

# CHURCHRIGHT

*Doing church right*



## Double Your Gift!

Sis-Q Meadows Camp has received a pleasant surprise. After observing a recent youth camp held there, an anonymous donor wrote the following to Sis-Q's board of directors: "We believe that ministry to youth is of strategic importance, and the fruit of ministries to youth taking place at the Sis-Q Meadows Camp has come to our attention. It is therefore our delight to offer our support to the Sis-Q Meadows Camp. We will match dollar for dollar funds raised for the sport court and shelter between now and July 31, 2020 up to \$125,000."

This is our opportunity to double our financial gifts to this worthy and effective ministry! Sis-Q's board chairman Harold Ogren writes, "While we encourage you to continue to support your local church with tithes and offerings, if God has blessed you, please consider investing in the future of Sis-Q Meadows Camp."

Donations may be sent to Sis-Q Meadows Camp, 2964 SW Brentwood Drive, Redmond, OR 97756.

## Focus on Jesus and Follow His Plan

Those who climb the highest mountains do so one segment at a time. They advance via a series of camps, resting and acclimating before continuing upward. On a rock face, they climb, drive a piton into a crack, and secure their progress before attempting the next segment. Without securing the progress they've made, climbers risk losing everything. This strategy — advance, secure, and repeat — is worth consideration of anyone attempting to attain a major goal.

For the past three years, our church has been focused on TVR: Transforming Vision into Reality. During 2017 we focused on Jesus as Savior. During 2018 we focused on Jesus as Lord. And during 2019 we focused on the Great Commission our Lord has given us. We've made great progress! Our ten vision points are now well known by our leaders and members. We have been further united by this common focus and by the common language of TVR. Our vision is fast becoming our reality. Our vision points are now our values points.

It's time to drive a stake and secure our progress. To plunge ahead is to risk "falling." Gravity will always pull us back to our original starting point if we fail to secure our accomplishments and make them our new normal.

I can think of no better phrase to mark this period than one introduced by Jody McCoy to sum up the three stages of TVR. It is "Focus on Jesus and Follow His Plan." We must do this because Jesus is our Savior, our Lord, and so much more. By Christ's sacrificial death and abundant life, God is reconciling the world to Himself. His kingdom has invaded the world, and we are His ambassadors and co-workers. By Christlike love, winsome witness, unified fellowship, and careful teaching, we are to make disciples for Jesus.

We've reached a great place to pause, secure our progress, and acclimate to our new reality. We've reached a great place to "Focus on Jesus and Follow His Plan"!

— Loren Stacy



# District News

## Northeast

Contributor: Esther Winchell



**Celebrating unity.** Fort Wayne, IN, was the site of celebrating the end of a long-awaited journey where two congregations joined in unity! Organized by Area 5 rep Marna Renteria, this October 26 Sabbath was made even more special with visitors and the district board present. Members of the Warsaw St. and Lafayette congregations listened to powerful sermons brought by Elders Heber Vega and Rex Miller, and Pastor Wilmer Arias.



**Hayride.** On October 13 the Hammondville, AL church held its annual hayride at the home of Ken and Jimmie Pell. There were tractor rides, along with breaking piñatas and more candy than could be eaten in one sitting (although all the children made a good effort). Hot dogs and fixings were served to about 80 parents and children. It was hard to tell who had more fun.

**Baptisms, baptisms, baptisms!** On October 13 Pastor Wayne Hrenyk baptized Sandra Vincente in Chattanooga, TN. We welcome this new sister in Christ (pictured with her three children). Three baptisms were conducted by Pastor Walter Apen in Stone Mountain, GA, on October 20. We welcome our new brothers and sister in Christ: Nelson Alonzo Lopez, Santos Velasquez, and Andrea Idalia Sandoval.



## Southeast

Contributor: Steve Krome, Superintendent



**Super Sabbath.** The Stone Mountain, GA CoG7 hosted a Super Sabbath on October 5. Pastor Marvin Espana (Jamaica, NY) preached on “Restoration by Christ” in the morning and “Simple, Clear, Specific” in the afternoon to 350 adults and 70 children. Special presentations were given in the afternoon by churches from Tarboro, Thomasville, Summerfield, and Dudley, NC, along with Stone Mountain, Marietta, and Baxley, GA. Pastor Walter Apen officiated the services, and Isaac Arias conducted praise and worship.

## Central

Contributor: Ken Lawson, Superintendent



**New mission.** This group of faithful members, led by Adolfo Luna, officially became a Central District mission congregation in Dodgeville, WI, on September 7. Approximately 50 people attended to support and celebrate with them. Welcome aboard, Dodgeville!



