

SPRING CLEAN YOUR LIFE

How to freshen up your
home, health, finances
and spiritual life

**RETREAT AT
LEONI MEADOWS
BRINGS CHURCHES
TOGETHER**

**IN WHAT AREA OF
YOUR LIFE WOULD
YOU LIKE TO
GROW?**

**A CONSCIENTIOUS
OBJECTOR'S INSPIRING
STORY OF FAITH**



Change Your Life



As this year enters its second quarter, many of those New Year's resolutions may have already been forgotten or abandoned. By now, a lot of people are attempting to catch up with their plan to exercise every day, lose weight, or read the whole Bible in a year. The good news is that the solution to keeping the promises we make to ourselves is easier than it seems. And Spring gives us a chance to begin anew, so keep reading because I have a challenge for you at the end of this column!

I will always remember my Dad repeating one phrase of Og Mandino's book, *The Greatest Salesman in the World* when I was little: "I will form good habits and become their slave." This is one of the great secrets to accomplishing anything. When we form a habit, it becomes part of us and we do the task without really thinking about it, like when we tie our shoelaces. To form a habit, whether good or bad, we just need to repeat the action as many times as it takes for it to become automatic. According to a study done by the University College of London, it takes 66 days on average to form a new habit. In the study, 96 people took from 18 to 254 days for a habit to stick. To break a habit, experts agree that there is no typical time frame.

We all would like to make some positive changes in our lives. We have to understand that this journey is not easy, and will require a consistent effort. If we want to achieve a permanent change there is no shortcut - like following a strict

diet for 3 weeks and then compensating for the "weight loss" afterwards. We need to repeat a desired action until it is a habit and then becomes part of our lifestyle.

So here is my challenge for you: For the next 30 days, focus on one new habit you want to form. Whether your goal is to exercise, be grateful, prioritize your time, or go to bed early, here are a few steps that will help you achieve your goal.

1. Identify your goal and put it in writing; outlining your motivation, any obstacles, and your strategy to overcome them.
2. Break down your goal into daily actions.
3. Commit yourself to it 100%, preferably to others who will hold you accountable to them.
4. Record your progress visually.
5. Reward yourself for each victory.
6. If you fail, evaluate your weak points, develop a new strategy, and try again. And...
7. Send us your success story! We will print it in the next Connection.

This Connection issue shares some great tips on how to Spring Clean different areas of your life (see pages... and...). Get inspired, start changing your life by choosing one of them and then tell us about it (you can send an email to connection@saccentral.org). I can't wait to hear your stories! And speaking of a story - André Hope shared his. Go to page 9 and read about his test of faith when he was in the Army.

Until our next issue... wishing you a Happy Spring!

Aline Henda
Editor-in-Chief



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THE **C**entral Connection

The Central Connection is a publication of the Sacramento Central Seventh-day Adventist Church
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DOUBLE SHOWERS AT THE 3RD ANNUAL CHURCH RETREAT IN LEONI MEADOWS



Elder Randy Skeete



By Tyra Taylor
Staff Writer

Photos: Nathan Earnest

From March 4-6, 2016, Sacramento Central SDA held its third annual church retreat at Leoni Meadows. The special speaker was Elder Randy Skeete and the theme for the weekend was, "In the world, but not of the world." Along with members from Sacramento Central, there were retreat attendees from at least five different sister churches. About 160 people participated for the entire weekend, and another small group attended just for Sabbath services.

In addition to being showered with rain, retreat attendees received "showers of blessings" through the powerful messages shared by Elder Skeete. The youth sessions were facilitated by Pastor Dana, the Kid's Kingdom program was led by Amy Maldonado, and the Sabbath afternoon sessions included speakers Dr. Allen Davis and Dr. Akash Singh, with his wife Neelam Singh. Topics discussed during the retreat included opportunities for witnessing, suggestions for effective stewardship, and how to avoid temptation. Youth attendees were provided with tips for successfully navigating life, and children learned about the awesome life of Daniel. Retreat attendees were also blessed with special music provided by a small group of choristers from Weimar and musical selections by Jennifer Buttery and Urie Gabriel.

