Behold the Lion!

“The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed!”

Revelation 5:5, NIV

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Modern society seems to dictate that life is measured in stuff. Stuff usually translates into items such as a house, a car, or a bank account. So much stuff gets accumulated that our life seems to resemble a game of Monopoly. But, in the end, when the game is over, we all end up in the same place. Jesus never lost sight of where He was headed. He didn’t have much stuff. Are our resources, our time, our talents, our treasures, our stuff, being used to proclaim the good news and to build God’s Kingdom?

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

John 6:27
How does God lead the church? As part of our “Love. Serve. Lead.” focus for ministry in 2020, this month we begin a journey to better understand the Christian leadership that will equip and engage the church in ministry and mission.

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.… In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps” (Proverbs 16: 3, 9, NIV).

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12, NLT).
First Principles of Kingdom Leadership

BY BRADFORD C. NEWTON

Leadership study stretches back thousands of years. Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, the plays of Shakespeare, and Julius Caesar’s conquests and rise to Roman power are but a few studied by aspiring business titans. Millions of hits appear on Google, if you want to explore the subject. A maze of business, sales, political, military, and ecclesiastical texts await you. I’ve read many of them and have my favorites. However, heeding Solomon’s warning is prudent: “Be careful, for writing books is endless, and much study wears you out” (Ecclesiastes 12:12, NLT).
The heavenly kingdom, to which we pledge our first allegiance, makes explicit its demand for our alignment with the first principles of kingdom leadership.

For Christians serving the cause of Christ, insights are gleaned from many sources, including our own experience. The longer we live, the more we think we know how to fix problems, provide wise counsel, and move groups of people to the right decision. Yet, leadership in God's work retains its enduring value only when continually aligned to Divine principles readily available to us through the inspired texts. The heavenly kingdom, to which we pledge our first allegiance, makes explicit its demand for our alignment with the first principles of kingdom leadership.

Let us begin with honesty about us all. Left to our fallen inclinations, we choose self-identified goals and use whatever means necessary to achieve them. Romans 3:10-11 gives every leader a timeout to consider that “No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God” (NLT). Are we immune from this reality when we work or volunteer for the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Common sense, history, and our own experience says no. So what separates our leadership motivations and actions from a CEO at Exxon or General Motors? Reflecting honestly with ourselves can point us to the kingdom path of leadership.

Do I understand myself?

Leadership rarely is unalloyed cravenness or unadulterated nobility. The starting point for effective kingdom leadership begins with self-knowledge. Paul writes to the Corinthian church, “Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves”
Kingdom leaders embrace the truth about themselves—that our sinful humanity requires consistent personal reflection and regular Spirit-led course corrections. The 19th-century British historian Thomas Carlyle wrote, “The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.”

The great leaders I have known are those who also accept probing questions from others without resorting to defensiveness or anger. A prerequisite for standing at the head of the caravan giving direction is readiness for questions from those following. Although it’s rarely fun to have someone doubt your motives, decision-making, or intelligence, the kingdom leader is ready to listen for truth even when it’s not expressed in a loving manner. (It is worth noting that striving for kindness and tact when expressing our doubts or questions to those who lead will help them hear us more clearly. The Golden Rule of Christ applies just as firmly to social media and comment sections of blogs and news posts as to face-to-face conversations.)

Kingdom leadership begins with asking the question, “Do I understand myself?”

Am I a servant leader?

Much has been written about servant leadership since the publishing of Robert Greenleaf’s 1970 essay, “The Servant as a Leader.” It was Jesus who introduced this fundamental principle in Mark 10:42-45. You will recall that He was responding to jealousy among the disciples about places of honor in the kingdom. “So, Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many’” (NLT).

The essence of being a servant leader is not hard to comprehend and practice. The attention of servant leaders shifts from what’s good for them to what builds up others. How do we know we’re moving in the direction of servant leadership? Here are just a few attributes:

Listening and then applying what we hear from others. James advises us, “You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry” (James 1:19, NLT). Sharing the opportunity to shape and grow the work. And, measuring success by how others are growing and developing. In the end, the servant leader knows it’s not about the leader—it’s about those being served. The ancient hymn of the incarnation expresses this poignantly: “You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had” (Philippians 2:5, NLT). Kingdom leadership develops by honestly assessing ourselves with the question, “Am I a servant leader?”

Does my leadership build or erode trust?

A growing body of leadership study focuses on high trust working environments. I recommend Stephen M.R. Covey’s The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything. He contends that trust is not blind but earned by both character and competence. It is built by treating people with respect, listening carefully to them, following through with integrity, and
Kingdom leadership grows in us when we consistently ask, “Does my leadership build or erode trust?”

Christian leadership ultimately rests on the resources of God that no book or think tank can duplicate. Many have found this promise from *The Desire of Ages* to be a powerful resource in facing the Christian leadership challenges of family, church, business, denomination, and community:

“Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer.... Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 329-330).

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Lessons from Moses on Leadership

BY JORGE SORIA
Leaders are sometimes considered to be controlling or charismatic people who are hungry for power. But I believe that effective leaders share power and find ways to distribute leadership to other competent individuals.

We as human beings are not always capable of leadership in every situation. Having the title isn’t enough. Just because you have been appointed leader does not mean you will be able to engage with your group in the process of promoting the common good. Leaders and followers engage in the act of leadership together.

Our great example of leadership is Jesus Christ. And as we read in Matthew 20:28: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (NIV). People were irresistibly drawn to His selfless, loving style of leadership.

There are also biblical examples of how NOT to lead and stories of people who learned to lead the hard way. The Bible offers revealing, non-blinking perspectives on the men and women within its pages. We witness the foibles as well as the fantastic accomplishments of individuals in both the Old and New Testaments.

Other than Christ, we can’t look at any one Bible character and say, “No wonder they did great things for God. They were perfect!” Because they weren’t. Look at Moses, for example.

God had a plan for Moses: prophet, teacher, author, and leader who dragged an entire nation of people—kicking and screaming—out of slavery in Egypt and deposited them—still kicking and screaming—on the border of the Promised Land. His leadership style was, to say the least, unusual, but he got the job done. Yet, at the same time, because of his failings, he lost the privilege of entering the Promised Land.

His journey from burning bush to the top of Mt. Nebo was an erratic one. His life as one of God’s most effective leaders offers a glimpse into both what a leader should be and what God is willing to work with. Every

His life as one of God’s most effective leaders offers a glimpse into both what a leader should be and what God is willing to work with.
Christian who longs to play a prominent role in God's cause would do well to pay attention to what Moses has to teach us.

The life and times of Moses offer eight vital lessons.

1. Moses was born in humble surroundings. His parents, descendants of the house of Jacob, were slaves of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Their lot in life was to serve, putting the needs of their masters first. Lesson: One's lineage isn't a concern to God when choosing a leader.

2. When Moses found himself with some control over his destiny, he failed miserably. He killed an oppressor who was violently mistreating a Hebrew slave. He forgot that, although God had called him to be the deliverer of Israel, he was merely an instrument in Divine hands—the deliverer of Israel was the Lord. As a result of this act, Moses fled into the desert, but God never left him. God continued to give him opportunities and helped him grow. Lesson: One's past transgressions aren't as important to God as one's willingness to change.

3. When God made His initial contact with Moses out in the desert, He had to go far beyond the gentle prodding that the Heavenly Father usually uses to reach individuals. He created a burning bush that didn't burn. Lesson: Our God will always find a way to reach us with His invitation to lead, and that way may be out of the ordinary.

4. Moses, the future leader of the Children of Israel, wasn't exactly thrilled with the idea of service to the Almighty. He felt inadequate and resisted the call. But that didn't stop God, who assured Moses of powers he didn't even know were available. Lesson: God isn't put off by our weakness. He only asks that we work with Him. Success is sure because of His power.

5. Once that power of God had miraculously extricated the Children of Israel from bondage, God didn't let up. He didn't move on to other projects, leaving them to languish in the desert. He turned His attention from their escape to their daily needs. Lesson: God doesn't abandon anyone once initial victories are enjoyed. Leaders can look forward to a continuing and growing relationship with the One who put them in a place of power to begin with.

6. God's people in the desert often forgot who brought them there. Despite the cloud by day and the fire by night, they lost sight of who they

Profiles on Leadership

Respect Each Other—
Every one must bear his weight of responsibility. The Lord is preparing each one to do his appointed work, and each one is to be respected and honored as a brother chosen of God and precious in His sight. One man is not to be selected to whom all plans and methods shall be confided while the others are left out. If this is done, errors will be made, wrong moves will be taken. Harm rather than good will be done. No one of you needs to be afraid of the other lest the other shall have the highest place. Without partiality and without hypocrisy each is to be treated.—Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases, vol. 21, pp. 336-337
If we could sit and have a conversation with Moses today, I have a feeling that he’d want us to know some things about God that we may have forgotten.

were and why they were doing what they were doing. Moses had to constantly remind them of the bigger picture that so many were refusing to see. Lesson: God's leaders can never rest on past victories. They must constantly remind those in their charge that the work isn’t finished yet. They haven’t reached the Promised Land.

7. Moses messed up in some rather profound ways. He wasn’t immune to his own humanity, even in his leadership position. And, like so many other characters in the Bible, he came face-to-face with the reality of God's forgiving grace. Lesson: God doesn’t leave us when we leave Him. We are precious in His sight, and He wants to complete the plan that He has for each one of us.

8. Moses discovered the sobering truth that sometimes the consequences of sin are real. When he sat looking down on the fertile plains spreading out from the base of Mt. Nebo, viewing the Promised Land from afar and knowing he would never set foot on that soil, his disappointment was painful and deep. Yet, he knew that the God who had led him across the desert was still by his side and that another Promised Land waited for his footfall. Lesson: Breaking God’s commands doesn’t have to be the end of our journey. If we can remember God’s grace even through our painful disappointments, we can have hope for a brighter day to come.

If we could sit and have a conversation with Moses today, I have a feeling that he’d want us to know some things about God that we may have forgotten.

I can imagine him getting a faraway look in his eye and saying softly, “I know what failure looks like. I know what it feels like. But don’t be discouraged by your shortcomings. The people placed in your care can know, as you cross the desert of this life together, that they are being guided by someone who recognizes which ways are correct and which ways are not. I believe that’s a valuable asset.”

Understanding the rules and commands is only half the battle out here in the desert. Knowing what happens when you break the rules and commands, along with a determination not to make those mistakes again, can provide a layer of protection for those who follow you across the sands.

The story of Moses teaches us that leadership is a learned skill and that learning can take place on all levels of success and failure. We mustn’t keep ourselves from being of service to the cause of God because of past mistakes. Our experiences, both good and bad, can form the backbone of our strength as, working together, we lead our fellow human beings across the desert toward the Promised Land.

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The Case for Being Christ-like

BY CARLOS CAMACHO
Recently I received a call from a number I didn’t recognize. Although I don’t normally take calls from strangers, I answered this one. The voice on the other end was not a very pleasant one. The caller was not even polite; he was demanding and demeaning.

The man wanted to know where to sign up to start a new congregation. He wanted a genuinely conservative Seventh-day Adventist church, with members that truly believed in the Sabbath and the Second Coming—unlike the one he was presently attending. “We don't believe in all this rock-and-roll music these liberal churches are doing nowadays,” he fumed. I was later surprised to learn that he was referring to an Adventist church I know pretty well.

As I listened, I realized that he was reacting primarily to what he felt was a part of the liberal agenda: a female pastor. Some pretty offensive judgment calls were made—among the mildest criticisms were complaints about the way she dressed.

Before the 2004 U.S. election, an evangelical preacher named Gary Vance asked, “Wasn’t Jesus a liberal?” A year later he reported, “I was

*If we analyze Jesus’ attitude while on earth, we should be able to classify Him as a liberal or a conservative and follow His example. Let’s try.*
saddened by the responses from the Religious Right.... They made vitriolic diatribes that questioned my credibility as a minister and my standing in the Kingdom of God.”

When we label people as liberals or conservatives, it is usually not so much according to our understanding of Bible concepts or political views. Instead, it often comes down to their behavior or appearance. Many believe that conservatives are cautious and willing to keep the status quo and that liberals have a wider worldview. However, I know there are conservatives with a wide worldview and liberals with a closed mind. People are complicated. It’s hard to classify them.

What should we do? If we analyze Jesus’ attitude while on earth, we should be able to classify Him as a liberal or a conservative and follow His example. Let’s try.

In His first sermon, He said that He hadn’t come to void the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17). That sounds to me like a conservative talking. But wait. We also find stories in which His disciples are accused of reaping grain on the Sabbath and He is caught healing the sick on the Sabbath. This places Him as a liberal, doesn’t it?

