helpful when she goes on mission trips with her school.

"A lot of times, the mission trips I go to are to aid people who are in a disaster," said Jackson. "So, I thought it would be good to have some sort of medical training. My goal is to make an impact in the community I am helping I want to help them physically and at the same time let Jesus' love shine through me." 🍎

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Youth Serve in Jackson

In August of 2022, a severe storm caused the Pearl River in Jackson, Miss., to flood. As flooding continued, the water treatment system began to fail. Residents were no longer able to safely consume the water. The South Central Conference Youth Department wanted to ensure that not just their churches had water, but the entire south Jackson community had the ability to perform essential functions. In partnership with E.E. Rogers Seventh-day Adventist School, Bethany Christian Academy (Montgomery, Ala.), the south Jackson, Berean (Jackson), Longview Heights (Memphis, Tenn.) Seventh-day Adventist churches, and the neighboring churches from Louisiana affiliated with the Southwest Region Conference, were able to give away more than 30 pallets of water, in addition to other household necessities.

More than 40 Pathfinders came together for this service project. One of the Pathfinders stated that volunteering creates stronger bonds between friends, family, and the community. Jonathan Ogburn, principal of Bethany Christian Academy in Montgomery, expressed that the experience was a wonderful opportunity to grow



New Heights Pathfinders unload the 18-wheeler.



Jonathan Ogburn, principal of Bethany Christian Academy, loads a car with water.

as a person. The residents of Jackson were truly blessed. One resident stated, “I am grateful that God sent so many caring individuals during our time of need. These lovely individuals have saved my family’s life when we needed it the most.”

South Central Conference Adventist Community Services and its regional partners provided the water that was given away through this service project. Funds were also received from other Adventist Community Services federations within South Central, along with other donors who sent funds to purchase water. At the onset, there was no water to

be purchased in Jackson and nearby municipalities.

The water was trucked into Jackson by tractor-trailers and commercial rental trucks. Bryant Stewart, youth ministries director, believes that “when a servant has been faithful by wisely using the resources with which his Master entrusted him, the Master congratulates him, entrusts him with more, and invites him to share in His happiness. Let us continue to serve others and help build the Kingdom of God.”

BY BRYANT STEWART

Pastor Reflects on CALLED

Pastor Tina Carriger shares her experience.

If there is one word I would use to describe the 2022 CALLED experience it is this: REUNION. It’s one thing to go to Camp Meeting, where pastors unite with colleagues from their conferences. It’s one thing to attend a union pastors’ convention, where pastors unite with colleagues from their unions. But, it’s a whole other thing to be at CALLED, where we unite with pastors from all over the North American Division.

There were familiar faces and new faces. Some pastors I met in person whom I had only known on social media. Other pastors I had not seen since my undergraduate years or my time at Andrews Theological Seminary. The CALLED Convention felt a lot like a high school reunion. The pandemic kept us physically apart, but CALLED brought us back together in a powerful way. The vibe in the arena during the morning and evening services felt like we were one nation under God, united in purpose and mission.

I attended Don Livesay’s seminar on spiritual leadership, which reminded me how important it is to do the right things at the right time for the right reasons. John Nixon Sr.’s seminar reminded us that our identity is in Christ, and God has authority over our sexuality. Dave Gemmill provided an overview on what pastors can do in order to retire as millionaires, and Derek Morris showed us how we can do evangelism better. The TechLab was amazing! Though most churches are open for in-person worship, it is still im-



Tina Carriger and Derek Morris



Tina Carriger and Kennedy Luckett



Christian Martin and Tina Carriger

portant to have a quality online presence, and the TechLab was gold. My favorite segment from the morning and evening services was George Knight’s “We Stand on Their Shoulders.”

I could make this all about my experience, but much appreciation is due to the Children’s Ministries Department of the North American Division. It was a blessing for my children to spend three days with other pastors’ children from

across the country. They had fun, they learned, they fellowshiped, and made new friends.

The cherry on top of the convention was the CALLED theme song. Between 2019 and 2022 a lot of pastors left the ministry. Though many of us contemplate leaving for a variety of reasons, the song expressed our struggle, but reminded us that the reason we keep our hands on the plow is that we’re called.