The retreat provided attendees with an opportunity to take time away from their normal routines and fellowship with one another at the beautiful, serene Leoni Meadows campground. It was a blessing to be part of such a large group of people gathered together to hear the words of Christ.



A CALL TO PRAYER

By Hope Beale

The early Church began when individuals, following Christ's instruction, spent 10 days praying together for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They searched deep within their hearts, feeling their need of God, and claiming His power. They also sought - through prayer - for fitness to do a greater work for Him. The Spirit of God descended upon that waiting group without measure... thousands would join the Church.

With this in mind, each year Seventh-day Adventists around the world are invited, from January 6 through January 16, to gather in large and small groups to pray together for 10 days. This year Sacramento Central responded to this invitation and for eleven days, we met for one hour each evening in the Chapel to pray. We sang hymns, praised God, and confessed our sins to a loving Savior. We read scriptures and passages from Ellen White's messages; we made our supplication and intercession for others, and always ended with giving thanksgiving to God.

There were some that met in their homes, uniting their voices and hearts, praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Not one who participated was disappointed.

The Spirit of God was clearly felt during those 10 days of prayer. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, people who had never before attended prayer services came, others who had not attended for years returned. Too soon, our 10-days together came to an end. During our last evening together, time was set aside for us to share how we had been blessed during our 10 days of prayer.

If you were not able to participate in this wonderful event, don't lose heart; come join us each Tuesday night for Prayer Meeting, where we continue to pray, praise, and worship together. It is truly an extension of those 10 days of prayer, and I promise that you will be mightily blessed.

THEY SHARED:

“ I was blessed to be gathering daily with my sisters and brothers in the faith, expressing our praise, confession, gratitude, and requests before our Lord. It made me think of apostolic days as we prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. ”

- Silvia

“ I could not attend the 10 days of prayer being held at the church because I no longer feel comfortable driving at night. However, a group of us met together at my home to pray. What a blessing! Each night that we met, we felt the power of God with us. Prayers were answered and although the 10 days of prayer have come and gone, we still meet together on Friday nights to pray. ”

- Verica

“ The experience brought me a better understanding of how to pray and how to worship, plus the importance and power of intercessory prayer. ”

- Christine

“ The prayers brought one of my sisters to the sanctuary and my older brother asked for baptism, and all within ten days. ”

- Francisco

“ The presence of God was so real each night as we met together to pray. ”

- Hope



5 WAYS TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR LIFE

By Aline Henda
Editor-in-Chief

The days are longer and brighter, and flowers on the trees show us that Spring is here! Winter is over, and it's time for a fresh start. This is the perfect time for a good Spring cleaning. In addition to getting rid of clutter, washing the curtains, and cleaning behind the sofa, Spring is a good time to extend this cleaning to other areas of our life. Here are 5 ways for spring cleaning your entire life.

1. CLEAN UP YOUR HOME

Eliminate the clutter in your home. Evaluate what you have and throw away or donate what you don't need or use. Declutter your closet. Reorganize the kitchen cupboards and pantry, and even rearrange the furniture to freshen up your home. Make your living space beautiful. Bring home a new plant, organize all the drawers and your workspace. And do something about that mess that is on the back of your mind and stressing you out.

2. TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Choose an exercise you enjoy and move your body. Start slowly if it has been a while since you last exercised, but do it frequently. Consistency is key, so make time for exercise every day. Buy a new exercise outfit for extra motivation.

Take this opportunity to start changing your eating habits too, by choosing whole, unprocessed foods, reducing portion sizes and eliminating sugar. Throw away the junk food in your pantry and fridge. Eat more fruits and veggies, thus increasing your nutrients and fiber intake. Increase your water intake. Sleep more. Little changes can make a big positive impact, but remember that it's not a short diet or working out

sporadically that will change your life; you need to change your daily lifestyle.