We typically categorize the Pharisees as conservatives. They had very strict laws, especially about keeping the Sabbath. Their lifestyle was such that we use the word *pharisaic* to mean someone who pretends to be religious but in actuality is a hypocrite. The Pharisees expected that the real Messiah would behave like they did. But Jesus accused them of putting aside God’s commandments in favor of their traditions (Mark 7:9).

It could be argued that the father in the parable of the prodigal son is the perfect example of a liberal outlook. But, after all, it was his son. Perhaps the father had a liberal heart, but in this story he was only showing compassion toward someone dear to him.

When I think of an example of a liberal character in the Bible, the Good Samaritan comes to mind. His actions went against the stereotype. He put aside his prejudices, if he had any, and liberally helped his neighbor in need. He followed the teachings of the Old Testament. As He told the parable, Jesus was quoting Leviticus 19:18 when He reminded us to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Ellen G. White writes that God “will prepare men for the times. They will be humble, God-fearing men, not conservative, not policy men; but men who have moral independence and will move forward in the fear of the Lord.”
Profiles on Leadership

Remain in Touch With God—Those engaged in the work of God cannot serve His cause acceptably unless they make the best use possible of the religious privileges they enjoy. We are as trees planted in the garden of the Lord; and He comes to us seeking the fruit He has a right to expect. His eye is upon each of us; He reads our hearts and understands our lives. This is a solemn search, for it has reference to duty and to destiny; and with what interest is it prosecuted. Let each of those to whom are committed sacred trusts inquire: “How do I meet the inspecting eye of God? Is my heart cleansed from its defilement? or have its temple courts become so desecrated, so occupied with buyers and sellers, that Christ finds no room?”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 423

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but men who have moral independence and will move forward in the fear of the Lord. They will be kind, noble, courteous; yet they will not be swayed from the right path, but will proclaim the truth in righteousness whether men will hear or whether they will forbear” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 263).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is considered conservative. Maybe it’s because jewelry is rarely seen in our communities—at least in most places. Maybe it’s because we don’t eat meat—at least some don’t. Maybe it’s because we keep the seventh-day Sabbath—I hope this never changes. However, it saddens me when these are the only things people know about us.

I like to be considered a conservative. Conservative in the way I live my life, the way I have a healthy lifestyle, the way I’m respectful of the rights of others, the way I obey the rules and laws of our society.

I also like to be considered a liberal. Liberal in the way I’m willing to serve others, the way I’m understanding when others err, the way I use friendly and kind words and actions, the way I participate in my church’s activities, the way I reach out to my neighbors and my community, the way I’m willing to see both sides of a situation, the way I contribute generously to the support of the ministry and my church, the way I’m not prompt to judge the behavior (and the outfits!) of others. Liberal—not intolerant.

So, was Jesus a liberal or a conservative? I think the answer is Yes. And I want to be like Him.

Whether we are liberal, conservative, anything in between, or both at the same time, our attitude toward one another must be monitored closely. A Christ-like attitude is much more important than the slant of the particular views we may have.

Inflexible positions tend to separate us. A Christ-like attitude does the opposite, and together we are better.
Behold the Lion!

BY RAY TETZ
“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book” (Revelation 5:4–5, KJV).

In the old story of the blind men and the elephant, six different descriptions of an elephant result from a blind examination of different parts of the largest beast of the jungle. Is the elephant like a tree? A snake? A wall? A spear? The elephant is all of these, but none of the descriptions are fully adequate.

But this is not the case with a lion. There is no confusion about a lion. Only a lion can produce the lion’s earth-shaking roar! Only a lion has a lion’s great shaggy mane. Only a lion has a lion’s great consuming jaws. Only a lion gazes with such confidence through those piercing eyes. The footprint is unmistakable, the speed and power unparalleled, the stateliness and majesty unchallenged. Even the tuft of fur on the tip of the great feline’s tail can only be attributed to the lion.

Ecce Panthera leo: Behold the Lion!

One of the most striking and powerful names for Jesus is that of the “Lion of Judah,” a messianic title that is rooted in the book of Genesis and can be found throughout the scriptures. It is in the book of Revelation that we find its most powerful expression, as the revelator sketches the scene in which only one, only the great Lion of Judah, has won the right to open the scroll that contains the story of the resolution of the great controversy between good and evil that has wrecked the world throughout history.

Only Jesus, the redemptive Christ, is able defend and protect those who have chosen to live in His grace. Only the slain Lamb of God, victim of Satan’s most wrathful behavior but now risen in the power of righteousness, can stand with confidence and power and bring about the deliverance of God’s people and the abolition of sin and evil forever.

Behold the Lion!

As this scene is unfolding, John describes himself as weeping—uncontrollably: “I wept and wept because no one was found who was
worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep!’” (Revelation 5:4-5, NIV).

Why are the people of God weeping? What do these tears represent? Scholars and theologians may debate the question endlessly, but it seems like those tears are representative of all the sorrow and sadness attendant in this sinful world.

They are the tears that Eve and Adam shed as they buried their son Abel after they were banished from the garden. They are the tears that wracked the family of Noah as they realized they were the only family left on earth. They are the tears of Rachel and Hagar and every woman who mourns the loss of a child, and the tears of the people of Israel enslaved in Egypt. They are the tears of those crushed by disappointment and despair, the tears of those who suffered unspeakable losses to disease or famine or war or cruelty. They are the tears of the human family, cried out across the centuries—tears incapable of washing evil and injustice and sorrow away.

“Do not weep!” the elder says. “Behold the Lion!” Behold the power and grace of God, exemplified in the person of Jesus Christ, who comes in strength and majesty, who comes to protect and to save, who comes to destroy that which separates humanity from the matchless and eternal love of God. Behold!

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, KJV).

“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10, KJV).

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, NKJV).

“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27, KJV).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1, KJV).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20, KJV).

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that
keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book”(Revelation 22:7, KJV).

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51, KJV).

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43:19, KJV).

In text after text, we see the guiding grace of God. We see the evidence of the guidance and direction of our salvation, under the masterful control of the Lion of Judah. We understand that the leadership of our Lord Jesus has never flinched, never faltered, and will not fail.

Commenting on this great scene, Ellen White paints an extraordinary picture of the fulfillment of God’s plan to save humanity:

“John saw the mercy, the tenderness, and the love of God blending with His holiness, justice, and power. He saw sinners finding a Father in Him of whom their sins had made them afraid....

“The Saviour is presented before John under the symbols of ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah’ and of ‘a Lamb as it had been slain.’ These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love. The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful.... The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal. Everyone who is faithful will be saved....

“In comparison with the millions of the world, God’s people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipo tence. God is always a majority” (Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 589-590).

Behold the Lion! May our hearts and hopes be fixed on Jesus—in whom we live and move and have our being. Author of our salvation, keeper of our greatest hopes, finisher of our faith, and strong to save.

Ray Tetz is the director of communication and community engagement of the Pacific Union Conference.

Profiles on Leadership

Show Unbending Integrity—An honest man, according to Christ’s measurement, is one who will manifest unbending integrity.

Deceitful weights and false balances, with which many seek to advance their interests in the world, are abomination in the sight of God. Yet many who profess to keep the commandments of God are dealing with false weights and false balances... His principles are built upon the sure foundation, and his conduct in worldly matters is a transcript of his principles. Firm integrity shines forth as gold amid the dross and rubbish of the world. Deceit, falsehood, and unfaithfulness may be glossed over and hidden from the eyes of man, but not from the eyes of God—Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 310
Finding Their Home in the West

BY ALBERTO VALENZUELA

Ellen White’s role in the West began before she ever visited! In 1868, before evangelists J.N. Loughborough and D.T. Bordeau had even boarded their ship for San Francisco, Ellen White had a vision in Battle Creek as to how to work in California. In a letter that was received by Loughborough and Bordeau soon after they arrived, she explained that methods used in the East would not be appropriate in the West. She urged a spirit of liberality, of being open and generous, telling them not to be penny-pinching. Following this advice, they were successful, both in terms of converts and also in the sale of literature.

In another example of “California liberality,” the new church at Santa Rosa sent $2,000 to Battle Creek for a mutual obligation fund, along with an invitation for James and Ellen White to spend the winter of 1872-73 in California.

The Whites accepted and traveled to Oakland, California, arriving in September 1872. Then they moved on to meet with J.N. Loughborough in Santa Rosa. James wrote, “We like the people of California, and the country, and think it will be favorable to our health.”

After speaking at camp meetings and other events, and helping with the organization of the California Conference, they headed back to Battle Creek. However, the Whites liked California so much that they were back again in December of the following year. This time, however, they wanted something more permanent, and they sent helpers ahead to set up home for them in Santa Rosa. They bought a team of horses and a carriage. They got busy with their writing.

James and Ellen were convinced to make Oakland the center for the work in California. The forerunner of the Pacific Press was set up there, and Signs of the Times began publishing. In fact, the Whites sold everything they had in the East to make this investment possible. It’s almost as if the
work needed to be reinvented in the West—with publishing being the first institution started.

However due to the demands from the East, Ellen decided to go back. James’ health prevented him accompanying her, though he joined her later. But they returned to their home in California for the winter. This pattern repeated frequently in the following years—they clearly felt torn about responsibilities “back east,” but their hearts and home were in California.

Tragedy struck in August 1881 with the death of James in Battle Creek. Soon afterwards, Ellen left for Colorado, and then for Oakland. In 1882 she bought a new home in Healdsburg. In 1885 she moved to Europe for two years. In 1891 she sold her Healdsburg home after accepting the brethren’s request that she go to Australia, though she commented that she saw “no light” in this.

There was no question in her mind that California would be her home when she returned from Australia in August 1900. She purchased her last home, Elmhaven, in St. Helena, where she would live for 15 years.

Ellen was coming home to the West. It seems that this was the place she wanted to be. Of course there were issues of climate and her health. Yes, there were the benefits of good fruit and vegetables, as she makes clear. But most of all it seems her heart was here, even though she had the whole work on her mind.

In fact, she had to face many of the issues of the East. She had to write strong letters to the brethren, opposing their mindset. She cautioned them against interfering in the West. She told them “hands off” the Pacific Press. She complained about the rise of “kingly power” in Battle Creek. She warned about the policies being adopted by the institutions there.

Perhaps in reaction to this, she urgently supported the purchase of Loma Linda in 1905 and fought for the independence of the Pacific Press. She was much involved in the purchase of Pacific Union College in 1909. She saw the church making great progress in the West, and she gave her wholehearted support. She had issues with GC decisions at times, and she wrote letters of counsel to many of the brethren, including the General Conference presidents.

She wrote strongly and plainly: “For long years prejudice had existed with those at Battle Creek without cause against the laborers on the Pacific coast.” “Attend to your own work faithfully, and take your hands off that which the Lord has appointed for the Pacific Coast.”

To George I. Butler, General Conference president: “The Lord has presented some things before me in regard to the prejudice and jealousy which has existed in your mind, and which you have communicated to others both by hints and in plainly expressed words, showing that you were not seeking to promote harmony and unity with the workers upon the Pacific coast.”

In the end, the West had the means to support the East. Ellen endorsed this reversal of fortunes, writing, “The truth is to go forth as a lamp that burneth in the cities of the East. The stronger conferences of the Middle West and of the Pacific Coast now have the privilege of advancing the cause of God in that portion of the field where the third angel’s message was first proclaimed.”

For much of the rest of her time in Elmhaven, that’s exactly what Ellen did—at home in the West.


Alberto Valenzuela is the associate director of communication and community engagement of the Pacific Union Conference.
A fascinating kaleidoscope of artistry fills a hallway of Adventist Health Vallejo as Lauren Chester invites teenagers to transform ordinary wooden doors into murals. Doors leading into patient rooms provide a blank canvas for self-expression. This creative process is helping adolescents cope with behavioral symptoms, develop self-awareness, and improve skills to help manage traumatic life experiences.

The concept of creating murals to elevate the human spirit is familiar to the Atlanta native, who recalls painting a mural on a fence in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, showcasing a beacon of hope rising from destruction. She also created a mural at a hearing-impaired school in Kazakhstan that was designed to bring joy in the midst of chaos. But working with Adventist Health Vallejo as a volunteer artist in residence is the first time Chester has used her talents to work with teenagers.

“This process of helping patients create murals inside a hospital has been very meaningful,” noted Chester, who has been a conduit for their ideas. “Their concepts inspired my own creativity.”

The goal of art therapy is to utilize the creative process to help people explore self-expression and find new coping skills. Through elements like color, shapes, subjects, and scale, patients might uncover conflicts that impact their behaviors.