**Montana fellowship.** This group has a unique beginning with the Central district and CoG7. Over 600 miles apart, several families are livestreaming on Sabbath morning with the Colorado Springs congregation. Pictured here are about half of those connected with the Church in this manner. Mike Wallace is our Montana coordinator for the families spread from Missoula on the west to Plentywood in the far northeast corner of this state.

Top: New members Henry and Lisa Miklush in Bozeman, with Ken Lawson. Center: Mike Wallace (Missoula) meeting with Ken Lawson. Bottom: David Ogren and his grandson in Missoula.



**Super Sabbath.** The amazing and well-trained praise team from the Aurora, CO church led worship at a Super Sabbath, September 14, at the Thornton, CO church. About 125 attended and heard preaching by BA editor Jason Overman.

## Southwest

Contributor: Jamin Teran

SWD photos taken by SWD Media Ministry



**Biblical marriage.** The SWD Marriage Ministry has been holding different workshops in the district with the theme "Returning to the Beginning." In September the Houston and Dallas areas discovered that God established guidelines for marriage in the beginning.



## CALENDAR 2019-2020

**December 6-8** - SoCal and NorCal Retreat, Oakhurst, CA

**December 27-28** - Super Sabbath Quarterly for Area 6, Midland, TX

**December 27-30** - SWD Winter Retreat for Student Ministries, Tyler, TX

### Artios Events

**November 3 - December 15** - Late fall classes in session

**December 30** - Early winter course registration ends

**January 5 - February 9** - Early winter classes in session

For a complete listing of events, please visit [churchright.org](http://churchright.org).

## GC Work Opportunities

Do you have a gift of technology? Would you like to use your skills in service to the Church? The General Conference is looking for people to join our tech team. If you have skills in web design, software development, or information technology, you might be the person we are looking for. Contact [it@cog7.org](mailto:it@cog7.org) for more information, and prayerfully consider how you might put your talents to use.



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Church of God (Seventh Day)  
P. O. Box 33677 • Denver, CO 80233,  
Phone: (303) 452-7973 • Fax: (303) 452-0657  
[churchright@cog7.org](mailto:churchright@cog7.org) • [churchright.org](http://churchright.org)



**Special night.** Youth in Dallas-Fort Worth (Area 1) gathered at our sister church, Nueva Vida, on September 21. The theme was “Not Perfect but Forgiven.” Youth became **one** by worshipping together and enjoying fellowship. Sister Jasmine Lucero blessed the youth with her message.



**Pastoral meeting.** Pastors in Area 1 gathered October 6 – the third time this year – to review the areas where they can grow to help their churches become vibrant in the 21st century. Superintendent Chip Hinds, GC Missions director Bryan Cleeton (left), and Pastor Robert Onsando (Kenya) shared the global vision of the Church and the importance of supporting it.



**SWORD fellowship.** SWORD’s volleyball tournament October 13 in Dallas, TX, brought together young adults for a great time of fellowship. The event was organized by our sister church, Nueva Esperanza, in Garland, TX. Churches from Arlington and North Dallas were part of the event.



**Evangelism and fellowship.** On September 28, an evangelism service took place at the El Paso Central church. Several brethren from local churches attended, as well as new people who were invited. We were blessed to witness the rebirth of Siria Arellanes, who gave her life to Christ and was baptized. Pastor Ruben Beard and co-pastor Armando Aguirre conducted the baptism.



**Octoberfest 2019.** More than 100 from inside and outside the district gathered October 18-20 at the Jasper, AR, church for Octoberfest. “Together in Him” was the theme, with fellowship and worship during the weekend. Different speakers motivated the church to become **one** in spirit, mind, and faith.



**Heart change.** Women in Area 3 (Houston, TX) met October 4-6 for a local retreat, focusing on the theme “Change My Heart.” Our sisters enjoyed the word delivered by speakers Bertha Ramirez and Eva Delgado.



**Super Sabbath - Dallas.** Approximately 400 brethren in Area 1 celebrated Super Sabbath on October 26 in Dallas, TX. Several preachers, including Noe Araniva, Jose Luis Ramirez, and Isaías Moran, spoke on the theme of “God’s Existence.” A group of brothers and sisters from all different congregations in the area led worship.