3. SPRING CLEAN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Spring cleaning applies to your emotional life as well. Some relationships are toxic and can drain your energy, affect your self-worth, and be detrimental to your health and happiness. Sometimes toxic friendships and painful memories hold you back from being truly happy. It's time to take responsibility for your own actions and release the negative influences in your life - the people associated with pain, frustration, and trauma. Identify what you want and need to bring the right relationships into your life - whether intimate, social or professional.

4. REVIEW YOUR SCHEDULE

So often we are overwhelmed with tasks and involved in too many activities. Drop those that are draining your energy and causing you to waste time. Identify how you are spending your time in order to make space for what is really important and what you truly enjoy. As we begin Sabbath on Friday at sunset, start your next day in the evening, at least before

sleeping – preparing yourself for the next day by planning and prioritizing what is important. Don't be afraid to say no; you can do it graciously.

Also, take time to clean out your mind. Make a commitment to spend from 5 to 20 minutes by yourself, going for a walk, resting, meditating, or praying. Stay away from your cell phone, computer, or TV to prevent distracting you during this time.

5. CLEAN UP YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE

Review your spending to see where you can cut expenses and start saving. Identify the things that you really need, and all those that could be cut out. This will help you have a clear sense of your spending habits that will help you live within your income.

Create a budget to take control of your spending

and manage it to keep on track of your goals. Shred old bills and financial documents (except those you need to save) and develop a plan of action to pay your debts.

You don't have to do everything all at once. Focus on one thing at a time. In a world where multi-tasking seems to be the norm, concentrating on one goal is actually more productive and less stressful. And through all the challenges that we will need to address in Spring cleaning our lives this year, we know we can always count on the help of our Father in heaven. Because "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13).

Cleaning Your Spiritual Life

By Kristine Butler
Staff Writer

When someone says, "I'm cleaning up my life," they usually mean they are giving up some habit or addiction in order to live a better, happier, more Christ-like life. But how does one "clean up" their life?

The Bible informs us that we are all selfish sinners to the core of our being, and as helpless to change ourselves as the leopard is able to change his spots. "Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil." (Jeremiah 13:23 NKJV)

Sometimes we are tempted to think that we can "clean up" a problem area of our lives by our own determined efforts.

But only God can change and cleanse US.

In the Bible God assures us that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to CLEANSE US from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9 NKJV) Only God can do the cleansing that we need. He cleanses US. He doesn't merely "clean up" different areas of our lives.

You can live a Spirit-filled life. And



surrendering ourselves to God for Him to cleanse us is our choice. A relationship with God has a profound ripple effect upon every relationship and interaction we have with others. It affects everything we think and say and do. The Holy Spirit will shine through all areas of our lives when He lives within us. The joy that fills our hearts, and the peace that He gives us is the result of the Holy Spirit at work within us, to will and to do of His good pleasure. This is not simply "spring cleaning" but a day by day, moment by moment experience.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)

IMPROVING YOUR HEALTH FOR A NEW YOU

By Karen Medeiros
Staff Writer

Want to reduce your risk of dying from heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, and high blood pressure? Exercise and eat a plant-based diet. Studies have shown that exercise is extremely important in improving overall health.

We were created to move. Active people live longer than inactive persons. Exercise helps your immune system function optimally, fighting disease! A plant-based diet reduces chronic inflammation in your body. Chronic inflammation contributes to heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, and decreases the effective function of the immune system.

As Seventh-day Adventists we have been given a health message from our Creator. He has provided us with an abundance of wholesome food. We are to, "abstain from



every stimulating kind of food, and eat wholesome, simple foods."

"We see all over the world how appetite has controlled the reason, and beclouded the perceptions of men, and has taken the foundation from the character. Through the indulgence of appetite men have come to a position where it is impossible for them to discern the light of God." Last year Dr. Ted Hoehn spoke about the "The Protein Myth" during a Healthy Plate Cooking Class. "All the protein our body needs can be found in a plant-based diet," he said.

One Bowl Meals were suggested as Inflammation Fighters: consisting of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. The following recipe was demonstrated and samples were served.

Recipe

SPICY GARBANZO BEAN AND VEGETABLE TOPPING

For a one bowl meal.