As a creative art therapist, Chester is promoting health by encouraging teens to actively participate in their journey of healing. Art becomes a tool for insight and discovery. Therapists noticed that boys and girls demonstrated a sense of ownership and pride as a result of their artistic expressions. The process of painting helped some set better boundaries with their personal space. Others found a sense of calm and an ability to relinquish anxiety by watching patients create their murals on doors.

“A patient told me she returned home and began painting as a coping skill after having experienced the mural painting in the adolescent unit at the hospital,” said Chester. “This project allowed me opportunities to listen to the teenagers express their hopes, fears, anxieties, pain, and dreams. Patients open up to me more while engaging in artistic projects. Their art speaks volumes.”

“Patients come to us with their spirits battered and broken,” said Nelu Nedelea, director of mission integration at Adventist Health Vallejo. “This project has been an outlet to help patients find an open door to address their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. Chester’s creative efforts have sparked joy among patients, visitors, and associates who are reminded that creativity is a form of healing.”
Making a Difference—Locally and Globally

By Tanna MW Allison

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love” (Galatians 5:13, NIV).

The students and staff of Thunderbird Adventist Academy embrace service throughout the year and participate in various community service activities. January 2020 was a month filled with outreach for TAA—giving back to the local community and beyond.

The campus citrus orchard, with over 40 grapefruit and orange trees, is a blessing to have in the desert of Arizona. When the fruit is ripe, students are often seen walking by the orchard during a break, picking a piece of fruit and eating it. One Sabbath afternoon, Campus Ministries Director Zachary Surovec coordinated students to pick citrus from the orchard, which was then taken to the local St. Mary’s Food Bank. The fresh fruit was distributed to those in the surrounding community who utilize the services of the food bank.

The month wrapped up with TAA’s dorm students and deans participating in their annual community service trip to California. This year they traveled to serve the San Bernardino area. The first stop was to fill over 75 bags with non-perishable items and fresh fruit and vegetables at the Helping Hands Community Center. The overflowing food bags, along with 50 hygiene kits and 150 pairs of socks, were then handed out to the homeless the next day at Socombe Lake Park.

While the dorm students were serving in California, the rest of the school headed to the local Feed My Starving Children center—a Christian non-profit organization with centers across the nation that coordinate the packaging and distribution of food to people in developing nations. On the day TAA volunteered, Manna Packs of vitamins, soy, protein, and rice were assembled. The Manna Packs were then sealed and boxed for shipment to Thailand. Sophomore Priscilla Carreto said, “It was fun! Seeing the impact of our work at the end of the day was cool.” Together with other community volunteers, the students packed 222 boxes, providing 47,952 meals. These meals will feed 131 children for an entire year.

These small acts of love are just a few examples of how the Thunderbird Adventist Academy family serves as the hands and feet of Jesus in action throughout the year.
In 2009, the Arizona Conference, with creative evangelism help from the Pacific Union Conference, set out on a new journey with a unique media ministry. Good News TV was born, and two brand new local TV channels, one English and one Spanish, started broadcasting Adventist programming 24 hours a day in Phoenix.

A unique facet of the ministry is that instead of creating programming, which is readily available from various Adventist ministries, the majority of its attention and limited resources are used to localize the channel to attract the viewer to our churches. Examples include a local phone number, local promotions for community outreach events, local worship services, and a banner that displays intermittently during programs inviting viewers to our churches. Viewers learn about Jesus’ love and His plan for their life through the programming, and then they connect with a local church family.

The ministry has expanded over the last 11 years, starting to broadcast in Payson, Prescott, Flagstaff, and Yuma in 2014; then in 2017 in Tucson, the second largest metro area of Arizona; and most recently in the Verde Valley in 2018. In addition, GNTV streams on their website and through Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, and YouTube. Interestingly, over this same period of time since the ministry started, the number of antenna viewers has doubled, as frugal homeowners are cutting the cable to cut costs.

This ministry has been effective in reaching Arizona, resulting in many baptisms into our local churches. Here are some examples of what viewers tell us:

In Prescott, Del and his wife requested our free offer for The Desire of Ages. “Good News TV is the only channel we watch anymore.” They also said they plan to start coming to church soon.

Trena and husband from Flagstaff called to ask us for help in starting to pay tithe. We helped them submit their first tithe to the Arizona Conference, before they visited an Adventist church. They told us they want to start worshiping on Sabbath.

Desiree from Tucson requested free Bible studies. “I can’t wait to get them.”

Ron from Phoenix, who is homebound, said, “Good News TV is my church.”

Jebeth from Youngtown: “I love the channel and watch it all day long!”

Milagros, a Spanish Pentecostal pastor from Phoenix, shared that the GNTV Latino channel “is helping all of us to be nourished, both physically and spiritually, as we learn to live God’s way. I learned, for example, how to prepare healthy, plant-based meals,” which she declared corrected her bad digestive problems and returned her triglycerides and cholesterol to normal. Milagros was baptized at a recent series presented by Robert Costa of Escrito Esta.

“We believe that Good News TV has the potential for being effective in other communities, just as in Arizona,” said Luke Skelton, ministry director, “and we are always open to helping a new group begin this or a similar ministry to reach their community.”

In 2010, the ministry worked with a team who started GNTV in Dallas, and they are currently working with teams in Atlanta and Denver to do likewise. “But,” Skelton explained, “we have always wanted to help a community closer to home in the Pacific Union.” Pacific Union ASI has contributed seed funds toward startup costs to accomplish exactly that, and GNTV has since invested in equipment and architecture enhancements to prepare to make this happen in another metropolitan area of the Pacific Union.

Do you see yourself involved in helping to start Good News TV in your community? To learn more about them, visit www.MyGoodNewsTV.com and go to www.YouTube.com/GoodNewsTVAZ to watch powerful viewer testimonies, productions, and local promotions.

Contact Good News TV at 480-264-1116 to learn more.
Recognition for First Cohort Completing 
Master of Theological Studies Program 

By Deloris Trujillo 

A fter accepting the challenging opportunity to “study to shew thyself approved unto God” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV), 22 pastors and teachers in the Central California Conference (CCC) recently celebrated an exciting educational journey.

In June 2016, CCC pastors embarked on a first of its kind academic program by enrolling in a Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program from the Graduate Division of the HMS Richards Divinity School at La Sierra University (LSU). Because of the collaboration between CCC, LSU, and the Pacific Union Conference, tuition was free for the students. The program also offered the convenience of two-week class sessions held at CCC’s headquarters. There were 12 required theological courses (plus Greek and Hebrew, if not taken previously), and one class even included a tour of Israel. All professors have earned doctorates, and the divinity school holds dual accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). CCC is also accredited by the Association of Theological Schools as a host site for La Sierra University.

Four years later, this opportunity of a lifetime became a reality when the candidates were acknowledged at a special consecration ceremony held on Dec. 14, 2019, at the Clovis church. Although the students will have to wait until spring for the conferring of their degrees from LSU, they can be recognized now for their perseverance and diligence on their path to becoming faithful scholars and disciples.

Although it was cost effective for CCC to have the pastors and educators obtain their MTS in this way, it was much more than that. Elder Ramiro Cano, CCC president, noted that not only was it a “true historical event for the conference,” they “have now laid a path for others to follow. For that we express our deep appreciation.” Nathan Renner, pastor of the Discovery Life Church in Sonora and one of the students, expressed how grateful he was to God and to all those who made it achievable. “Their support made it possible for me to earn my Master’s degree when I doubted I would ever have the opportunity. Their generosity has given me a beautiful glimpse into the grace of our Lord.”
Elaine Posthumus, a Bible teacher at Monterey Bay Academy, testified that one miracle after another allowed her to be part of the program. Her heartfelt response was, “I cannot say being a part of the MTS cohort program was a dream come true. It was much more! God genuinely exceeded my dreams and the expectations of my prayer requests.”

Students and teachers alike noted the camaraderie and fellowship they experienced together as colleagues. Dr. Friedbert Ninow, dean of the divinity school, who taught several of the classes and guided two of the Israel tours, said, “Seeing the growth of these students during the course of the program, the bonding among their peers, the sometimes enthusiastic and spirited discussions, the reflections and communal devotions, the sheer joy of mining God’s Word and exploring new insights have made this journey a successful one. God was in it!”

Special recognition was given to Dr. V. Bailey Gillespie, who was the associate dean of the divinity school when the program began. Even though his untimely passing did not allow him to see the results of his vision, students and staff mentioned the impact and impression he made on them. Not only did he impart wisdom and knowledge, he also demonstrated his passion and love for his God and those around him.

Dr. Pierre Steenberg, CCC Evangelism/Ministerial director, helped to organize the program and served as the extension campus administrator. Steenberg was a driving force in launching the program, spending countless hours in preparation, research, and coordination. After teaching several courses, Steenberg remarked, “Our pastors are being blessed with the opportunity to become even better equipped to serve God and His church.”

“This cohort saved the conference thousands of dollars while enabling its ministers to stay within their local congregations to continue studying and serving,” says Vice President for Communication Cindy Chamberlin-Eastwood. “It was also a first of its kind partnership between this conference and the university.”

At the consecration ceremony, with gratitude for all that had been accomplished, Elder Cano commented, “With their classes now complete, with their textbooks now closed, and their tests and papers successfully graded, we now pray that the enhancement of their intellect and deeper knowledge of the Almighty will translate in better reflecting Christ and transforming communities for the kingdom.”

This group of scholars certainly discovered what Ellen G. White counseled: “The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort” (Selected Messages, Book 1, p. 20). May that thought inspire the next group of pastors and educators when the second cohort embarks this year to earn their MTS degrees.
For almost four years, the Olive East church in Merced, Calif., has been running an energetic mission support program: ZEST. Any church member can bring a charity or ministry idea to the program’s coordinator, Loren Heckerott. Once the idea is approved, that member is given time during the church service to raise funds for their project.

I first met Loren by phone in 2016. The program had just started and Loren and his church had raised enough money to sponsor 104 surgeries for It Is Written’s Eyes for India program. “No doubt about it,” Loren shared, “the idea of giving someone eyesight for just $75 dollars is a world class opportunity.”

I could tell Loren was passionate about making a difference and excited to see his church get behind the program. But, I didn’t realize what would happen next. They took on new projects, one after another. The projects actually turned into witnessing opportunities and family members and friends of church members were excited to participate.

This excitement was a byproduct of the church members’ passion. “It is a wonderful thing to see the sacrifice of the church family as they step up financially project after project,” Loren shared. “Several have told me that the ZEST report is their favorite part of the weekly church service.” The church has held two campaigns for Eyes

Loren Heckerott Zest, Olive East Merced church member, has been leading ZEST, an initiative that earns money for special projects, for almost four years. He is quick to provide leadership on special projects and vision, including It is Written’s Eyes for India project.
for India, and one for It Is Written's Mission: Mongolia program; as well as campaigns for mission projects in Madagascar, Mexico, Ethiopia, Peru, Brazil, the Philippines, Indonesia, Bhutan, Bolivia, and several local projects.

The congregation hasn’t used traditional methods like dinners or sales to raise funds, but they have motivated each other. Several church members have offered matching gifts, while other people have pledged portions of their personal sales. “One person was selling their bicycle collection,” Loren recalled, “and pledged $75 for each bicycle sold.”

The church’s zest has spread to their Spanish congregation also worshiping at the Olive East church. “Since the inception of the ZEST program,” Loren explained, “I have made presentations to them each week with the help of a translator. This has resulted in many new friendships and fosters unity as we work together project after project.”

In January 2019, Loren and his church family began a second campaign for Eyes for India. As a result, they funded 107 eye surgeries. Loren called me just as the church’s treasurer was cutting the check. “My fellow church members, Greg and Renee, are going to be in the Chattanooga, Tenn., area in a couple weeks,” Loren told me. “Could they meet you and deliver the check in person?” We set up the meeting.

A few weeks later I drove to the new It Is Written headquarters site in Collegedale, Tenn., and met Greg and Renee. We put on hard hats and walked through the building and discussed the ministry that would soon be taking place in that space. Then, our conversation turned to what this church had been doing faithfully for almost four years. As they handed me the church’s most recent check for Eyes for India, I felt like their ministry impact equaled anything done in the building behind me. It wasn’t a big church, but they were making a huge impact.

As we parted, I asked Renee and Greg about their impression of the ZEST program. “It has opened the eyes of our church family,” Renee replied, “and allowed us to experience the joy of helping others. It has been a spiritually invigorating experience.”

Later, as I filled Loren in on my meeting, I asked what kept him energized. “Leading out in this program has provided purpose for my life,” Loren replied. “It is what gets me up on Sabbath morning because I can’t wait to share a new project or update with the congregation.”