I delayed registering for this event because I was not sure I wanted to attend, but I am so glad the Spirit changed my mind. Had I not gone, I would have missed out on so many blessings. I am thankful to the administration of the South Central Conference for sponsoring and encouraging pastors to be there. 🙏

BY TINA CARRIGER

Alicia Hunt Promoted to Assistant Treasurer

Alicia Hunt has been promoted to assistant treasurer of the Treasury Department. Along with her duties as payroll manager, she will assist the treasurer in the direction and management of the Conference’s treasury activities. Hunt has served in the Treasury Department for the last 25 years. Her service with South Central Conference started in 1994, where she served as a departmental secretary for youth, Sabbath School, and family ministries.

“It’s a joy to have Mrs. Hunt join the leadership team in treasury,” said Sonja Crayton, chief financial officer. She continued, “I am excited to continue serving

with her as she continues to serve the constituents of South Central Conference!”

Hunt, a native of Louisville, Ky., is outspoken and loves to laugh, but she is serious about her God and her family. She is married to Pierre Hunt of Buffalo, N.Y., and they have two daughters and one grandson. Hunt is a passionate reader of the Bible. One of her favorite texts is Matthew 5:8, which says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” — which is her greatest desire. 🙏

BY ROGER R. WADE



Innovative Colporteur is Health Resource Educator

Colporteurs add value by sharing and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the health message through distributing and selling literature to people in the community and the church. For years, colporteurs went door to door in neighborhoods selling books and magazines on various topics about the Creation story, salvation, health, and much more. Today, many have a book or magazine purchased from a colporteur in their homes. If so, thank a colporteur for helping to spread the Gospel by providing relevant and valuable educational resources.

Times have changed, people are less likely to open their doors to someone they do not know, and some live in gated communities, limiting access for colporteurs. Realizing the critical need for and importance of reaching people with messages of health and salvation, Richard Frazier, a colporteur for more than 40 years, became an innovative colporteur by enhancing the traditional method of canvassing. He narrowed his focus and started selling health books to people outside their homes at grocery stores, military bases, hospitals, businesses, housing complexes, schools, and in front of fast food restaurants.

To start the conversation with people and spark their interest in the health message, Frazier uses a variety of attractive and interactive displays which engage sight, hearing, and touch. His colorful tablecloth with stand-up posters and banners is eye-catching. Likewise, models of the healthy and unhealthy brain, heart, kidney, and lungs are used to compare healthy lifestyle choices and poor lifestyle practices. Allowing the audience to touch the models helps to bring the health message to life. This innovative approach knocks on the hearts



and minds of people, opening them to the truth about salvation and health.

Through the years, the health message remains relevant. Frazier keeps current with health topics of public interest via the media. In the news, anchor persons report health problems. In contrast, Frazier, an innovative colporteur and health resource educator, offers a partial solution by displaying and distributing books and magazines about the topic. He provides education on disease and remedies. Also, he sells magazines and books on diabetes, mental health for adults and young people, and the eight laws of health — nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in God, which contribute to mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellness.

Frazier is passionate about spreading the Gospel and balancing health and salvation. During a conversation, I asked, “What motivates you to promote health and wellness and to do colporteur work?” He answered, “I enjoy helping to spread the Gospel — the principles of salvation and the health message, which is the entering wedge to the Gospel. The enemy is subtly taking away health. I plan to

spread the Gospel as long as God allows and until probation closes.” He shared that he prays for God to lead the way and for angels to go before him throughout the day. He concluded, “My sole desire is for people to meet Jesus.”

Despite the changing times, the innovative colporteur approach used by Frazier aligns with the Gospel commission in Matthew 28:19, 20, to go and teach. This method reaches people where they are allowing them to learn about health and wellness, Jesus the Savior, and the gift of eternal life. There is much to be learned from this approach; when we try to spread God’s Word, He opens doors for all to have access to people in places that they otherwise may not have had.

Southeastern Conference has a robust Publishing Department led by Lucious Hall, pastor and director. He trains students and individuals how to be colporteurs. Because the health message is the right hand of the Gospel, let all do their part to share the health message for the salvation of souls, educating how to care for the body, God’s temple, where the Holy Spirit dwells. Southeastern has numerous educational resources on various topics. For more information, contact Lucious Hall at 352-735-3142, x107, or email Lucious.Hall@secsda.org.

More information about the innovative colporteur health resource educator, contact Richard Frazier at 216-644-6434 or email rfrazier1000@gmail.com. 📞

BY JENNIFER SANKEY, PH.D., M.H.A., R.N.,
SOUTHEASTERN DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
AND DISABILITIES

ACS Partners with Nursing Organization, Trains Community Health Workers

The Adventist Community Services (ACS) at Mount Sinai Church, Orlando, Fla., does more than distribute food and clothing; it shares hope and restores wholeness in many ways.