- 2 13-oz cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed (or your bean of choice)
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 3 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- 1 13-oz can crushed tomatoes
- 1 ½ cups vegetable stock
- 1 cup cubed butternut squash
- 1 cup green beans, cut into pieces
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tsp. dried oregano



Sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil for 2 minutes, then add cumin and chili powder and cook for 1 minute. Add the garbanzo beans, crushed tomatoes and stock to the pan, bring to a boil, then add the squash, green beans, tomato paste, and oregano. Cover the pot with a lid and simmer for ½ hour or until the squash and green beans are tender. Remove the lid, simmer uncovered for 10 minutes to reduce the liquid and thicken the sauce. Serve over your choice of whole grain: brown rice, farro, freeka or quinoa. (Farro and Freeka are both wheat products, for the gluten sensitive). Liquid can be adjusted to ensure veggies are cooked. Serves 4 to 6 persons.

SPRING CLEANING YOUR CLOTHES CLOSET

By Ruthie Flynn
Copy Editor

God's ideal for us is to rightly represent Him in every area of our lives. As Adventist Christian women of any age, this clearly includes dressing modestly, appropriately, and attractively for church, in our workplace, and even in our casual wear. A beloved pastor summed it up in the best way I have heard yet: We should dress so that when anyone looks at us, their eyes should be drawn to our faces, where they will see God's love shining in our smile."

Worldly fashion promotes baring as much of our bodies as we dare—but God invites us to live by His principles and standards. When our hearts are in tune with God's plan for our lives, and we choose to dress by God's principles of modesty and what is appropriate and attractive for any occasion, this goal is far easier to achieve than we might think.

When we factor in the principle of dressing affordably, those of us who live in North America have an added advantage of thrift stores, especially Goodwill stores, as well as stores like Ross and Wal-Mart. God has truly enabled us to live by all of His principles, including good stewardship of the resources He has entrusted to us. The underlying principle of why Adventist Christians have traditionally



chosen to not wear jewelry is to have more financial resources to give to the cause of God. Thus we can help give the gospel to the world, but also help support humanitarian ministries who are striving to provide clean water, nutritious food, warm clothing and bedding, shelter, and education for millions of persons and families who are simply struggling to survive until tomorrow. Our current overwhelming refugee crisis and escalating persecution of Christians worldwide has multiplied our responsibility to the lost, the last, and the least.

Long skirts and dresses are classic wardrobe items that are timeless. They can be paired with warm sweaters or cardigans during cold weather, and attractive blouses

or knit tops for warmer weather. Not only are they appropriate for church, but they can be ideal for dressing in our workplace. Even casual wear during hot summer weather can be modest, yet comfortable and attractive.

God longs to help us simplify our lives, and living by His principles truly simplifies all our choices, including how we dress day by day. As we transition from winter to warmer weather clothing, our challenge is to evaluate each item of clothing in our closet by God's principles. Let's keep the ones that rightly represent Him, and clear out all the others.

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV))



"WHO ARE YOU?"

In spring 1983, the US Army assigned me to the 25th infantry division at Schofield Barracks Army Base in Hawaii. As a conscientious objector, I knew that I was not supposed to be in an infantry unit.

By **André Hope**

As a matter of fact, my job title was nursing and I was supposed to be assigned to the hospital. After informing the unit commander and the first sergeant that I may be in the wrong unit I was told that they would look into it and get back to me; but they never did.

Six months later the division commander called for a division-wide command inspection with weapons. On the day of the inspection everyone in my unit went to the arms room and signed out their assigned weapon. That is, everyone except for me. When the call was given to fall into formation I stood in my place. Since I was on the front rank it did not take long for the unit commander to see that

I did not have a weapon. When he ordered me to fall out of formation and to report to the arms room to sign out a weapon I answered him with a strong, "No, Sir!" Since the general was now inspecting my unit, the unit commander ordered me to fall out of formation and wait for him in his office, I answered, "Yes, Sir!" and followed his order.