This article first appeared as a Partnership Highlight in the Fall 2019 issue of It Is Written’s Impressions magazine. Photos and texts are reprinted here and used with expressed written permission of It is Written and the subjects.
Hawaiian Mission Academy Ka Lama Iki and Hawaiian Mission Academy Windward Campus kicked off the New Year with their annual Jog-a-thon fun run. The two HMA campuses joined forces to make possible the biggest fundraiser of the year. For two hours on January 19, more than 200 students, parents, siblings, and friends ran, walked, hopped, and even danced around the track. It was a fun run indeed—a fun day all around.

Each year, all classes prepare for this event in advance. Jog-a-thon preparations are included in physical education classes, of course, but math classes are also involved in collecting donations and pledges. Community outreach is also a big part of the preparation. Jog-a-thon takes place every year on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend and brings the campuses together for three main goals: wellness, teamwork, and fundraising.

Wellness
HMA Ka Lama Iki and HMA Windward understand the value of not simply focusing on testing and improving target educational goals all year. There is great significance in educating the whole student—promoting physical fitness, mental health, and spiritual wellbeing. It is also important to cut down on screen time.

Teamwork
Uniting the partnership of Oahu’s Adventist schools is among the top priorities this year for principals at all four Oahu SDA schools. On the day of Jog-a-thon, the elementary schools were thrilled to have the HMA high school girls varsity basketball team, coaches, and school principal join them to support the younger students through two hours of constant exercise.

Fundraising
“With such small school settings, the need for funds is a constant concern,” shared Sarah Traczyk, principal at HMA Ka Lama Iki. “Jog-a-thon provides us with the opportunity to join forces—join together with ohana—and just have a great morning running and chatting with community, parents, and friends.” Improving technology on campus and rebooting school clubs like the robotics club and coding club are vital to the transformation that is helping HMA campuses incorporate STEM into classrooms. Technology is not simply laptops and tablets—it also means having the resources available for sponsoring clubs, producing hands-on lessons, and connecting students’ learning to real-life career choices.

Jog-a-thon will continue to undergo positive changes to best meet the ever-changing needs of the schools and students. Ideas for color runs—where runners are doused in colored powder after each kilometer—and other outside relays are in the works for next year’s big event.
At 5:30 a.m., before the winter morning had even begun to dawn, the campus was already stirring to life. It was Rec Day for the students at Holbrook Indian School (HIS)—one of the highlights of the school year.

This year there were three different field trips for the students to choose from. One group went to Bearizona, a safari park. Another group signed up to go bowling and ice skating. The third group went skiing and snowboarding.

The first group of students loaded up early and headed for Sunrise Park Resort on the Fort Apache Reservation, where skis and snowboards awaited them. The excitement was palpable as the bus drove off campus. A few hours later, the safari park and bowling/skating groups were ready to go. The buses pulled out of the driveway and Rec Day began.

The two-hour drive to the safari park in Williams, Arizona, seemed to take forever. Finally, Bearizona came into view and the students got ready for the drive-through safari. Phone cameras clicked as bison ambled across the road. Up next were the wolves, who surrounded the bus and sniffed the tires. Finally, the wolves wandered off and the safari could continue. The fuzzy, cuddly-looking black bears were among the kids’ favorite animals.

When the safari came to an end, everyone headed to the...
exhibits to see more animals. There were red foxes, porcupines, raccoons, bobcats, and even jaguars! The snow was piled up by the trails and the wind was blowing. However, that did not dampen the spirits of the visitors.

Meanwhile, the students on the ski trip were also having fun. While the more experienced students skied down slopes of varying difficulty, the younger ones received skiing and snowboarding lessons. A lot of laughs ensued as first-time skiers and snowboarders bumbled their way through the lessons. As the day progressed, so did their skills; there were fewer falls and more successful attempts. Finally, they were cleared for the real slopes!

As the day drew to a close, each group had supper and settled in for the long drive back to Holbrook. Rec Day had been a resounding success. Every student went to bed that night with a host of unforgettable memories and friendships that were stronger than before.

Rec Day is an important event on the school calendar. The field trips give the students a chance to experience adventures they’ve never had before. Many times, Rec Day is the only chance a student will have to do something like skiing or bowling. This year a generous donor helped to cover the cost of Rec Day so the students could have this opportunity.

Having the opportunity to explore outside of the classroom also helps the students experience the joy of learning. While it is our teachers’ primary goal to introduce the students to Jesus, we want them to enjoy school and learning new things. It takes a great deal of planning and effort, but Rec Day is one of the ways to do that.

M.A.P.S. is a vital part of the NEW You Initiative at Holbrook Indian School. We want to help our students grow Mentally, Artistically/Academically, Physically, and Spiritually. Rec Day field trips are one of the ways we help our students grow physically. Thank you so much for your support in providing a safe and nurturing environment for the students of HIS.

Without Rec Day, many students at HIS would never have the opportunity to experience adventures like bowling, skiing, or snowboarding. Rec Day field trips are one of the ways we help our students experience the joy of learning.
Students Step Outside Comfort Zones to Lift up Guatemala’s Poor

By Darla Martin Tucker

T he La Sierra University students began planning several months in advance for their 2,720-mile mission trip to Guatemala, collecting dozens of pairs of shoes, hundreds of stuffed toys, and other items for distribution to orphans, seniors, hospital patients, and families in need. Their eight-day trek around the country to aid others through donations, health care assistance, and other outreach activities would require sleeping bags as beds each night and big steps outside of their comfort zones.

On the evening of Dec. 12, 2019, a group of 18 La Sierra students, two biology faculty members, and a faculty member’s spouse departed Los Angeles International Airport for Guatemala City as participants in the Pre-Medical Society’s annual humanitarian outreach to the Central American country. The society, a student club for those studying various health sciences, has been traveling to Guatemala each Christmas break since 2004, led by Eugene Joseph, associate professor of anatomical sciences in La Sierra’s Department of Biology.

The objective of the mission trips is multi-faceted, Joseph said. It involves offering humanitarian aid to the children and families of Guatemala, including assisting local Adventist doctors, dentists, and health care providers in the delivery of medical and dental care. It also encompasses “[providing] our pre-medical, pre-dental, and pre-allied health students with the opportunity to serve and appreciate the value of helping others in an altruistic humanitarian context, [and inspiring] our students to return to Guatemala or other mission fields,” he said. Their work in Guatemala also provides an opportunity to “identify and encourage promising Adventist Guatemalan youth to receive college and professional degrees so that they can help their country to rise above some of the existing situations of poverty,” he said.

This year’s student group was the second largest in the 16 years the society has been making aid pilgrimages south of the U.S. border. The students took along 12 suitcases filled with 60 pairs of donated shoes, 100 handmade Christmas cards, candy, and 540 stuffed animal toys, which long-time La Sierra supporter
and former academic advising director Iris Landa helped collect. Landa has secured donations of stuffed toys for the club’s annual outreach for more than a decade. Approximately 60 more stuffed toys were donated by La Sierra alum Ariel Lynch and her family.

The La Sierra group’s journeys involved visits to various towns and churches, an orphanage, two hospitals, and a community medical clinic. Their activities ranged from distributing the donated shoes and stuffed animals, leading out in kids’ crafts and games, assisting medical and dental personnel, and volunteering at a Ronald McDonald House to painting houses, building chicken coops, and vaccinating livestock.

“Everyone was blessed by the impact we made on the people,” said Jaymie Gacula, a senior biomedical sciences/pre-medicine major with plans for medical school. She serves as the society’s vice president and activities coordinator. Her many responsibilities included ensuring the students had enough supplies on hand for crafts, games, and other functions, and coordinating with the society leadership in overseeing care of the group and its funds. “I was worried about things being prepared for each day, having to go out and buy supplies,” Gacula said. “Once I asked God to help me realize that I was there to serve and show people His love, I felt joyful. The tiredness at the end of every day could not compare to the happiness in serving others.”

The December mission trek was the third for Pre-medical Society President Taryn Batin, a senior neuroscience major who plans to enter a medical career. Her broad responsibilities included communicating with trip supervisors and Guatemalan hosts in executing activity plans, organizing shopping lists, cooking and cleaning tasks, and itineraries. She was personally impacted by her interaction with the people of Guatemala and through witnessing their deep appreciation for the group’s efforts at bringing some comfort into their lives. “Seeing the gratitude of the people, despite their poor living conditions, allowed my faith to grow on a humanitarian level,” Batin said. “Being Jesus’ hands and feet might require stepping outside of your comfort zone, but seemingly little acts of service can mean everything to the people there.”

For more on this story, visit www.lasierra.edu. To learn more about La Sierra University’s biology programs, visit https://lasierra.edu/biology/.
Mental Health Maintenance: Have You had a Check-up?

A mental health check-up should be as common as a physical check-up.

By Janelle Ringer

Most people know they should go to their primary care doctor once a year for a check-up. The annual visit can be a great time to address how you're maintaining your physical health, help you avoid illness, and take the best care of your body.

Yet, with a greater focus on physical health and preventative healthcare, a gap remains in how we care for one key part of the body: the brain.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health, approximately 1 in 5 Americans experience a mental illness or disorder each year. “Mental health issues can both stem from and create physical health issues,” says Jennifer Weniger, PhD, a licensed psychologist and marriage and family therapist at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center. “We sometimes forget that the brain is a vital part of our bodies, and preventative care can protect both.”

Weniger suggests yearly or biyearly screening for mental health problems as a crucial branch of preventative care. “Our brains should get the same care as our vision and our dental health, and catching a mental health issue early can save the expense of more serious long-term mental health treatments.”

She also notes that mental health providers often see patients when their disorder is so debilitating that they can no longer function. “Mental health check-ups can identify symptoms such as stress, feelings of sadness or hopelessness, or physical symptoms that can occur after a stressful life event,” Weniger says. “A mental health provider, such as a licensed counselor or a psychologist, can help you process big changes.”

Weniger suggests checking in with a professional after a significant life event. “A check-up can catch something before it snowballs and becomes debilitating,” she says.

Access to mental health care is sometimes limited, and insurance companies won’t always cover the needed costs, so Weniger says your primary care physician may be a good place to start. “They are trained professionals and can refer you to the best person if they feel you could benefit from additional support,” she says.

Being open about your mental health with your provider may seem scary, but it can be a great way to actively combat the stigma around mental illness. “The stigma placed on mental illness has contributed to mental health assessments being left out for too many years, and this needs to change,” Weniger says. “These life-saving preventative medicine assessments need to become part of mainstream preventative care.”

If you find that your mental health is taking up a large part of your primary care visit, consider scheduling an additional appointment dedicated solely to your mental health.

“We need to get more comfortable talking about mental health with both our peers and our providers,” Weniger says. “Yearly mental health assessments could open up more conversations around mental illness.”
Walnuts May Slow Cognitive Decline in At-risk Elderly

BY ANSEL OLIVER

Eating walnuts may help slow cognitive decline in at-risk groups of the elderly population, according to a study conducted by researchers in California and Spain.

The Walnuts and Healthy Aging Study, published earlier this year in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found that walnut consumption by healthy elderly adults had little effect on cognitive function over two years, but it had a greater effect on elderly adults who had smoked more and had lower baseline neuropsychological test scores.

The study examined nearly 640 free-living elders in Loma Linda, California, and in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. For two years, the test group included walnuts in their daily diet and the control group abstained from walnuts.

Walnuts contain omega-3 fatty acids and polyphenols, which have previously been found to counteract oxidative stress and inflammation, both of which are drivers of cognitive decline.

Joan Sabaté, MD, DrPH, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Loma Linda University School of Public Health and the study’s principal investigator, said this was the largest and most well-controlled trial ever conducted on the effects of nuts on cognition.

“While this was a minor result, it could lead to better outcomes when conducted over longer periods of time,” Sabaté said. “Further investigation is definitely warranted based on our findings, especially for disadvantaged populations, who may have the most to gain from incorporating walnuts and other nuts into their diet.”

Sabaté and his research team at Loma Linda University were the first to discover the effect of nut consumption—specifically walnuts—on lowering blood cholesterol. Findings were first published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1993. Subsequently, findings from Loma Linda University researchers have linked nut consumption to lower risk of cardiovascular diseases.

The Walnuts and Healthy Aging Study was funded by a grant from the California Walnut Commission, which had no input in the study design, data collection, analyses, or writing and submission of the manuscript.