The primary function of ACS is to respond and meet the essential needs of people in everyday situations and during disasters. Considering the health disparities and inequities existing among specific groups in society, Mount Sinai ACS considers it a moral imperative to implement proven approaches to the societal disaster.

Many people lack access to quality affordable healthcare services and resources, which causes a decline in their health, resulting in poor quality of life. To address this problem, Mount Sinai partnered with the Central Florida Black Nurses Association (CFBNA) of Orlando to provide community health workers training. Community health workers are trained to connect people with resources.

Nurses of the CFBNA taught the 30-hour class weekly from October 1 to December 3, 2022. During the lively and interactive classes, the students learned how to assess the needs of community residents, be educators on ways to prevent diseases, and advocate to help individuals to gain access to quality and affordable health services and resources. More than 25 ASC volunteers, church members, and community participants attended the training to help improve the health and well-being of residents in the community.

A grand and celebratory graduation was held at Mount Sinai Church on Sabbath afternoon, December 3, 2022. Excitement filled the room as the CHW



graduates entered. Derrick Moffett, D.Min., senior pastor and invited speaker, addressed the graduates and nurses, expressing appreciation for their participation in the training. The CHW students conveyed gratitude for the training and shared heartwarming testimonials of how they will use the information on health and wellness in their own lives. One by one, each indicated that they felt ready to educate others on available health resources to improve health equity. The training expanded the reach of ACS at Mount Sinai, making a difference by yielding a workforce of individuals well-equipped to work with the ACS volunteers and health professionals to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

The collaboration between ACS at Mount Sinai Church and the CFBNA of Orlando yielded a successful community outreach and a bond between the partners. The united efforts of these partners for a common cause addressed the health inequity problem. Participants were recruited: Lesli Ahonkhai, Mount Sinai Church Family Resource Center board

member and former community services leader, is commended for expanding the scope of ACS by taking action to organize and promote this training. The CHW classes are taught by registered nurses Constance Brown; Monique Farrington, D.N.P.; Juanita Green; June Robinson, Ed.D.; Audrey Rounds; Lea Turnbull; Edna Sankey; and Jennifer Sankey, Ph.D., president of CFBNA of Orlando. The RISE Grant funds were used for the Community Health Workers training. The grant administrator, Lawanna Gelzer, president of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, recognized the dire need for this program and offered full support.

All the partners agree that this was a worthwhile endeavor, and have plans to continue the community health workers training for the benefit of the community and the church. The project reinforces that ACS leaders can explore new ways to meet the needs of people in the communities. ●

BY JENNIFER R. SANKEY, PH.D., M.H.A., R.N.

Pathfinder, Adventurer Clubs Parade for Jesus

The Berean Church in Brunswick, Ga., had a high day on January 14, 2023. As attendees walked in the door, they could tell something was different. The sanctuary was filled with chairs set up for extra seating, and anticipation was felt by all. It was the first time in three years that the Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs from District 1 of the Southeastern Conference were able to come together. Clubs from Jacksonville, Fla.; Thomasville, Ga.; Bainbridge, Ga.; Jessup, Ga.; Gainesville, Fla.; Lake City, Fla.; Tallahassee, Fla.; and Brunswick were represented.

The church service began with all club members marching into the sanctuary, and Pathfinder Kristty Richards led the congregation in the Legions of Honor. Gloria Blake Watts, executive director for Southeastern Club Ministries, gave a warm welcome to the congregation, and a special thank you to Ian Forbes, Berean pastor. Watts said when she asked Forbes about hosting the District Day 2023, he said, “Whatever you



want, tell me, and we’ll make it happen.” The morning message, entitled “The Family Business,” was presented by Annie P. Kline, Adventurer District 1 area coordinator.

Berean Church is known for its delicious potlucks, and the one on January 14 did not disappoint. After lunch, the special day continued with an Adventurer and Pathfinder Induction Ceremony. Opening prayer was offered by Maria Hickman-Flanders, District 1 Pathfinder area coordinator, and Gwendoline Powell, Berean Pathfinder and Adventurer director and a member of the Brunswick Church, welcomed everyone and gave a big thank you to those who made the day possible. After sunset, the church hosted its first old-fashioned social that was put on hold since the beginning of COVID-19. Members and visitors enjoyed visiting with each other and partaking in good food, games, and fellowship. One member described the event as, “A glorious day!”