After the inspection was over the commander came into his office, and he was very angry. He ordered me to go to personnel to sign out my records and bring them to him. When I returned he informed me that he would be going through my records and if he could not find my conscientious objector paperwork he would give me the order to sign

out a weapon, and if I refused he would put me in jail and later cut me out of the Army.

It only took the commander about 10 minutes to find my conscientious objector paperwork. It was right where it was supposed to be, behind my enlisted papers. The commander now knew that he could not legally order me to sign out a weapon. However, he twice ordered me to sign out a weapon anyway, and each time I answered him with a "No, Sir!" At this time the commander ordered the first sergeant to have an M16 rifle brought into the unit office. Once he returned with the weapon the commander told the first sergeant to throw the rifle at me and told me



that I had better not let it fall on the floor. The first sergeant followed the commander's order and threw the rifle at me, the rifle hit me in the chest and fell to the floor. When I was told to pick it up I answered with a "No Sir!" The commander got into my face and shouted that he was going to put me in jail and that he would see to it that I would be out of the Army, and he ended by shouting, "Get out of my office!"

As I left the commander's office I knew that he would try to do just what he said he would, but I knew that God would take care of me. I could not see how He would work things out for me, so I set out to take care myself.

Twenty-four hours after the

command inspection, I was on my way to see the 25th infantry division chaplain. By this time the whole division knew what had happened at my unit the day before, and all eyes were on me to see what would happen to me. The chaplain was a civilian Baptist pastor, but after talking with him for over an hour, I knew that he did not understand my convictions as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian soldier. I was looking for someone who could help me get out of this infantry unit and into the hospital, but this chaplain informed me that the job of the Army was to protect the country, and to protect the country might mean that I would need to kill people to protect my homeland. He advised me, "Why don't you just go back to your unit and sign

out a weapon and begin your firearms training. This will make you a better soldier."

After the visit with the division chaplain, which was a waste of time, I was called to my battalion commander's office. When I got to the office he informed me that he did not like me and would be backing up the recommendation of my unit commander, and would do everything in his power to put me out of the Army.

The battalion commander and I did not like each other at all. When I first got to the unit the battalion had appointed me to be the unit drug and alcohol officer. About eight weeks before the division inspection I conducted a urine test for my unit, and this test exposed a large number of people, among

them were the unit commander, the first sergeant, the battalion commander, executive commander, sergeant major and a host of battalion level officers. According to Army regulations, any E5 and above rated person, who has a positive drug test is automatically dishonorably discharged. When I completed the paperwork and turned it in to the division Jag officer I was very surprised at what happened.

The Jag officer destroyed my report and threw it in my face. He stated that all the urine that had been collected had been destroyed and there would be no note of this test in any record of the E5 and above in rank, however, the record of the E4 and below would be noted in the field urine test. In my records it would be noted that I had used my office of drug and alcohol officer to harass the officers of my unit. I was stunned! It was at this time I realized that everyone in my unit and at division headquarters was out to get me.



I first went to the division procurement officer, since the whole division knew what was going on. I did not take a lot of time to explain to him what I needed, which was not to be forced to carry a weapon, and to be transferred to the Tripler Army hospital. I stated to the procurement officer that he was

the one person who could clear up this mess. I also stated that all he had to do was to sign his name on the orders and I would be gone to the hospital. He smiled and said, "Yes, I know, and I will be dead in hell before I sign your orders!" Three days later he was dead. It was Sunday and he was scuba diving when he died, but he did not drown, and the cause of his

death is unknown to this day. Three days after his death I got my orders to go to the hospital. I went to see Chaplain Stenbakken a few days before I saw the division procurement officer. Chaplain Stenbakken was the chaplain for the Hawaiian command, but I was not under his jurisdiction since I was at Schofield barracks. Chaplain Stenbakken had just been passed over for promotion to colonel. His was his third time of being passed over and once you have been passed over three times, you will soon be out of the Army. Chaplain Stenbakken was also a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Because we were members of the same church it made it easy to talk to him.

During this time I had given up. I told my wife that I had looked everywhere for help and found none. I thought maybe God wanted me out of the Army, It was my 10th anniversary with the Army and I only needed 10 more years before retirement. It was at this low point that I saw the hand of God. Only after I had let go of trying to take care of things myself, did God enter the situation.