Joan Sabaté, MD, DrPH, was principal investigator of the Walnuts and Healthy Aging Study.
Rabbit Reading

By Nancy Schafner

Every time Nancy Schafner drives to Summit Christian Academy (SCA), she sees its large digital sign with the words “Learn, Love, Inspire” scrolling across the screen. After parking and retrieving her precious cargo from her car, she goes inside, where she is warmly greeted by the school administrator, Pam Mertz. After climbing a half flight of stairs and crossing the hallway to the library, she prepares for the joyful students to join her for Rabbit Reading.

While getting her bunny situated for the day, she thinks to herself, “Yes, SCA is a place where students learn—and learn to love learning.” This school offers creative environments that make learning fun. As a result, students love to learn; because they love learning, their joy inspires others.

Teachers at SCA are frequently involved in educational projects outside the classroom “box.” Because of this, Schafner is able to take her bunnies to the school to read with the third and fourth graders. When the idea of having students read to a rabbit was presented to head teacher Cindy McCaw, she quickly embraced the idea.

The students practice their oral reading skills while reading aloud to Schafner and one of her bunnies. By holding and reading to the bunnies each week, students learn an appreciation for God’s little creatures. The Bible encourages us to take care of the animals. In the creation story, God asked Adam to name the animals and take care of them.

As a parent wouldn’t you want to send your child to a school where many different approaches to learning are utilized? There are four major styles of learning: auditory, kinesthetic, reading/writing, and visual. Studies reveal that the most common way of learning is kinesthetic, followed by visual. Kinesthetic learners prefer using their hands, body, and sense of touch.

Tapping into kinesthetic learning, students are encouraged to use their hands and sense of touch by petting and grooming the rabbit during their oral reading time in the library. Before going back to their classroom, they have the opportunity to hold the rabbit in their lap for more petting and grooming time.

When asked what they like best about reading to the bunnies, varied responses were given. Fourth grader Gia said she likes how they feel and likes petting them. Simon Sakata, a third grader, said, “I think they are listening to me.” Diego told Schafner that he had never seen a real bunny before. Aly said she likes how soft they are and that she enjoys brushing them. Jay’s answer delves into the reason animals often provide excellent stress reduction therapy. He said, “Bunnies are quiet. They make me feel good. I like it calm and peaceful.”

Job 12:7 tells us to ask the animals and they will teach us. The rabbits that visit SCA are doing just what God designed them to do.
Sharing God’s love can taste great! Las Vegas Pathfinders in the Teen Leadership Training (TLT) program organized an ooey, gooey, delicious community outreach project over the winter holidays. Collecting graham crackers, kosher marshmallows, and chocolate bars, they assembled 300 s’mores kits for the St. Jude Ranch for Children, a therapeutic residential treatment program for abused and neglected children in Nevada.

“The TLT program is designed to train and mentor youth in service and leadership skills,” explained Nevada-Utah Conference Teen Leadership Training Coordinator Desiree Tomlinson. “Our TLTs receive training in Pathfinder club management and programming over a four-year period. Community outreach is one of our training tracks, and last year they made emoji pillows for hospice patients. The best part of the program is that our teens are inspired and empowered to apply their training in creative ministry in their local congregation and home communities.”

Eight TLTs—Isabella Alvarez and Elayne Tamano from the Centennial Hills church; Amber Gray, Andrea Damian, and Isaiah Jaimes from the Paradise church; and Elijah Lugo, Ashly Domond, and Faith Flores from the Mountain View church—planned the s’mores outreach project. They calculated the amount of supplies needed, contacted churches to ask for donations, and recruited Pathfinders to assist with assembling the s’mores kits. TLTs Amber Gray and Elayne Tamano served as team leaders and were key to onsite project implementation. “Our TLTs have a heart for service,” said Club Ministries Director for Nevada-Utah Conference, Iso Vernon. “They believe God’s love is so good it must be shared. The staff at St. Jude’s Ranch for Children was touched that our teens cared about their mission of helping abused children and amazed that our teens organized the project from start to finish.”

(Right) Amber Gray, Teen Leadership Trainee from the Las Vegas Paradise Church, begins preparations for the S’mores Project for the St. Jude’s Ranch for Children.

(Far right) Once the s’mores kits were assembled, the quality control team checked all 300 bags to be sure everything was well done and ready for delivery to the St. Jude’s Ranch for Children.

(Left) The packaging of 300 s’mores kits went smoothly due to the capable direction of the Las Vegas TLTs.
On Sunday, Jan. 26, the Northern California Conference (NCC) held a Grand Opening and Dedication for its new headquarters in Roseville. More than 300 people came to welcome the conference, pray for God’s blessing, and tour the renovated offices. Guests also had the opportunity to shop at the Adventist Book Center located in the building.

The new office formerly served as the corporate headquarters for Adventist Health before that organization moved to its newly constructed building. In August, the NCC office moved from Pleasant Hill, where it had been located since 1972.

During the event, NCC President Marc Woodson, along with Executive Secretary Jose Marin and Treasurer John Rasmussen, formally cut the ribbon and welcomed people into the building.

Before offering the prayer of dedication, Pacific Union Conference Executive Secretary Bradford Newton spoke to the group. “We’re not just praying for bricks and mortar,” he said. “We’re praying for what will happen here. We will be praying for the mission of God that is led and deployed through the leadership of the people that are here, through our conference leaders, our pastors, our teachers, our Bible workers, the thousands of volunteers that make the Seventh-day Adventist Church what it is—God’s remnant church in this time in earth’s history.”

Early in the day, California State Assemblyman Kevin Kiley toured the office and presented a certificate of recognition to the conference. Kiley represents the 6th Assembly District,
which includes Placer County, where the headquarters is located.

During the event, Woodson accepted a commendation from the City of Roseville, presented by Roseville City Council Member Scott Alvord on behalf of the mayor of Roseville. Accompanying Alvord were Roseville Police Chief James Maccoun and Roseville City Council Members Pauline Roccucci and Bruce Houdesheldt. “The City of Roseville welcomes the conference office move into our city and the Sacramento region,” Alvord said after the event.

Alvord is a member of the Orangevale church. “The office is now located closer to more church members, and I hope that it will result in more of our members getting involved outside the walls of the churches because the communities can use the positive influence of Christ’s love,” he said.

The day included many other highlights. Pathfinders from the Sacramento Spanish church and the Sacramento Ukrainian company raised the flag. The Sacramento Adventist Academy choir and members of Pacific Union College’s Vox Pro Musica sang a number of songs. Guests enjoyed refreshments and took tours of the building.

The Grand Opening came after months of effort. “Our office team has worked very hard—packing up the old building and settling into the new one, while still keeping up with their professional responsibilities,” said Woodson. “I’m thankful for their dedication and for the patience of all our NCC employees and members as we were in transition. We now look forward to continuing the work of the Lord until He comes.”

The NCC Grand Opening and Dedication features (clockwise from left): choral music, a short program, an Adventist Book Center opening, a flag raising, and a commendation presented to President Marc Woodson (center) by Roseville City Council Member Scott Alvord (second from left), accompanied by Roseville Police Chief James Maccoun (left) and Roseville City Council Members Pauline Roccucci and Bruce Houdesheldt (right).
Georgetown Church
Gets a Makeover

BY JULIE LORENZ

This Christmas the Georgetown congregation received an unexpected and welcome gift. From Dec. 22-26, nearly 40 volunteers refurbished the church property and facility, which is home to a 21-member congregation.

The nonprofit organization Build and Restore International (BRI) organized the project in only two weeks, after a previously scheduled project fell through. Volunteers came from the Chico, Granite Bay, Sacramento Central, Sacramento Slavic, and Vacaville churches, as well as several places outside the NCC. Donations of materials and tools came from all across California, including Ukiah, Redding, Shasta, and Sacramento.

The volunteers saved the church about $26,000 in repairs and maintenance. Young people from the Sacramento Slavic church painted the sanctuary and installed flooring in the hallway and kitchen. Other volunteers sealed cracks, painted, installed new baseboards, and rewired the sanctuary for LED lights. They thoroughly cleaned the church facility and removed 37 dead or dangerous trees from the grounds, reducing the risk of fire. “At one point, we had 10 chainsaws running on the property,” said Ostap Dzyndra, BRI founder and president.

On Christmas Day, some of the volunteers took gift packages—including Steps to Christ, GLOW tracts, and fruit—to about 35 homes in the community as a present from the local Adventist church.

The makeover and the enthusiastic volunteers inspired the Georgetown congregation. “Everything’s beautiful!” said Carol Clarke, who attends the church. “And all the people who worked on the project were really nice.”

Dzyndra hopes that the volunteers’ efforts will inspire the church members to reach out to their community. “The biggest blessing we can share is that the church members now feel proud of their church building,” he said. “They now have a fresh, clean, modern church where they can invite their neighbors and friends.”

BRI has worked on other projects in Northern California, including Redwood Area Camp, the Lincoln Spanish church, and Pacific Union College’s biological field station, Albion. Find out more about the organization: buildandrestore.org.
The Holy Spirit used young people in a mighty way during this year’s Northern California Conference (NCC) Freshman/Sophomore Retreat, held Feb. 7-9 at Leoni Meadows.

Nicknamed “Freshmore,” the annual retreat has a dual purpose—bringing freshmen and sophomore academy and public school students closer to Jesus and providing an opportunity for junior and senior students to lead and mentor their younger peers.

Two days before the retreat, about 55 juniors and seniors came to Leoni Meadows to be trained as small group leaders and worship leaders by NCC youth pastors and Bible teachers.

“They taught us how to get our group to talk,” said Tyler Wilensky, Pleasant Hill Adventist Academy senior, who served as both a small group leader and a worship leader. “Games can be tools to do different things, such as mix up the seating, lead into Bible study, or become a lesson.”

The teens also learned that being part of a praise team is about more than music. “We challenged them to make their worship Christ centered,” said Miguel Verazas, Pleasant Hill church associate pastor. “Don’t make yourself or the people in front of you the focal point. Ask yourself: ‘Where is God in this? What do the words mean to you?’”

By Friday night, the juniors and seniors were ready to welcome about 200 younger students. “Kids who really didn’t know how to lead had become totally focused and engaged leaders,” said Eddie Heinrich, NCC youth director.

The speakers for the weekend were all young people: Lodi Academy junior Emma Little and Pacific Union College sophomores Adan Quezada and Hailey Snyder. “The kids really connected with their messages,” said Heinrich. “The other pastors and I felt that, overall, this weekend was one of the most spiritual experiences we’ve had in all the years we’ve been doing this.”

The pastors encouraged the teens not to let the retreat be an isolated experience. “We tell the students, ‘Now take what you’ve experienced, what you’ve learned, and what the Holy Spirit has done back to your home churches and live it every day,” said Verazas.

The hope is that all the student leaders had as affirming an experience as Wilensky did. “My favorite part of the retreat was the praising singing—standing up there and feeling that I was where I belonged,” he said.
Many college students take advantage of their holiday break as a chance to relax while they’re away from their studies. But then there is Adrienne Weiss.

Weiss is a chemistry major and Maxwell scholar at Pacific Union College with plans to get her Ph.D and become a professor. And her holiday break was a little different than most. She travelled to Peru to serve as the spiritual director on a Maranatha International family project.

The daughter of Kenneth Weiss, Maranatha’s executive vice president, this was Weiss’ 10th trip with the organization but her first in this challenging leadership role.

“I love the family projects most because of the mixing of generations,” said Weiss. “I love being able to help a 6-year-old paint a playground and then have a deep discussion of fulfillment through a career with that child’s grandfather later that afternoon. In planning the spiritual aspect of the project, I attempted to make use of this rich mixture of experiences. During the project itself, I did a few of the worship talks, yet I was always on the lookout for volunteers who would be willing and would have interesting ideas to share with the group.”

She found that a lot of the work she did in Peru actually strengthened what she was studying back home at PUC.

“I think the experience highlighted for me the joy of facilitating learning and experiences for others,” she said. “As I wish to become a professor, this was particularly impactful and further solidified the idea that I really do love enabling people in their learning.”

While most of us spent Christmas Day in comfort with our families, Weiss and the rest of the Maranatha project team spent the day delivering gifts to the children and families of church members living as squatters in the local mountains.

“On the general topic of serving overseas, I can talk for hours about how important it is for developing a healthy worldview. Not just the idea of being grateful for what we have, but also understanding that what we
see in our culture is merely familiar, not necessarily correct,” Weiss said. “My experiences overseas influence my daily interactions and remind me to be respectful and appreciative of all types of people. Taking the time to step outside our comfort zones and make the effort to learn about a different culture is the best practice for making other people comfortable and welcomed when we are back in our comfort zone.”

Weiss previously spent a year studying in Argentina as part of the Adventist Colleges Abroad (ACA) program, so she has advice for other college students who want to serve or study overseas.