BY ACAROL CAVINS



FILLMAN, NAOMI MINNIE JENSEN, 95, born Feb. 22, 1927, in Lake City, IA, to Bernhard Henry Jensen and Edna Mae Norman Jensen, died Jan. 16, 2023.

Naomi graduated in 1945 and then attended Union College in Lincoln, NE, for two years, majoring in elementary education. While at Union, she met the love of her life, and on Aug. 17, 1947, she married Gerald Fillman in Nevada, IA. They were married for 70 years and had four children.

Naomi spent her adult life in ministry with her pastor husband in the Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Texico, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky-Tennessee conferences, teaching church school, working as a secretary at Southern Publishing Association, and Madison Hospital. She especially enjoyed working with children in Sabbath School, Vacation Bible School, and Pathfinders (her specialty was teaching the Shell honor).

Naomi was an impeccable seamstress, played the piano, accordion, and hand bells, and she sang alto in the choir for many years. The family always had a large garden, and besides having delicious home-grown foods to eat all summer, she canned and froze much of the food to last all winter.

Naomi's parents, five siblings, and her beloved husband preceded her in death. She is survived by her son Gary (Melissa) Fillman; three daughters: Rita (Jerry) Wagner, Debra (Gray) Coyner, and Kathleen (James) Brummett; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; cousins; nieces; and nephews.

PEEL JR., PASTOR JAMES DENSON, 87, born July 9, 1935, in Montgomery, AL, the son of the late James Denson Peel and Edna Coker Peel, died Dec. 16, 2022.

He graduated from Southern Missionary College in May 1958, earning a bachelor's degree. In August of that year, he married Rae Reta Meyers. He later earned a master's degree from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI. Pastor Peel taught at Pell City Elementary School in Pell City, AL, for two years, and then taught Bible, history, and driver's education for 20 years at Fletcher Academy in Fletcher, NC. For five years he was a singing evangelist for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. He continued his career by pastoring Seventh-day Adventist churches in Houma, LA, Kingsport and Bristol, TN, as well as Ellijay and Jasper, GA. In his spare time, James enjoyed gardening, photography, and travel. He also enjoyed writing and wrote many articles which were published in Ellijay's Times-Courier.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Rae Reta Meyers Peel; two sons: Gerald (Susan) Peel and Michael (Lisa) Peel; one daughter, Cindy Peel (Jeff) Lemon; cousin, Kevin (Teresa) Costello; seven grandchildren: Christopher Peel, Michael David Peel, Matthew Peel, Heather Peel (David) Orvek, Shawn Lemon, Jordan Lemon, and Kiona Costello; and one great-grandchild, Ivy Peel. In addition to his parents, Pastor Peel was preceded in death by his younger brother, Robert Peel.

A Celebration of Life service was held December 30, 2022, at Collegedale, TN, Church.



HARDEN, DEBORAH, 72, a resident of Banks, AL, died Dec. 24, 2021, at Troy Regional Medical Center. She is survived by her husband, Russell J. Harden; children: Leigh Ann (Ricky) Lapinski of McDonough, GA, Rusty (Kayleen) Hamilton; one grandchild, Waylon Lapinski; one sister, Bobbi (Tom) Blanz; two brothers: David (Sue) Johnson and Chris (Melissa) Johnson; several nieces; nephews; and other family. She was very involved in her church and enjoyed participating in the services. She loved spending time outdoors growing her plants. Baking and cooking for her family were some of her favorite past times. She was well known for her biting sense of humor. The funeral services were held Dec. 30, 2021, at the Chapel of Dillard Funeral Home in Brundidge, AL, with Pastor Elton Desousa officiating. Interment followed in Ramah Cemetery.