**Super Sabbath - Claremore.** Churches from all over Oklahoma assembled at the Claremore, OK church on October 26 for a blessed time of fellowship, worship, and communion. After worship led by pastor Barry Mauldin, Elder Gerson Gonzalez preached and encouraged the churches to ensure that every family becomes a vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century family. Superintendent Chip Hinds prayed over the business meeting and for the area leadership. A presentation of the IMC's and Media Ministry's work was given. We praise the Lord for His presence!

## West Coast

Contributors: Martha Ling and Ruth Martinez



**Helping couples.** SoCal SWORD held its third annual couples workshop October 13-14. The "Guard Your Heart" theme, led by Brother Jose Hernandez from Las Vegas, focused on four topics for improving communication. Nine couples and fourteen children participated in this special two-day event. We hope to keep encouraging marriages to build stronger families that represent God's love.



**Celebrating beauty.** The SWD Women's Conference was a success in San Antonio, TX, on October 26. With "You are Beautiful" as the theme, more than 200 women from all over the district gathered to celebrate their beauty in Jesus Christ. Different speakers talked about the importance of focusing on the Lord's beauty, rather than on the world's point of view. The women attended workshops and enjoyed creating crafts together, listening to special presentations by several district churches, and learning the importance of helping the IMC to continue its work.



**Caring for others.** During the GC Convention, SWORD held an outreach for the homeless community in Albuquerque by assembling 329 care kits. Due to the busy schedule during convention, the young adults couldn't deliver the packages. On July 27 the Albuquerque church delivered the care kits to the homeless community. Thank you to everyone who supported the efforts with donated items and financial contributions, to the young adults who assembled the packages, and to the Albuquerque church for delivering the items to the community.



**Special recognition.** On October 5 the Albuquerque church was given an award for their support during convention. Brethren, your example as the body of Christ has been engraved in our hearts. May you continue to serve the Lord with abounding love.



**Intentional faith.** *The Bravehearted Tribe, in participation with SoCal SWORD, held a Sunset Gathering on August 17. The theme was about being intentional with our faith. Brother Alex Baez from the San Diego church spoke on finding what motivates our relationship with Christ. It is more than just sharing our faith; Jesus calls us to live it out.*



### Finding Refreshment

On September 11 many seniors wound their way through the rural hills near Cave Junction, Oregon, to attend retreat at Sis-Q Meadows Camp. What a “Time of Refreshing” more than 60 seniors experienced through September 15. They were reminded how our Shepherd provides for, cares for, and walks us through all seasons of our lives, depicted in Psalm 23.

The Holy Spirit intertwined this beautiful message through the many presenters, using their God-given talents to share their experiences and knowledge of His daily workings in our lives. Thanks to all who helped, and God’s blessings on everyone as we look forward to next year’s retreat: September 9-13, 2020.

## Great Commission Video Series

Inspired by the Northeast District’s creation of the TVR Sabbath school video series and its success, the GC has partnered with the NED’s video production team to create a new video series on the Great Commission. It features active Church ministries (Great Commission stories) and lives that have been transformed by Christ (transformation stories).

We think you’ll enjoy this video testimony as we celebrate the work God is doing in us and through us. Together, we’re building His kingdom one friend at a time.

We’ll release one or two videos each month for the next six months. If you enjoy the series, please continue supporting projects like these through your gifts to Issachar Forum ([cog7.org/giving](https://cog7.org/giving)). We’re releasing the videos here: <https://cog7.org/featured-videos/>. Check it out now, and save the link!



## Core Executive Team Meets

GC President Loren Stacy and Executive Director Jody McCoy met with our seven GC district superintendents (Orville Rose, Western Canada; Larry Zaragoza, West Coast; Ken Lawson, Central; Chip Hinds, Southwest; Leeroy Williams, Eastern Canada; Heber Vega, Northeast; Steve Krome, Southeast) in Denver, Colorado, October 28-29. This administrative team meets monthly via telephone and, at least twice each year, face-to-face.

During this, the second in-person meeting of 2019, President Stacy, Executive Director McCoy, and our district superintendents reviewed the progress made over the past three years of TVR (Transforming Vision into Reality) and mapped the course to be followed between now and the 2021 GC Convention. Our theme for these coming months will be “Focus on Jesus and Follow His Plan.”

Among many other things considered and accomplished, or assigned, during this meeting, this group reviewed the GC’s financial plan and agreed on the use of similar forms and procedures; created a uniform

approach to the election of district board members for review by the GC board of directors; agreed on new protocols regarding invitations to guest speakers; and reviewed and suggested improvements to the annual Church assessment. The next scheduled face-to-face meeting of this team is March 29-31, 2020.