“He smiled and said, “Yes, I know, and I will be dead in hell before I sign your orders!” Three days later he was dead.”

For some reason that neither Chaplain Stenbakken nor I know of, Congress turned their votes around and promoted Chaplain Stenbakken to colonel. This



With his parachute, ready for a mission



“When you let go and let God fight your battles He is phenomenal.”

promotion made him the chaplain for the entire Pacific basin, which put me under his jurisdiction. Chaplain Stenbakken was now able to come to my unit, which he did. He let the battalion and my unit commander know that he would be pressing charges against the two of them if they did not stop their illegal harassment of me, because they knew that I had been granted conscientious objector status by order of Congress. He also informed them that if they did not stop what they were doing he would be back, and they would not like what would happen.

After Chaplain Stenbakken left, my unit commander looked at me with his mouth open and asked me one question, “Who are you? You have people from Pacific command headquarters defending you! Just who in the hell are you!” When you let go and let God fight your battles He is phenomenal.

The next thing that happened was that the battalion commander, executive commander and command sergeant major were all demoted one rank and discharged from the Army. They were charged with harassment, destruction of evidence (the urine test that I conducted and the related paperwork), conspiracy to entrap, intimidation, and creating a hostile work environment.

The company commander of headquarters was relieved of duty and sent to a different unit. He was also charged with harassment and intimidation.

As this situation unfolded there were many people, for various

reasons, keeping an eye on what was happening. There were two people whom I remember well, because it was my situation that caused both of them to become ministers. One was in the Seventh-day Adventist church (we will call him John in the Bible) and the other one was in the Baptist Church (we will call him Luke for Luke in the Bible).

John worked in headquarters Company, and he worked for me as one of my nurses. What I didn't know was that John was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor who had gotten upset with something in the church, so he left the church and joined the Army. Later John told



André Hope in 1981, after his graduation as a nurse

me that he was watching as I made my stand against the Army and that I caused him to rejoin the Adventist church and to return to the ministry.

Luke worked in Delta Company where he was an M60 machine gun operator. Luke had also watched the stand that I took, but what I did not know was that Luke was a pastor who had also had trouble in the Baptist church, which drove him to join the Army and leave the church. Luke rejoined the Baptist Church and became a pastor again. These two men knew each other, but did not know that the other was watching me. Luke told me later that he got strength from watching me take my stand. The same day that these men made this stand and came back to God and the church, I got my orders to report to Tripler Army Hospital.

As I reflect on those days, I can now see the moving of God in this situation, I can see that God put me into the infantry unit, that God knew I would stand strong in the situation, and that John and Luke would gain strength from watching me. Always stay with God and be ready to go wherever God sends you. We have no idea whom we may be able to save with our witness.

Some 4 1/2 months after this situation started and three months after I was moved to the hospital; I got a full understanding of what Satan was trying to do. I was working in the cardiac ward as assistant head nurse, and one night we had no patients and the ward was quiet. I received a phone call from the emergency room that I had a patient coming up to the cardiac ward who was in full cardiac arrest. We put him in our cardiac arrest room where, after some time, we were able to get him into

a stable sinus rhythm. Some hours later I began to work on his records, and I looked at his name and unit that he was in. I recognized who he was, that this was the first sergeant of the headquarters unit to which I was assigned in the 25th infantry division at Schofield barracks Army base. Now the first sergeant never did anything against me while I was in headquarters Company, but he also never did anything to help me.

He was now resting peacefully and had not seen me. I completed the paperwork and went off shift. The next night I came to work and found the first sergeant was awake and doing well. After the nurses' report I went into the first sergeant's room because he was my patient for the night. When he looked up, I could see in his eye that he recognized me-- and he went into cardiac arrest! Within 30 minutes, after calling a code, the first sergeant was stable again. I let him know that I was not going to hurt him.