SANDERS, BOBBY AUDREY, 87, born Dec. 3, 1934, in Mobile, AL, died Sept. 13, 2022. He worked for many years as a welder/boiler maker in the southeast, and for GM & O Railroad for 10 years. He was a loving family man, who enjoyed spending time with his children, grandchildren, other family, and friends. He enjoyed building and gardening, both of which he did very well. He was a faithful member of the Cody Road Church for 60+ years. He served in many positions at church—including Bible studies, an elder, deacon, Pathfinders, Sabbath School teacher, and his greatest joy was working with the building of the new church. Some of his fondest memories was spending time at Camp Meetings for many years at Bass Memorial Academy. He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Shelby Sims Sanders; his three children: Stephen (Jayne) Sanders, Benton (Jennifer) Sanders, and Becky (Duane) Sanders Carr; three sisters: Dorothy Sanders Hilton, Betty Carney, and Doris Stewart; one brother, Emory Sanders; six grandchildren: Beth (Bill) Crutten-den, Ashley (Jason) Johnson, Brandon Sanders, Ryan Sanders, Stephanie (Blake) Busby, and Heather (Noah) Guzman; and 10 great-grandchildren: McKayla, Savannah, Jessica, Brooke, Courtney, Kelsey, Bethany, Maverick, Andrew, and Audrey. He was preceded in death by his parents: Wilbur and Ada Brooks Sanders; and one sister, Dean Bush. The funeral services were held at the Cody Road Church on Sept. 17, 2022, with Pastor Marvin Allison officiating.

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DON'T JUST RETIRE.... Live with purpose at Fletcher Park Inn. An Independent Living Retirement Community, located on the campus of Fletcher Academy near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Join our family, take part in the many opportunities for staying active, volunteering, making new friends and living with a purpose. Call to find out more about our apartment and villa homes 828-209-6930 ask for our marketing department or visit www.fletcherparkinn.com. [3-7]

FLORIDA SDA REALTOR Would you like to BUY or SELL in Orlando, Florida or surrounding cities? I look forward to helping you! Sandra Da Silva, Realtor: 407-840-8500 (call/text). Service provided in English, Spanish & Portuguese. [C]

YOUR REALTOR IN FLORIDA & EASTERN TENNESSEE Are you ready to BUY or SELL your home? Maybe you want to trade hectic urban life for peaceful country living? Want to build a homestead? I can help you make it all happen. Contact Osvaldo "Ozzy" Ferrer 423-457-9057 or

407-285-2510..Call, text, WhatsApp, or email ozzyferrer@outlook.com. [C]

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COLLEGEDALE- 5 bed/3 bath home on 1.47 acres with inground pool. \$619,000. Call Wendy Dixon Team- Keller Williams for more information. dixonteam.com. Call 423-702-2000. [3]

TELLICO PLAINS, TN - Airbnb income producing with 3 units. Could also be a country store with 2 units. Approx 90 min from SAU, this quaint little town is sure to please! Fishing, camping, hiking, waterfalls etc. So much activity and potential in this town. Type the link below in to see photos or visit DixonTeam.com to view in our listings. Call Wendy Dixon Team/ Keller Williams at 423-702-2000. LINK- <https://www.flexmls.com/share/83vof/11882-Highway-68-Hwy-Tellico-Plains-TN-37385> [3]

18 BEAUTIFUL WOODED acres for sale in Carroll County, Tennessee. You will need to install a well, septic, and power. \$60,000. Contact Bonnie Love at 765-720-4560. [3-4]

LOOKING FOR FLORIDA COUNTRY HOME

Looking for Florida off-grid home with one to two acres to share with others as a tiny home community, such as a R.V., park model, or house trailer. If interested, call 407-435-3971. [3]

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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 [3]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

is seeking qualified candidates for the following teaching positions: Faculty—School of Education and Psychology, School of Business, School of Nursing, Engineering, English Department, McKee Library. Adjunct—German Instructor-Modern Languages Department, Applied Technology (Mechanics). For detailed descriptions and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs. [3]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

is seeking qualified candidates for the following staff positions: Salaried position— Marketing & University Relations Digital Engagement Manager. Hourly positions—Cafeteria Floater (Cafeteria), Cafeteria Worker (Cafeteria), Cook Coordinator (Cafeteria), Deli Lunch Cook/Supervisor (Village Market), Deli Supper Cook/Supervisor (Village Market),

Deli Floater (Village Market), Vitamin Associate (Village Market), Procurement & Merchandising Assistant (Village Market), The Garden Assistant Manager (Food Services), Plumbing Master Technician (Plant Services), Housing Technician (Plant Services), HVAC Master Technician (Plant Services), Patrol Officer (Campus Safety), Academic Support Manager (Retention Services), Cashier/Customer Service Associate (Village Market). Temporary positions— Bus Driver (Transportation Department), Rental Fleet Coordinator (Transportation Department). For a detailed description and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs. [3]