## Promises to Keep

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,/But I have promises to keep,” wrote American poet Robert Frost in one of his beloved poems. We can all relate. We, too, have promises to keep. Other things call to us, but our promises are our priorities. People rely on us to fulfill our commitments.

This is at least as true within the context of the General Conference as it is in any other area of important relationships. When we joined ourselves to a Conference congregation, we entered into a membership covenant. We promised to conduct ourselves in ways that promote unity, and support our congregation and the GC as a whole with our finances and participation. Similarly, when our congregations joined the GC, they committed themselves to support the Conference as a whole – doctrinally, financially, and organizationally. We all have promises to keep.

Whether as individuals or as congregations, we make these commitments because we see the value in joining ourselves with other believers who hold similar understandings of God and His Word. A congregation of believers can do many things for the cause of Christ that an individual believer cannot do alone – or as effectively. The same is true regarding individual congregations. Whether as individuals or as congregations, we are better together.

Think of what we can accomplish as the General Conference that none of our individual congregations could accomplish as well, if at all. Working together as the GC, we educate future pastors for ministry (Artios and its predecessors), set ministerial standards, license ministers, provide doctrinal stability, and resolve doctrinal concerns (North American Ministerial Council). We publish a top-notch magazine (*Bible Advocate*), a church-wide newsletter (*Churchright*),

## ASLEEP IN JESUS

### Tom Robinson

1940 - 2019

Pastor Tom Robinson, Church of God (Seventh Day) leader and minister within and among our greater Los Angeles, California congregations for decades, passed away September 7, surrounded by family. Born November 19, 1940, he was 78 years old and held a Retirement Ministerial License from our North American Ministerial Council at the time of his death. He is survived by his wife, Irene, and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.



Pastor Robinson worked with Elder Trinidad Padilla in the early days of the San Fernando, California church, and he served that congregation as its pastor for almost twenty years following Elder Padilla's departure. For a time Brother Robinson also served as assistant pastor and pastor of the Pasadena, California congregation, and as pastor of the Lakewood, California congregation for a number of years.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

The General Conference extends its condolences to the Robert Coulter family in the recent passing of his son, Eric.

and Bible study materials (Sabbath school quarterlies, children's curriculum, and Bible tracts). We create and maintain a vibrant identity (web presence, logo, and trademarks). We develop promotional items (posters, welcome booklets, and brand products of various kinds). We even work with our international body (IMC) to develop ministries and churches around the world (GC Missions and its associated ministries). We are better together.

During our 2017 convention, the membership, meeting in formal business sessions, completed a yearslong process by adopting new (revised) bylaws for the Conference. These contain “promises to keep” – commitments to fulfill – for all members and member congregations. In the process of adopting these bylaws, the membership also voted to give each GC congregation three full years to bring its own bylaws

and practices into full agreement with the new bylaws. The end of that three-year period is July 2020, a deadline that is fast approaching.

While there are many significant “promises to keep” within our GC bylaws, one of the most important is to faithfully follow the financial plan our membership has established. Members give tithes locally and trust their congregation to retain (in most cases) 75 percent of these funds for local needs, and to send the remaining 25 percent to its district. Each district (in most cases) retains 10 percent of the total tithes received by its congregations to support district work, and sends the remaining 15 percent to the Conference to support its work. As we honor our commitments as members, congregations, and districts, we enable our entire General Conference to function effectively. Without the faithfully given tithes and offerings from members or the faithful participation of congregations and districts in our financial plan, our entire General Conference cannot exist and fulfill our purposes.

For these reasons and to fulfill its responsibility to the membership, the GC board of directors has instructed the GC president to ensure that all congrega-

tions are fulfilling their commitments to abide by the financial provisions of the bylaws. As a result, the district superintendents and their leadership teams are working with the pastors and leaders of their congregations to help meet or beat the July 2020 deadline. Members and leaders of congregations that have not yet brought their bylaws and practices into agreement with the GC bylaws may receive in-person contacts and/or written communications from their district superintendents and/or area representatives urging them to do so. Please cooperate with these faithful servants as they implement the decisions agreed on by the GC membership almost three years ago.

We highly value each member and member congregation of our General Conference. We are better together. In order to remain together and thrive, each member and congregation must fulfill all of the commitments agreed upon. Let’s do this and help grow the kingdom of Christ as individuals, congregations, districts, and the General Conference. “The woods are lovely, dark and deep,/But [we] have promises to keep,/And miles to go before [we] sleep,/And miles to go before [we] sleep.”

## GC Ministries

Faithfully support our ministries with your prayers and financial giving —

Help us focus on bringing Christ to the world.

Thank you!