Three nights later, the first sergeant called me into his room and after asking me to sit down, he told me that he wanted to make things right with God and with me, I told him that it was not necessary, but he insisted. The first sergeant told me that when I was in his infantry unit, the battalion commander and the executive commander did not care if I carried a gun or not, what they wanted was for me to just put one finger, just one hand on the gun, so they could put me in jail. The first sergeant also told me that if I had put just one finger on the gun they were ready to arrest me and charge me with falsifying government records, by stating that I was a conscientious objector, and then by putting my hands on the gun would make my statement false. hat would be

enough to put me in jail and then to put me out of the Army. What the commander had not counted on was my strong faith in God and my willingness to stand for Him no matter what. After the first sergeant had told me this and how the division high command tried to intimidate me and failed, I then understood that God had put me in that infantry unit to save someone else, in this case John and Luke.

All too often we cry to God about the situation we find ourselves in, and we say, "God, why me? Why let me go through this pain and trouble." We are too selfish to see that God is using us to save others. If I had cried, why me, what would have happened to John and Luke? We must open our hearts to God, trust in His leading in our lives, and we may save more than our own souls.



Photo: Aline Henda

André Hope in 2016. He is an Elder at Sacramento Central church and volunteers for the church's Media and The Food Closet Ministries

Inspiration

“'God is love' is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green -- all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy.”

**- Ellen White,
Steps to Christ**

March/April 2016



We Asked

Photos by Nash Carlisle

“What area in your life would you like to grow?”



“So what I truly believe I need growth in is knowing God and understanding His word more.”

- Stephanie Nagy



“Doing my devotions and keeping consistent. In general to manage my time wisely.”

- Gabriel Contreras



“I’d like to have more confidence in teaching Bible studies and being a more effective witness in sharing my faith with my neighbors and family members with out being dogmatic about it.”

- Karen Johnson



I would have to say my spiritual life. Spending more quality time in seeking and listening to His voice. It's so easy to just offer a prayer throughout my busy day. But I realize, just as in nurturing any relationship, it's important to listen and to study His Word daily.

- Dennis Mitchell

BAPTISMS

Photos by JeAnn Davis

January 16



Hellen Shaw and Margie DeLaRosa

February 20



Lindsay Duncan Smith

- Margie DeLaRosa,
By Pastor Mike Thompson
- Hellen Shaw
By Pastor Fred Dana
- Lindsay Duncan Smith
By Pastor Mike Thompson

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Corneliu Taylor

02/20/2016

By Pastor Chris Buttery





Pastor's Corner

Pastor Chris Buttery

NEW LIFE

It's that time of year when the Northern Hemisphere once more begins its tilt toward the Sun. As this occurs we see spring flowers blossom, people coaxed outdoors, and new life appear everywhere. The changing of the season surrounds us in gardens, parks, zoos, farms, and more. Is there anything better than signs of new life?

You have no doubt heard of John Harvey Kellogg. Dr. Kellogg was the Medical Director of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and a faithful member of the Dime Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist Church in Battle Creek, MI. On all accounts it appeared as though he was truly a committed Christian man.

After the Minneapolis meetings in 1888, the famous General Conference session that heard the stirring messages of righteousness by faith presented by A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner, it was said of Dr. Kellogg that he became converted as a result of those messages. The implication was that until that point Dr. Kellogg may not have been converted.

It is important to note that others didn't just believe in Dr. Kellogg's conversion because he said he was converted; There was evidence in his life that indeed he was a changed person. People could see the change.

What could they see?

Dr. Kellogg took an interest in caring for Adventist orphaned children and aging Adventist ministers. His plan was to build homes for them. He also started a visiting nurses program to help those who couldn't avail themselves of care at the Sanitarium. In addition, he organized the "Christian Help Band" which was comprised of individuals who would go out into assigned sections of town in search of those who needed food, clothing, or firewood, and to teach people health and hygiene.

The change in Kellogg's heart was seen in his loving actions of concern for others.

This reminds me of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Evidence of conversion, or new life in the heart, according to Jesus, will be seen in good works – acts of thoughtfulness and kindness toward the poor, the lonely, the uneducated, the sick, and the lost. Prompted by the love of Christ they will have hands ready to help, feet swift to aid, and hearts burning to bring relief.