UNION COLLEGE, Lincoln, Nebraska is searching for applicants for a History Professor to teach various courses in global non-western history, cultural history, political science, and/or ancient classical history in the Politics, History, and International Relations Program. This is a full-time, exempt position to start June 1, 2023. Please see the full job description and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment and direct any inquiries to Bruce Forbes at bruce.forbes@ucollege.edu. [3-4]

UNION COLLEGE, Lincoln, NE has the following job opportunities in our graduate programs. Please view the full job description and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment or contact Debbie Eno at debbie.eno@ucollege.edu for more information. Occupational Therapy Program; Academic Fieldwork Coordinator; Public Health Graduate Program; Program Director and two half-time faculty positions; Leadership Graduate Program: Program Director and one faculty full-time faculty position. [3-4]

UNION COLLEGE, Lincoln, NE, is searching for candidates for Athletic Director. This individual will provide overall leadership to the Warriors Athletic program to provide a positive learning experience for the students and to share the character of Christ within all areas

of athletics. Bachelor's degree required, Master's preferred. Please see the full job description and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment. Direct any inquiries to Kim Canine at kim.canine@ucollege.edu. [3]

UNION COLLEGE, Lincoln Nebraska, is searching for candidates for two positions in the campus library: Library Director and Reference and Instruction Librarian. Please see full job descriptions and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment or contact Ed Allen at ed.allen@ucollege.edu for more information. [3-4]

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEEKS FACULTY- Architecture, The Assistant or Associate Professor of Architecture holds a faculty appointment and has academic, service, and scholarship responsibilities consistent with the mission and philosophy of the School of Architecture & Interior Design. This individual demonstrates competence in design studio education, teaching of assigned lecture courses, and curriculum development at the graduate and undergraduate levels. For more details and to apply, please visit https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_2 [3]

MISCELLANEOUS

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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/gradtestudies. [3-5]

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#INC & SC Allstate Insurance Agency. SDA owned and operated. Call today for a for a free quote for auto, home, renters, boat, motorcycle or life insurance. Agent is UCSDA church Treasurer & Elder. Exclusive Agent, Brian King 704-844-2572 or jbrianking@allstate.com or visit us at www.allstate.com/jbrianking. [3-7]

ADVENTIST TOURS. 2023 Dates: Israel April 16-25 & June 4-13 with Andy Nash, and June 18-27 with Clifford Goldstein. 2024 Dates: Egypt/Jordan/Israel March 28-April 16; Israel June 2-11 with Greg King; British Reformation June 9-17; German Reformation June 17-28; Thailand June 17-26. Contact tabghatours@gmail.com or tabghatours.com or 423-298-2141. [3]

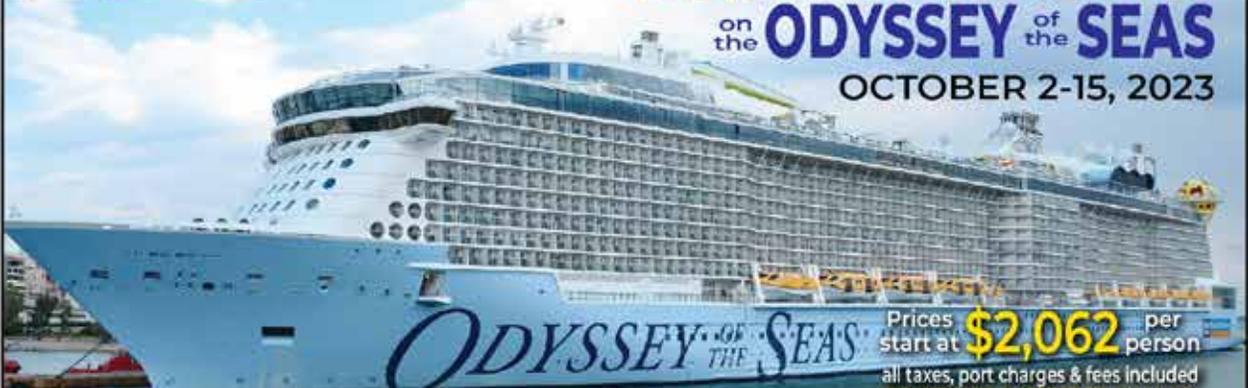
IN SEARCH OF Adventist operated group home foe mentally challenged adult female. Call 299-588-0974 and leave a message. [3]

IN THE PICTURESQUE Cherokee Valley – just 15 minutes from Southern Adventist University – Country Haven Retirement Center offers professional, loving care to a small number of persons. Owned and operated by an Adventist family. Contact Jonathan Stockil at 304-888-3691 or jr-stockil@yahoo.com. [3-5]

FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITY: Adventist owned plant-based fast food restaurant Earth Burger is now franchising. Sabbath closure is approved. All territories are currently available. For inquiries, visit www.earthburger.com/franchise/. [3-8]



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How easy it is to find you and know they have arrived at the right place?