“For a short-term mission trip such as my Christmas project, cost is the biggest concern. Having seen hundreds of kids figure out a way to go on these projects, I will say that it is always possible—not always easy, but always possible,” Weiss said. “Making a longer time commitment is a little harder. I feared that taking a year off would put me behind and make it difficult to reenter my program, but it turned out that I came back a smarter studier and more enthusiastic and able to really embrace my area of study.”

Pacific Union College offers opportunities to both serve abroad and study abroad. Visit puc.edu to learn more.

(Above) Adrienne got her passion for service and travel from her parents, who she enjoys serving alongside. (Left) She encourages other young people to study and serve abroad as a way to connect with other cultures.
New Senior Pastors
Share Their Visions for Their Churches

BY CYNTHIA MENDOZA

Having been installed throughout 2019, new senior pastors are serving several SECC churches.

**Kris Loewen**
**Redlands church**

Kris Loewen transitioned to the Redlands church in May 2019 from the Washington Conference. As the one-year mark of his installation approaches, Loewen has gotten a good feel for the church and community that the Redlands church serves.

“The Redlands church is a remarkable community of people,” he said. “I have so much respect for the families who have been here through all the ups and downs. There is a lot of sacrificial service and dedication in answering God’s calling.”

Moving forward, Loewen feels that the concept of family may be a significant component of how outreach and ministry will be approached. Ideas to be considered include how to model healthy family relationships and how the church can support families in the community.

“We don’t have answers yet, but I want to explore that more deeply,” he said. “It could potentially become a part of our mission.”

**Mario Perez**
**Palm Springs church**

Mario Perez joined the Palm Springs church as senior pastor in June of last year after having served at the Escondido church. Perez has been busy getting to know the leadership team, as well as the members and the flow of the church.

Perez said he wants the church to focus on not just “growing together” but also on growing the kingdom of God together. Part of that includes fostering intergenerational interaction such as The Dugout, a baseball-themed program that pairs older “managers” with younger “players” in mentoring friendships.

The church is also reaching out to the seasonal snowbird community through events such as health seminars that promote abundant living.

Other goals include sharing member stories, fostering leadership, and encouraging spiritual development in young people.

“It’s a fantastic church,” he said. “We want to be a welcoming church and continue to focus on our mission.”

**Rochelle Webster**
**Paradise Valley church**

After having served as family pastor at Redlands church, Rochelle Webster was installed as senior pastor of the Paradise Valley church in August 2019.

In her own words, the Paradise Valley church is one with “enormous amounts of diversity,” as evidenced by the nearly 60 nationalities represented at their Festival of Nations, something she enthusiastically embraces.

“It’s a blessing to be in a church of rich diversity,” she said. “It reminds me of Revelation 7, where all nations are worshipping together. In a way, it’s a foretaste of heaven.”

Heading into spring and beyond, Webster looks forward to leading with a strategic vision, which the members will be involved in setting.

“My experience is that long-lasting ministries are the ones in which the people were involved in vision setting,” she said.

**David Steward**
**Fallbrook church**

Installed in October 2019, David Steward is the new senior pastor at Fallbrook church. Prior to serving at Fallbrook, Steward was an evangelist with Amazing Facts.

“I’m looking forward to getting to know church members and helping deepen their love for witnessing,” he said.

The Fallbrook church began the year with the 10 Days of Prayer
Southeastern California Conference

The Right Arm of the Gospel:
Health Ministry Thriving in Yucca Valley

BY BECKY ST. CLAIRE

Back in January 2015, the Yucca Valley church opened its doors to the community for its first diet- and health-focused event. They showed the documentary *Forks Over Knives* and served a healthy vegetarian meal, concluding with a lively discussion about what was presented.

“Much of our community is vegetarian or vegan,” said Cheryl Arnott, church secretary and event coordinator. “This topic didn’t seem to be addressed by anyone else in our community, so we decided to.”

The church members have now hosted a variety of events, such as cooking demonstrations (including one by renowned Las Vegas chef Mark Anthony), expert lectures, health documentaries, and presentations on topics such as home remedies. Church literature is available each evening on health and other topics, and there are drawings for giveaways such as cookbooks and Ellen White’s book *The Ministry of Healing*.

“I was always taught that the health message is the right arm of the gospel,” said Gina McElfish, Arnott’s fellow coordinator. “This type of event is a nonthreating way to get to know people and introduce them to the church.”

Though healthy eating is important, the ministry goes beyond food. “It’s more than a health message,” Arnott said. “It’s a community-building opportunity.”

The Yucca Valley church has about 50 members. Funding this ministry with such a small church membership can seem daunting at times, but Arnott and other coordinators donate much of the food, which alleviates some of the cost for the church.

It seems to be working. Arnott said several people who initially connected with the church because of health ministry now come to other outreach events too.

“We’re a place and people they trust, and we give them good information,” Arnott explained. “It’s not just ‘Here’s a movie; thanks for coming.’ We put great effort into providing quality experiences and engaging personally with everyone who comes.”

Another byproduct is a positive impact on the church itself. Church members are not only coordinating and presenting the events—many are attending as well.

“In any ministry, when you share, you become stronger,” McElfish pointed out. “It’s a wonderful side benefit we’ve really come to appreciate as a church family. It’s inspiring to see the community God is developing as a result of our efforts for Him.”

“Steward shared that what he is most excited about in his new role is the chance to work with a church that is focused on revival.

“It’s exciting to be a part of a church that wants to participate in evangelism, that is willing to do outreach, and that is passionate about preaching the three angels’ messages,” he said.

PHOTOS: MANUELA HESSLUP
According to research, one of the greatest needs for countless homeless people across the United States is warmth—particularly in the form of socks. During the holiday season, Hemet church members recognized this need to stay warm and created their first “sock ministry.”

“I brought the idea to my adult Sabbath School class,” explained church member Ramona Perez Greek. Her class loved the opportunity for outreach, and eventually the entire congregation became involved.

What began as a goal to gather 650 pairs of socks grew into a collection of over 1,020 pairs. Over a period of several Mondays in December, the socks were hand delivered to the people in need at the San Jacinto Healthcare Facility, the Community Pantry, the Hemet Healthcare Center, and the Valley Restart Family Shelter, where the youngest person was just 15 months old.

Before the socks were distributed, a group of 15 volunteers met at the home of Honnie and Mollie Magsalin to bundle the items according to the specific needs and requests of the facilities accepting the donations.

“For example,” Perez Greek said, “the Valley Restart Family Shelter asked us to provide seven pairs per bundle. This would give the individual homeless person one pair of clean socks per day of the week.”

On one of the Monday nights that was particularly cold, church members also brought hot drinks to one of the shelters, hoping to warm hearts in addition to feet. Rade Milosavljevic, Hemet church interim pastor, offered a short devotional at the various facilities. Russ Brown, mayor of Hemet, joined the volunteers on two occasions, and reporters from the Hemet & San Jacinto Chronicle and the Press-Enterprise covered the outreach in their newspapers.

“What stood out for me was how such a small item can have such a big impact,” said Perez Greek of the ministry as a whole. “It brought so much joy and smiles to people in need. It was a rich blessing to be a giver.”

The sock ministry is a new part of other ongoing outreach efforts, including local health seminars, in-home Bible studies, and literature shared by Pathfinders. Throughout 2020, the church will continue its plans for even more outreach.

“We will use the sock ministry again in order to be more present in Hemet,” said Milosavljevic. “Helping others is the bottom line of our mission.”
In mid-January, 94 couples converged at Pine Springs Ranch for the third annual Hispanic ministries couples retreat, growing closer to one another and closer to God. This number is up from the 60 couples who attended in 2019.

“Word is getting around that the couples retreat is a worthwhile way to spend a weekend,” said Rossy Michel, coordinator for family ministries for Hispanic ministries. “Couples who have attended in the past are inviting their friends to come to the next one. Their endorsement of what we’re doing is better than any marketing we can do.”

Mornings at the retreat started at 5 a.m. with group prayer. Then, at 7 a.m., everyone came together for the daily worship experience, followed by the main weekend presentations and activities.

“This retreat offers tools with which couples can improve their relationship,” explained Yohalmo Saravia, conference vice president for Hispanic ministries. “Couples discuss their perceptions, expectations, and needs within their marriage and how they can help each other with those needs. It’s a good balance between lecture and practice.”

The theme for the 2020 retreat was “His Needs, Her Needs.” The presenters were César and Carolann De León, vice president for Hispanic ministries and ministerial director, and associate director for Hispanic and family ministries, respectively, at the North Pacific Union. In addition to their roles at the union, the De Leóns are also both certified family therapists. Their presentation focused on how to express and fulfill individual and combined needs within a marriage, as well as how God fits into it all.

Many couples, such as José and Hilda Jimenez, plan to continue to attend this event every year. “These retreats offer us an opportunity for a better married life,” José Jimenez shared. “We will absolutely go again.”

Saravia said that investing in events such as these is incredibly important for the church. “People come back from the retreat inspired to be and do better, and that overflows into the home and into the church,” he said. “We believe that healthy couples make healthy families, and healthy families make healthy churches. It comes full circle because healthy churches can more readily support their members and their community. Everybody wins.”

Many couples tell Michel that they come to the retreat with a list of problems in their marriage, but they leave with renewed light in their hearts.

“There is once again hope for their future as a couple,” she explained. “It brings me joy to see their lives changed in such a positive way. This is why we do this.”
Most people are directly or indirectly affected by the impact of life-threatening illnesses such as cancer. Whether through personal journeys or supporting loved ones, this is a reality that many face. For that reason, The Place Adventist Fellowship church and Chino Valley Chinese church (CVCC) have both identified a need for creating opportunities to dialogue about this topic.

In February, The Place hosted a workshop about discovering ways to spiritually support those who are battling cancer. This workshop is the first in the church’s new spiritual support series. After encountering members who were experiencing cancer firsthand, the congregation looked for ways to tend to their needs. While many support groups exist, the congregation realized that few, if any, offered a spiritual component. As promoters of holistic health, The Place recognized how crucial it is to incorporate spirituality into support systems that are currently in place.

The event began during the divine worship service with a message from Bronwen Jones, interfaith chaplain at Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute. In the afternoon, there was a panel discussion featuring a member of The Place who is a physician and cancer survivor and representatives from Cancer Support Community Valley Ventura Santa Barbara (CSC VVSB), Hospice of the Conejo, and Adventist Health Simi Valley (AHSV). Both segments emphasized the importance of community support and maintaining a human connection while providing care.

“The Place is all about connections—connecting with God and with one another,” said Simon Liversidge, senior pastor at The Place. “We are praying God will give us greater opportunities to connect with people who are in need and who are looking to bless others in need.”

On the same day, CVCC invited Benjamin Lau, emeritus professor at Loma Linda University Medical School, and his wife, Esther Lau, to present on nutritional therapy intended to maximize cancer healing. Their topics, “Biblical Prescription for Cancer” and “Healing Cancer With Food,” demonstrated that God has prescribed a lifestyle that leads to a full, healthy, and abundant life.

During his presentation, Lau referenced passages from Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus, which he deemed three love letters from God, as the basis for a plant-based diet for preventive and corrective care. “A plant-based diet has no side effects and does not hurt normal cells,” said Lau. “It only hurts the cancer cells.”

Both workshops emphasized different, yet equally needed, approaches to cancer care that together encompass a holistic practice—meeting spiritual and physical needs.
What does it take to make a difference? It turns out that it doesn’t require anything too elaborate, as Pasadena church discovered. Small acts of kindness can make a big impact.

Back in 2017, the church took a day to host free meals for local law enforcement—breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And the relationship has blossomed since. “Our 2017 event opened the door to our presence in the community,” said Aileen Ligan, the Community Services director at the Pasadena church. “I wanted them to know us as members and not just a building they drive by. After that first event, our church started bringing lunch to the dispatch at the department during Global Youth Day. It began to build a familiarity with our church and the community outreach we are passionate about.”

This January, the church opened its doors again. One Sunday, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., the church fed three patrol teams plus some of the department’s professional civilian staff—all 50 people. Local business donated food, as did some local residents of Pasadena who brought homemade dishes for the officers.

“The generosity from the Pasadena Adventist church was definitely appreciated by all at the police department personnel,” said Sean M. Dawkins, Lieutenant, Pasadena Police Department, Field Operations Division, East Service Area. “All of us thought it was so special that members of your church were available all day to make sure the personnel working at the department [that day] were able to get some great food.”

Church members came in throughout the day to fellowship with the officers during the meals and express their appreciation. As often happens with acts of service, the members were just as blessed as the officers. “The officers were so kind to us and especially to the children,” said Greg Sewell, head elder at the Pasadena church. “One officer even played an entire game of ping pong with a few of the kids. They really appeared to enjoy themselves, and we enjoyed the time with them as well.”