This experience can only be ours if we turn our faces toward the Son of Righteousness, Who alone can warm our hearts with His love. I want to experience this every day. How about you? Can others see signs of new life in you?





March

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| 1 Marilyn Calise
Joe Chansa
Sergio Juca
Victoria Teppone
Bobbie White | 2 Mile Fa'aiu
Ron Frank
Deante Millard | 3 Ana Kramer
Maria Pena | 4 Jim Laicovsky | 5 Stacey Baudoin
Susana Martinez | 6 Candace Davidson
Joy Wasson | 7 Jaime Arechiga
Brian Boone
Michael Glasser | 8 Duane Abbott
Shari Thompson | 9 Pho Phongmany
Lydia Ramirez
Nikki Sanchez | 10 Nichole Valdivia
Ana Volitilevuka | 11 Danny Cordos
Evica Raduc | 12 Marite Ugarte | 12 Michelle Brown
Jaime Esparza
Arne Jarnbert | 14 Harvey Clark
Josephine Ezenduka
Robert Gloyd
Rose Johnson | 15 Lila Concannon
Raquel Frame-Allen
William Fuller
Anna Gomes
Earnest Hill
Claudia Stanko | 17 Adriana Fuica
Patty Gonzalez
Peter Poroch | 18 Horace Adams
Regina Fuller
Jesse Gabriel
Karen Koehler | 19 Carie Battistone
Rosy Contreras
Jose Galvez Martinez | 20 Briana Sanchez | 21 Bonnie Ensminger
Charissa Karn
Yolanda Price
Anita Williams | 22 Pearl Anger
Robert Barnard
James Lang | 23 Silvanette Ballesteros
Jim Beal
Tammy Wagner | 24 Blanca Chavez
Latisha Glover
Duane Moye | 25 Leonardo Angel
Mariana Cardenas
Jacqueline Clark
Marica Krsulovic
Anthony Simons | 26 Norman Barron
Patrick Cotham
Maraia Ratabua
Maria Vargas | 27 Cindy Anthony
Lotus Fabian | 28 Emmanuel Corpuz
Amy Maldonado
Jose Reyes | 29 Dennis Allen
JeAnn Davis
Ricky Sanchez
David Stover | 31 Boris Vrbeta |
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April

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|--|---|---|
| 3 Esther Jebelean | 14 Joanne Fagaly
Bradley Sear | Cipriano Villanueva
Wesley Whitley |
| 5 Ivy Van Zant Powell
Ezequiel Torres | 15 Maria del Carmen
Galvez | 21 Nichol Klopfenstein |
| 6 Tyra Taylor-Cooks | Gloria Luna | 22 Ruben Cantu
James Stowell
Ahijeihron Yates |
| 7 Lisa Emmanuel
Manuel Juarez
Valerie Taylor | Ivan Esteban Martinez
Diana Mitchell | 23 Jane Elliott |
| 8 Susan Boone
Blake Dorsey | 16 Phyllis Gross
Meridith Lovell | 24 Florina Camelia Izvernari
Jamey Valdivia |
| 9 William Chapman
Latesia Davis
Samantha Kirkpatrick | 17 Oscar de la Rosa
Amber Davidson | 25 Chris Buttery
Ruben Dante Martinez
Kidist Mirach |
| Rudi Oppelt | Peggy Gawley | 26 Gabriela Tablas
Rahela Vrbeta
Jim Wuerstlin |
| 10 Lore Engel
Francis (Buddy) | Adriana Gurrola
Tanya Hall | 27 Alberta Ballard
Omar Nanez |
| Harper | 19 Serena Neuman | 29 Edward Dumitru |
| Alvin Laberinto
Sosse Pambakian- | 20 Angie Beach-
Swiedom | 30 Gregory Atkins
Cheryl Henry
Oleg Kolbach |
| Irwin | Sally Jones | |
| 11 Rhonda Scheer | Christine Trillo | |
| 13 Jeff Kramer | 16 Jack Uyeyama | |

Birthdays Calendar