Inadequate signage causes missed opportunities. Focus on the mission, while we assist you getting a new sign.

Your church sign represents the church body. It is the first structure associated with your church that most people will see, a powerful evangelistic tool!

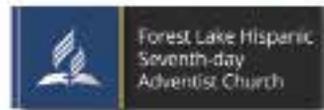
Our sign engineer will help you selecting the sign that meets your needs. We have two main types of signs and several options on Monumental designs.

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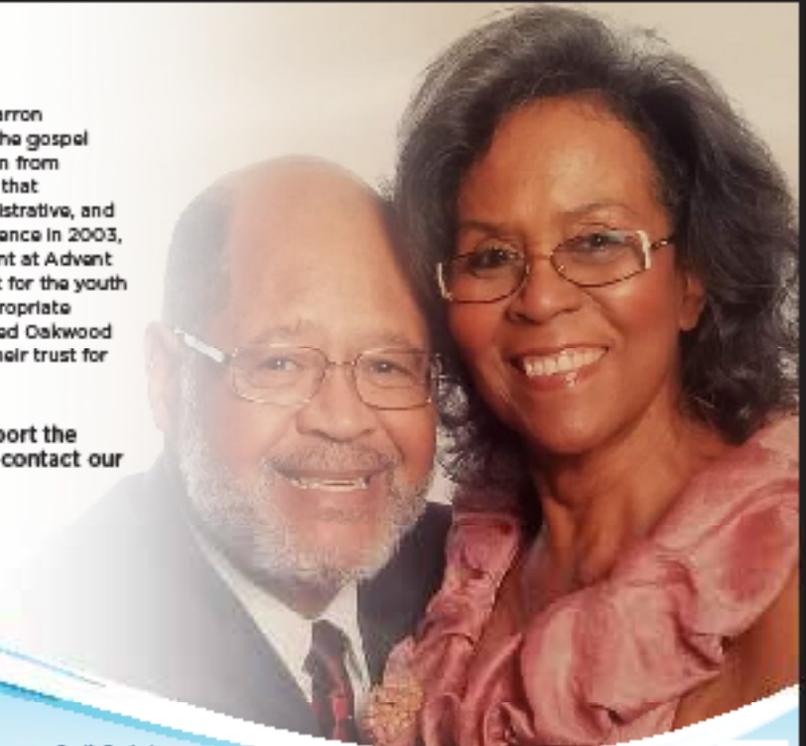
Highway Directional Signs
Assist to locate your church

Monumental Signs
Identify your church



Richard Edward Barron and Vivian Virginia Barron were a husband-wife team who supported the gospel mission in many fields. Upon graduation from Oakwood, the Barron's began a ministerial career that spanned 60 years which included pastoral, administrative, and camp ministry. After retiring from the General Conference in 2003, Elder Barron became the Assistant to the President at Advent Health Sabaling. He had a special place in his heart for the youth and was known as the "Youth's Friend." How appropriate that he and his wife, a nurse by profession, included Oakwood University Religion and Nursing Departments in their trust for educational pursuits of young people.

▶ **If you are interested in a living trust to support the work God has placed on your heart, please contact our planned giving office.**



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Florida Adventist Book Center Express Delivery Schedule - Avoid shipping costs by placing an ABC order to be delivered to a scheduled location. Orders must be made by phone or e-mail before noon on the Thursday prior to a scheduled Sunday delivery.

March 5. St. Augustine, Jacksonville LifePoint Christian Fellowship, Jacksonville Southpoint. (*Southeastern Conference: New Life International, Jacksonville Ephesus.*)

March 12. Kendall, Miami Temple, Miami Springs, Maranatha in Miami Gardens, Sunrise, Midport.

March 19. Inverness, Brooksville, New Port Richey, Clearwater, St. Petersburg, Winter Haven.