“T’their deep gratitude and appreciation was very clear,” Sewell continued. “They got to see how much we appreciate what they do, and the most wonderful part of it was that we got to pray with them before they went back to their shift.”

What started as a simple opportunity to share a meal or two became the crux of a deeper relationship. “Your kind generosity has definitely impacted all the officers and professional civilian staff at the department,” Lieutenant Dawkins shared when Ligan asked how the event impacted the officers. “It is always so special for the officers when members of the community reach out to thank us or invite us to share a meal with them. We appreciate everything the community does for us, and it is truly special when something like this happens.”
SFVA Takes the Classroom on the Road

By Araya Moss

Last fall, San Fernando Valley Academy (SFVA) students spent four days on a cross-curricular field study tour, visiting local museums and other locales in Los Angeles, Ventura, and Orange counties to complement their studies in science, math, English, history, and P.E.

“The inspiration was to have a change from the four walls that the students—and teachers—see every day,” said Joel Kindrick, English and history teacher at SFVA and also one of three teacher-leaders of the tour days. “We wanted to do something that the entire school could do together.”

On the first day, students got in touch with local animal history at the Natural History Museum and the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles. Afterward, a visit to the California Science Center allowed them to watch, and later try, physics and chemistry experiments.

History was the primary focus on day two. Students went to the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, where they saw actual Apollo 11 equipment. Students also saw the president’s birth home, his current resting place, and exhibits on the important historical events in between. Later, they traveled to Independence Hall at Knott’s Berry Farm, where the resident historian told them about the inception of the Declaration of Independence. They then were able to watch a drama about the founding fathers and their debate leading to the signing of this important document. Next, they headed to San Pedro to visit the USS Iowa, where experienced military docents led them on a tour of the ship and taught them about its history and its many military voyages.

Day three took SFVA students to the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, where students learned about the Japanese-American experience during World War II in the United States. “This was sobering for the students,” Kindrick said. However, the mood shifted from seriousness to excitement when the archivist pulled out a copy of Kindrick’s master’s thesis about that time period to show them.

From there, the group headed to Los Angeles’ birthplace: Olvera Street.

Students stand in front of Independence Hall at Knott’s Berry Farm for a photo. The study tour was led by teachers Debbie Baroi, Frank Crosgrove, and Joel Kindrick.

Students saw a movie about the landing of Apollo 11 on the moon in the IMAX theater at the California Science Center and later saw Apollo 11 equipment at the Nixon Library.

From the first fire station to the oldest adobe building, they experienced what the Spaniards might have felt and seen when they first entered this area. Next, they went to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust.

Day four brought the students to Simi Valley to witness the Veterans Day ceremony at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. The students also had the opportunity to explore this museum with all its artifacts, culminating in Air Force One, which is housed there. The students concluded their field study tour days by visiting DojoBoom, a trampoline park in Thousand Oaks. Here, they received their physical education credit from activities on trampolines, rock climbing walls, rope courses, and other similar equipment.

“As fun as the activities were,” Kindrick reflected, “all the students still had work to do.” They were given worksheets to complete and were required to take pictures documenting what they learned each day. These materials were sent to the teachers to be recorded for their grades.

“The students look forward to the spring cross-curriculum field study,” Kindrick said. “The plan is to go north and visit sites pertinent to American authors like John Steinbeck, John Muir, and Mark Twain.”
This past December, the Southern California Conference (SCC) and the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) teamed up to bring a message of hope and healing just in time for the holidays. “The mission was to pass out half a million Christ-centered tracts in the communities of Orange County and Los Angeles County,” said Marco Topete, SCC literature ministries coordinator.

Every day began with daily worship and a short training with the team, led by Topete and Jared Napod, the GLOW director from SECC. In just five days, the team shared 480,000 tracts. “Overall, we were just shy by 20 thousand tracts of the goal, but God really blessed each participant,” Topete said.

Made up of different missionaries each day, as many as 28 participated on one day, with the team consisting of an average of 15 people. “It was really neat to see our busy professionals from our churches join us for the day of GLOWing,” Topete shared. “One nurse had just started her vacation and joined us on our mission trip. Another man named Rome had the day off and decided he wanted to go out with us. Pastor Mark Tatum from the host church, Anaheim church, also participated in the trip.”

Missionaries visited places with crowds and high foot traffic, such as shopping plazas, sports events, and colleges. The territory included Anaheim, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Lakewood, Long Beach, East Los Angeles, El Monte, and Montebello. Every day brought divine appointments and encouraging testimonies. God revealed His hand at work through the experiences of the GLOWers. Evan, one of the missionaries, gave a GLOW tract to a man in a parking lot, who asked, “Is this Adventist?” When Evan replied that it was, the man shared that he was a backslidden Adventist and was taking that tract as a sign that God is calling him back to church.

Another divine appointment came about when one missionary gave a GLOW tract to the manager of a café. The manager quickly asked the missionary to sit, and they started engaging in a spiritual conversation. The manager then called a customer over to sit in on the conversation, which led to her also receiving tracts. At this point, the customer realized that the topic of the GLOW tract was one that had been on her mind—it focused on media and the brain. After the GLOWer prayed for his new friends, they both asked for tracts to share with others. Praise God for how He orchestrates circumstances like these!

“As is noted in most mission trips,” Topete continued, “the ones blessed were not only those in the community but also those participating. Jerry, a young man in his 20s, shared that this was the most rewarding thing he has done in a long time. Many others had a similar experience. We hope to cover more and more of our communities with a message of hope through Christ-centered literature!”

Missionaries gather to distribute hundreds of thousands of GLOW tracts in just five days.
Adventist Health White Memorial Wins Prestigious Presidential Award

Compiled by Yara Enamorado and Connie Vandeman Jeffery

The call from the White House came in November. Wilber Ross, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, was on the line to tell John Raffoul, the hospital president, that Adventist Health White Memorial was a 2019 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner. Every year since 1987, the Baldrige Award has recognized a select few U.S. organizations and businesses that have shown an unceasing drive for innovative solutions to complex challenges, visionary leadership, and operational excellence. White Memorial was one of six recipients of the 2019 Baldrige Award. This is the highest level of national recognition for performance excellence that a U.S. organization can receive.

Over nearly two decades, White Memorial has worked closely with its partners in the Hispanic-majority community to train more than 224 local residents in nursing. Of these, 100 percent received registered nurse licensing, 70 percent pursued advanced degrees, and 90 percent were still working at the hospital after three years. The result is a nursing staff that reflects the demographics of the community, providing culturally competent care in the primary language of its patients.

Adventist Health White Memorial demonstrated continuous improvement practices for delivering healthcare services, exhibited efficient and effective operations, and revealed systematic methods for engaging and responding to patients and other stakeholders. In addition, White Memorial achieved exceptional results in patient safety, patient experience, workforce engagement, and financial performance.

Following an intense, multi-day survey at the hospital, Baldrige Award examiners noted several outstanding achievements that led to their choice of White Memorial as one of the six award recipients for 2019. Four achievements caught the attention of the examiners:

• Since 2014, not a single patient has returned to White Memorial’s Emergency Department for care following surgery at the hospital.
• Since 2013, the hospital has been nearly perfect in the recommended timing for treatment of heart attack patients who need balloon angioplasty to open their blocked artery.
• The hospital pioneered a highly successful program to make its campus a safe zone from gang violence by employing a former gang member as a liaison between White Memorial and local gangs.
• Despite the hospital’s location in an economically challenged, medically under-served community, it has an AA+ rating from Standard & Poor’s for its 396 days of cash-on-hand—hundreds of days better than the hospital’s nearest competitors.

This is exciting news for Adventist Health as this is the second Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in their hospital system. In 2017, Adventist Health Castle was the only organization in Hawaii’s history to receive this honor. Adventist Health White Memorial is the first Baldrige Award recipient for any hospital in Los Angeles County.

The 2019 Baldrige Awards will be presented at a ceremony on March 24, 2020, during the Baldrige Program’s 32nd annual Quest for Excellence® conference, which will be held in National Harbor, Maryland.
This April, the Church Support Services (CSS) department of the Pacific Union Conference will sponsor and organize the sixth annual inSpire, a weekend gathering for Adventist creatives.

“Our purpose is to let the creatives within our church know that we value their presence and expertise as photographers, poets, singers and songwriters, videographers, visual artists, and more because of the clarity they can add to storytelling and sharing God’s story,” said Rich DuBose, director of CSS.

DuBose is eager to see the arts take a more prominent role in helping share the essence of God’s story in the Pacific Southwest.

“Instead of creativity being a source of suspicion and fear, it is something Seventh-day Adventists should celebrate and encourage,” DuBose added. “Because we are fashioned in God’s image, who is Himself the master Creator, we cannot help but build, explore, and create.”

The goal of inSpire is to “bring good to life” through all forms of media and creative expression—to use the arts as a vehicle for truth telling. Those interested in songwriting, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, poetry, videography, and other art forms are invited to attend.

Part of this year’s inSpire event will include the viewing of an exclusive, award-winning documentary by Alan Lacy, an Adventist communicator and cinematographer. The film explores the habitat of Mexican gray wolves and the dangers they face from extinction.

This year’s inSpire gathering will be held April 17-19 at the Advent Worship Center located at 15220 N 39th Ave., Phoenix, Ariz. The event is free and open to the public. For more details about this gathering, go to visitinspire.org.

Alan Lacy, an award-winning filmmaker, is passionate about the natural world. His fascination with the critically endangered Mexican gray wolf—and his desire to do something to help—spurred him on to produce his first film about the endangered species. His film, Gray Area: Wolves of the Southwest has screened internationally and will be part of this year’s inSpire gathering.
New $2,000 Scholarship Supports In-Union College Freshman

By Faith Hoyt, with Stephen Mayer

Many incoming freshmen at Pacific Union College or La Sierra University now have access to a $2,000 scholarship provided by the Pacific Union Conference for the 2020-2021 school year.

“We initiated this scholarship in order to support students attending our Union-sponsored Seventh-day Adventist undergraduate programs here in the Pacific Southwest,” shared Stephen Mayer, treasurer of the Pacific Union Conference.

The scholarship application defines freshmen as first-time undergraduate students who have not previously attended an institution of higher education. Scholarship recipients must be enrolled full time. Additionally, they must be a baptized member of an Adventist church in the Union, or have a parent or guardian that is a baptized member of an Adventist church in the Union, or have attended a secondary school operated by Pacific Union Conference for a minimum of one semester.

According to the application, a prorated amount of this one-time, nonrenewable scholarship is also available for qualified freshmen transfer students, depending on the date of transfer.

Applications and verifications for this scholarship are to be completed with Pacific Union College or La Sierra University and submitted as part of the student financial clearance process. The funds are paid directly to the institution and credited to the account of the student by the end of the term in which the scholarship was approved.

“Adventist Higher Education is such an amazing blessing!” Mayer said. “The Pacific Union is excited to offer this scholarship, which supports bringing costs down for students while encouraging them to experience the excellence in education the Pacific Union offers. My prayer is that this scholarship will impact our students in a powerful way to His glory!”

For more information about this scholarship, email the student financial services department of Pacific Union College at studentfinance@puc.edu or La Sierra University at sfs@lasierra.edu.
Help a child get a Christian education. To contribute or for info contact JoAnn Bloom at 480-991-6777 ext. 150 or visit www.adventistscholarships.com.

Central California Conference
Hispanic Women’s Retreat

Retiro de Damas
(March 14) 5:30 p.m.
Tenaya Lodge Resort, cerca de Yosemite. No se va a querer perder a las dinámicas oradoras, Esther Crisóstomos y Lupita Aragón, presentando el tema: “¡Señor, rompe mis cadenas!” Para registrarse, llame a María al 559-907-2537.

Life Hope Centers
(March 15) for the Mountain View community in and around San Jose, Calif. Volunteers are needed for this free event. The more dentists, medical professionals, and optometrists that volunteer, the more community members can be served. Registration: LifeHopeCentersCentral.com.

Alumni Weekend
(April 25-26) Fresno Adventist Academy. All former students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to attend Sabbath services featuring Cathie Jones, followed by a potluck meal. Put together your team or join one for Sunday’s golf tournament. Info: office@faa.org or call 559-251-5548.

La Sierra University Summer Music Camp
La Sierra University’s Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) is offering music camps and academy programs for students in grades 1-12. (June 15-26) Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Hole Memorial Auditorium. Registration $35; tuition $390. Info: email: avpa@lasierra.edu or 951-785-2086.

Hanson-Koobs Chamber Music Series
featuring professional concert artists from the Los Angeles Philharmonic and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (March 1) 7 p.m., Troesh Conference Center, Zapara School of Business. Tickets: students $5, seniors 55+ $10, general admission $15. Info: https://lasierra.edu/hanson-koobs/, music@lasierra.edu, 951-785-2036.

“The Sound of Music” La Sierra University’s Department of Music will present a double-cast production. Hole Memorial Auditorium, Sat. (March 7) 7 p.m.; (March 1) and (March 8) 3 p.m. General $15; seniors (55+) $10; student/child $5 (college students with ID). Tickets: https://music-events.lasierra.edu/the-sound-of-music/;
email: music@lasierra.edu or 951-785-2036.

La Sierra University Orchestra under Dr. Dean Anderson will perform on Sat. (April 18) 7:15 p.m., Hole Memorial Auditorium. Tickets: students $5, seniors 55+ $10, general admission, $15. Info: https://music-events.lasierra.edu, music@lasierra.edu, or 951-785-2036.

Nevada-Utah Conference
Las Vegas Junior Academy 80th Birthday Alumni Weekend Celebration
(May 8-9) beginning Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. 6059 West Oakey Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89146. RSVP by April 24, 702-871-7208; info@lvja.org; ddahl@lvja.org.

Northern California Conference
Junior High Music Festival
(March 6-7) Rio Lindo Adventist Academy, 3200 Rio Lindo Avenue, Healdsburg. Choir and band practice sessions with clinicians Lisette Parks and
Community & Marketplace

Steve Hall. Saturday evening concert, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Info: Education Department, 916-886-5645.


All About Jesus Seminar (March 13-21) 7 p.m. Pleasant Hill church, 800 Grayson Road, Pleasant Hill. Opening night dinner: 6 p.m. Revival speaker: Lee Venden. Discover or rediscover how a personal relationship with Jesus is the sum and substance of the Christian life. Info: church office, 925-934-5803.


NAD Children’s Ministries Training - Track 1 (March 21) 2-6 p.m. NCC Office, 2100 Douglas Blvd., Roseville. Special needs, multiple types of intelligence, dealing with children in the 21st century. Info: Children’s Ministries Department, 916-886-5654.


Hispanic Women’s Retreat (March 27-29) Leoni Meadows. Speaker: Raquel Arrais, General Conference Women’s Ministries associate director. “Give Them All to Jesus.” Info: Hispanic Ministries Department, 916-886-5614.

Church Treasurer Training (March 29) 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Location to be announced. Bring your laptop computer.

Lunch provided. RSVP. Info: NCC Treasurer’s Office, 888-434-4622, ext. 209.


Pathfinder Bike-a-thon (April 5) 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Metro Air Park, Sacramento. Info: NCC Youth Department, 916-886-5656.

Adventist Community Services Retreat (April 17-19) Leoni Meadows. Speakers: W. Derrick Lea, North American Division Adventist Community Services associate director; Marc Woodson, NCC president; Steve Hamilton, Paradise church senior pastor. Musician: Cindy Suh. Register online at www.leonimeadows.org or call 530-626-3610. Info: Community Services Department, 916-886-5616.

Revelation: Prophecy For Today (March 14, 17-21). March 14, 10:45 a.m. and 2 p.m.; March 21, 10:45 a.m.; March 17-20, 6 p.m. Palm Springs church, 620 S. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs. The presenter is Robert Edwards, conference vice president for Black ministries, who will share the importance of the prophecies found in Revelation and how that knowledge changes lives. Info: palmspringsadventist@gmail.com, 760-327-5112.

PQ Rise 2020 will be taking place June 28-July 3 at Pacific Union College, and applications are open now! The program will accept up to 18 qualified high school students, and the $700 program fee is all-inclusive. Students will explore the Mendocino Coast in Northern California with an emphasis on experiential learning. Visit puc.edu/pqrisefor full details and to apply.

Southeastern California Conference Annual Fundraising Ladies Tea (March 8) 2 p.m. Riverside Convention Center, 3637 Fifth St., Riverside. $50 per person and $500 per table of 10. Proceeds benefit projects at La Sierra Academy. Info: HSA@lsa12.com.

Pacific Union College We’re hiring! View current PUC job listings at puc.edu/careers.

PUC Now: Sign up to receive PUC’s monthly e-newsletter with links to news, events, and more. Visit puc.edu/newsletter today.

PacificQuest 2020: Pacific Union College is now accepting applications for PacificQuest 2020, which will take place from June 21-26. The program accepts 24 students who have completed grades 6, 7, or 8, and the $600 program fee is all-inclusive. Classes will illustrate the way various STEM fields contribute to our understanding of disease causes, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatments. Visit puc.edu/pacificquest for full qualifications and to apply.

Orangewood Academy Spartan Scholarship Golf Tournament (March 17) 12:30-7 p.m. Oak Creek Golf Club, 1 Golf Club Dr., Irvine. Funds raised go toward tuition assistance at Orangewood Academy. Registration: bit.ly/OAGolf2020.
Loma Linda pastors, laypersons, and anyone interested in hearing how people are sharing Christ in the marketplace are welcome to attend ASI Pacific Union’s annual spring meeting at the Loma Linda Chinese church (March 17) 6:30 p.m. Supper will be provided free of charge.


**Pathfinder Drum Clinic** (March 22) 10 a.m.-3 p.m. SECC grounds, 11330 Pierce St., Riverside. Learn how to read music, complete the drumming and percussion honor, and receive a drum pad and sticks. Regular price $25; $10 for those who already own a drum pad and sticks. Info: seccyouth.com, 951-509-2265.

**Safety Sabbath** (March 28). Would you like to help your church members feel safe and prepared to act when emergencies occur? Safety Sabbath is an opportunity for churches to learn and plan safety practices. Info visit: safetysabbath.com.

**Southern California Conference Cougar Pride Golf Tournament** (March 1). First hole begins at 8 a.m. Glendale Adventist Academy Alumni Association is hosting the 2nd annual tournament to raise funds for incoming and current students in need of financial assistance. Brookside Golf and Country Club, 1133 Rosemont Ave., Pasadena 91103. Info: https://www.gaacougarpride.org/.

**Mental Health Workshop** (March 3) 2:30 p.m. Topic: symptoms and treatment of depression. These mental health workshops are confidential, free, and educational. All Nations church, 1948 Peck Rd., Monrovia 91016. Info: meusebio@ph.lacunty.gov.

**Revival Seminar: Claim Your Children Back!** (March 7) 2 p.m. These messages and testimonies will bring hope, healing, peace, encouragement, and joy. Speaker: Grant Agadjanian of A Sure Harvest Ministries. Valjeo Drive church, 300 Valjeo Dr., Glendale 91206. Info: 818-246-2476.


**Second Saturday Series Concert** (March 14) 4 p.m. Presented by William Feasley, classical guitar. Admission is by free-will offering. Reception to follow. Glendale City church, 610 E. California Ave., Glendale 91206. Info: 818-244-7241.

**Los Angeles Adventist Forum** (March 14) 2 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Loren Seibold, editor of Adventist Today. All are welcome. Glendale City church chapel, 610 E. California Ave., Glendale 91206. Info: 818-244-7241.

**The Herbivore Exchange** (March 24) 6:30 p.m. Enjoy a whole-food, plant-based dinner where participants are invited to bring healthy dishes and

**Mental Health Workshop**
(April 4) 2:30 p.m. Topic: anxiety disorders. These mental health workshops are confidential, free, and educational. All Nations church, 1948 Peck Rd., Monrovia 91016. Info: meusebio@ph.lacunty.gov.


**SCC Girls Retreat** (April 17-19). Where young ladies, ages 13-18, can go to be inspired to fall in love with Christ. Practical workshops, team bonding, on-site counseling and prayer, studying the Bible, and other activities will be offered. Glendale Adventist Academy, 700 Kimlin Dr., Glendale 91206. Registration & info: sccgirlsretreat.com.

**53rd Annual GLAR Convocation** (April 18) 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Join the Greater Los Angeles Region for the annual convocation. Faithful Central Bible church, 333 W. Florence Ave., Inglewood 90301. Info: Franklyn Broomfield, 818-730-5094.

**San Gabriel Academy Alumni Homecoming Weekend** (April 24-26). San Gabriel Academy, 8827 E. Broadway, San Gabriel 91776. Info: alyssa.cheung@gmail.com.

**Piano Concert** (April 25) 6 p.m. All are invited to an unforgettable evening where 15-year-old piano virtuoso and vocal soloist David Cerna will perform. Norwalk church, 12191 Firestone Blvd., Norwalk 90650. Info: 714-234-1998.

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**Employment**

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**Pacific Union College is seeking a full-time men’s/ women’s soccer coach.** Major duties include management of all operations for soccer intercollegiate teams, provision of leadership and direction to support student athlete success, familiarity with NAIA governing rules. Must also have willingness to travel for competitions and recruiting, and work with NAIA and California Pacific Conference. Bachelor’s degree required; Master’s degree preferred. For more information or to apply, please call Human Resources at 707-965-6231 or visit our website at https://www.puc.edu/campus-services/human-resources/current-job-postings/head-soccer-coach,-mens-and-womens.

**Union College seeks committed SDA candidate for tenure track faculty position in instrumental music beginning June 2020.** Responsibilities include overseeing instrumental program, directing instrumental groups, advising undergraduate music majors, and teaching undergraduate courses and instrumental lessons. Master’s degree in music required, doctoral degree preferred. Complete application: https://ucollege.edu/employment/and upload cover letter and resume/ CV, and provide 3 references. For further information, email Bruce Forbes, chair, Division of Fine Arts bruce.forbes@ucollege.edu.

**For Sale**

**Bucky Stone’s sequel series is here!** Author David B. Smith’s missionary childhood fuels these dramatic love stories as Bucky’s sister Rachel Marie tackles a rookie year teaching at Bangkok Christian School. “Love in a Distant Land” on sale at Amazon or as Audiobook download, Kindle e-book ($1); or at the ABC, Riverside, Calif.

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Reunions
28th Annual FAA Alumni Weekend (April 25-26). Sabbath Service Speaker, Cathie Jones; Sunday Golf Tournament. Please bring a dish to share for the potluck after Sabbath Service. Info: FAA office at 559-251-5548 or office@faa.org.

Vacations Opportunities
Angwin home – Five-bdrm, 3-bath vacation home, 2 miles from PUC. Fully furnished, large kitchen, dining room, living room, family room, piano, vineyard views, WiFi, washer and dryer, BBQ grill, sleeps 10. Call for rates, photos, and reservations: 415-497-5678 or email: nvroger@mac.com.

Egypt tour (Dec. 28, 2020-Jan. 6, 2021) with Dr. Carl Cosaert of Walla Walla University. Discover the Pyramids, the Valley of the Kings, the Exodus, a Nile cruise, and much more. Wonderful weather, meals, and accommodations $2,565 plus airfare. For information contact info@adventtours.org.

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d. Dec. 28, 2019, Antioch, Calif. Survivors: wife, Cheryl; daughter, Theresa Link; stepsons, Vincent Lilja, Jacob Lilja; seven grandchildren; brothers, Ken, Eddie; sister, Peggy Birnbaum.


Becker, Larry – b. Aug. 19, 1957, Charlottesville, Va.; d. Jan. 21, 2020, Loma Linda, Calif. Survivors: wife, Laura; son, Roger; daughter Erica; two grandchildren; brother, Barry; sister, Betty Whitehead. He served the church 39 years, most recently as pastor of Valley church in Sun City, Calif.

Comm, Walter – b. Feb. 4, 1926, Szczecin, Poland; d. Aug. 6, 2019, St. Helena, Calif. Survivors: wife, Ruth; sons, Walter, Todd; daughter, Debbie Tuttle; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Served as an educator, teacher, principal, professor of education at La Sierra College, superintendent of schools for NCC, administrator at Loma Linda University.


Harder, Marjorie (Goll) – b. June 2, 1922, Omaha, Neb.; d. Dec. 14, 2019, Glendale, Calif. Survivors: husband, Herbert; son, Thomas; daughter, Jennifer; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild.


Pitts, Joyce Verniece (Dirksen) – b. March 18, 1930, Shafter, Calif.; d. Dec. 22, 2019, Bakersﬁeld, Calif. Survivors: daughter, Dorothy; son, Rochlin; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.


Thorton, Irving – b. March 24, 1928, Jewett City, Conn.; d. Dec. 27, 2019, Riverside, Calif. Survivors: sons, Richard, David; daughter, Donna Mendenhall; two stepchildren; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; brother, Bruce.


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