March 26. East Pasco in Zephyrhills, Brandon, Palmetto, Sarasota, Port Charlotte, Avon Park.

April 2. North Lake in Leesburg, Marion Oaks in Ocala, Ocala, Perry, Tallahassee.

April 16. West Palm Beach First, Pompano Beach, Margate, Ambassador in Lauderdale Lakes, Plantation. (*Southeastern Conference: Port St. Lucie.*)

April 23. Naples, Lehigh Acres, Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Avon Park.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

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.

Hispanic Women's Retreat - April 7-9. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

Women's and Teen Girls Spring Retreat - April 14-16. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

Pathfinder Camporee - April 21-23. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

Setting up Retirement Income Streams - April 25. Zoom.

Emotional and Spiritual Care Certification - April 28-30. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

Master Guides Bible Bowl - April 29.

Master Guides Leadership Convention - May 10, 11.

Collegedale Camp Meeting - May 31-June 3. Southern Adventist University. Please check our website for the latest information, www.gccsda.com.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Symphony Orchestra Concert - March 5. With Laurie Redmer Cadwallader conducting, Southern's Symphony Orchestra will perform at 7:30 p.m. in the Collegedale, TN, Church. This and many other musical events are also broadcast at southern.edu/streaming.

Brain Awareness Exhibit - March 23. The School of Visual Art and Design and the Physics and Engineering Department at Southern Adventist University are hosting displays and activities focused on the connection between neuronal activity in the brain and the visual experience. Titled "Opticus Realm: Where Things Are Not What They Seem," the showcase will open on Thursday, March 23, at 6 p.m. in the John C. Williams Art Gallery in Brock Hall. This free exhibit with optical illusions and virtual reality exercises is open to the public through April 14. For more information, visit southern.edu/artgallery or call 423-236-2732.

Champion Paraclimber - March 23.

One-handed mountaineer Maureen Beck, named Adventurer of the Year by National Geographic in 2019, will be speaking at Southern Adventist University on Thursday, March 23, at 8 p.m. Her presentation "Improbable Ascent" features inspiring stories and videos that chronicle her journey as one of the foremost leaders in adaptive climbing. The ticketed event on campus in Iles P.E. Center is open to the public. For more information, call 423-236-2814.

PreviewSouthern - March 23, 24. Interested students are invited to take a campus tour, discuss majors with professors, sit in on financial aid workshops, and enjoy a fun activity in Chattanooga, TN. For more information, call 1-800-SOUTHERN, email visit@southern.edu, or visit southern.edu/preview.

I Cantori Choral Concert - April 2. Southern Adventist University's School of Music presents an evening of sacred music with the I Cantori Chamber Choir on Sunday, April 2, at 7:30 p.m. Conducted by Gennevieve Brown-Kibble in Mabel Wood Hall's Ackerman Auditorium on campus, the free concert is open to the public and will be livestreamed. For more information, visit southern.edu/musicevents or call 423-236-2880.

SUNSET

	MAR 3	MAR 10	MAR 17	MAR 24	MAR 31	APR 7
ATLANTA, GA	6:36	6:42	7:48	7:53	7:58	8:03
CHARLESTON, SC	6:19	6:24	7:30	7:35	7:40	7:45
CHARLOTTE, NC	6:20	6:26	7:32	7:38	7:44	7:49
COLLEGEDALE, TN	6:38	6:44	7:50	7:56	8:01	8:07
HUNTSVILLE, AL	5:44	5:50	6:56	7:02	7:07	7:13
JACKSON, MS	6:00	6:06	7:11	7:16	7:20	7:25
LOUISVILLE, KY	6:39	6:46	7:53	7:59	8:06	8:12
MEMPHIS, TN	5:58	6:04	7:10	7:15	7:21	7:27
MIAMI, FL	6:24	6:28	7:31	7:34	7:38	7:41
MONTGOMERY, AL	5:45	5:50	6:55	7:00	7:05	7:10
NASHVILLE, TN	5:44	5:51	6:57	7:03	7:09	7:15
ORLANDO, FL	6:27	6:32	7:36	7:40	7:43	7:47
TAMPA, FL	6:32	6:36	7:40	7:44	7:48	7:51
WILMINGTON, NC	6:10	6:16	7:22	7:27	7:32	7:38

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CLOSER TO JESUS

AT ADVENTIST SCHOOLS



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**See research data at southern.edu/100reasons.*



Collegedale, TN

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