

CHURCHRIGHT

Doing church right



Pastor Appreciation

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Our pastors do much for us throughout the year, and we are grateful for their service. We urge all our members to express their gratitude to their pastors and families in a special way, remembering what Scripture says: “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24, NKJV).

We are a body in Christ, and together we work in the kingdom of God.

– Daniel Flores
NAMC President

A Spirit-Formed Convention

The 2019 General Conference Convention in Albuquerque (July 1-6) was a joy. For many in various leadership roles, it was the culmination of at least two years of prayer, planning, and preparations. When convention week finally arrived, those who were assigned tasks faithfully fulfilled them. Volunteers selflessly gave of their time to meet pressing needs. Children’s, youth, and young adult programs, six major worship services, twenty-nine adult workshop opportunities, and the required business sessions – all accomplished and accomplished well.

Better yet, our members came – 1,311 completed registrations! A total of 1,174 people attended our Sabbath morning worship, and 1,017 meals were served at our Fourth of July fiesta dinner. Enough of those who came stayed in convention hotels, bought meal tickets, and gave generous offerings – things crucial in making this event a financial success.

Something even more was at the heart of our 2019 convention: attendees displaying the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23a). Plenty of things challenged that good fruit! Any event the size, length, and complexity of a GC convention will have its failings and provide us opportunities to respond poorly. This year’s convention was no exception. Some of us had problems verifying our registrations or memberships. Some were left waiting for a shuttle that never came, and some were disappointed by business session votes. Two in our group had their cars stolen! In spite of such challenges, the overall mood remained positive and encouraging.

Someone has said, “People are like sponges: You don’t know what’s inside them until they are squeezed.” Squeezed or not, it was evident what is inside those who attended this convention: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

I’m filled with gratitude. Thank You, Jesus, and thank you, attendees, for a Spirit-formed convention!

– Loren Stacy



District News

Southwest

Contributor: Jamin Teran

SWD photos taken by SWD Media Ministry



Evangelism training - Area 3. With the theme “Obeying Jesus,” 140 attendees gathered May 3-5 in Houston, TX, to learn how to share the good news with others. They were instructed on how to use their personal testimony in witnessing. Speakers provided real-life scenarios, examples, and necessary tools to obey the call God has given us.

Southeast

Contributor: Steve Krome



Planning ahead. The Southeast District held our annual Youth Leaders Conference May 24-26 at the Ramada Conference Center in Jacksonville, FL. Thirty attendees planned for the youth retreat, scheduled for December in Parrish, FL. A committee of six (Jon Unzueta, Jo Krome, Sharon Modeste, Andre Campbell, Kelly Berduo, and Silverio Sanchez) was appointed for a minimum of two years, and will be responsible for planning future retreats.



Baptism. The Chattanooga church held a baptism for five young ladies on Sabbath afternoon, June 16. Back row (L to R): Sarah Reece, Rachel Hooper, and Elder Forrest (Vandy) Vandergriff. Front row (L to R): Ilaina Dixon, Ally Webb, and Channah Liles. Join us in welcoming these new members to our church family!



Evangelism training - Area 1. Gathering May 10-12 in Dallas, TX, 105 attendees learned the importance of their role as ambassadors of Christ in spreading the good news. Superintendent Chip Hinds recognized the work of Joe and Claudia Acosta, who worked as marriage ministry directors for the past three years in the district.



New pastor. On June 8, Superintendent Chip Hinds and Area Representative Manuel Salazar installed Brother Allo David Sánchez as the new pastor for our sister church, Austin-Eva. Area congregations joined the celebration service. Also, prayer was given for Brother Juan Correa, as he will be leading the Bastrop, TX mission. Please pray for both these men as they serve the Lord.



Men's retreat. Well over 100 men met May 17-19 at Camp Tejas to be encouraged and challenged in the call God has placed on them. Messages on the theme of "Fishers of Men" helped them accept the challenge. We praise the Lord for the opportunity men had to worship, fellowship, and grow spiritually.



Community outreach. On June 9, our sister church, San Antonio-Ceralvo, hosted a community festival. They provided food and clothes to the neighborhood, as well as games and prizes for children and adults. The purpose for this event was to invite our community and children to church and share the gospel with them. We praise the Lord because many responded to the invitation.



SWORD retreat. Fifty young adults from the Dallas and Houston areas gathered May 31-June 2 in Garland, TX, for a SWORD retreat getaway. Three sessions – Remember, Repent, and Return – revolved around remembering our first love: God. Thanks to our sister church Nueva Esperanza for organizing this time of fellowship, worship and communion.



CALENDAR 2019

- August 16-18 - Family Camp, Lake Poinsett, SD
- August 23-25 - Men's Retreat, Chicago, IL
- August 30 - September 2 - Hispanic Women's Retreat, Las Vegas, NV
- September 6-8 - Areas 1 and 2 Women's Retreat, Gladwin, MI
- September 11-15 - Senior Adult Retreat, Sis-Q Meadows, Cave Junction, OR
- September 14 - Super Sabbath, Denver, CO
- September 20-22 - SWORD Retreat, Fall Creek, OR
- September 26-28 - Harvest of Thanks, Alfred, ND
- October 12 - Super Sabbath, Mitchell, SD
- October 12-13 - SoCal SWORD Marriage Workshop, Ontario, CA
- October 26 - Super Sabbath for Areas 2 and 3, Elgin, IL

Artios Events

- July 21 - August 25 - Summer classes in session
- September 16 - Early fall course registration ends
- September 22 - October 27 - Early fall classes in session

For a complete listing of events, please visit churchright.org.



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West Coast

Contributors: Ruth Martinez and Alex Baez



Help for stepfamilies. On April 27, SoCal SWORD presented the *Blended & Blessed* event in partnership with FamilyLife ministry. The online presentation included workshops catered to stepfamilies, step couples, and single parents, and it addressed the unique challenges of stepfamily relationships. The event was open to the public, and four non-CoG7 people attended. We encourage all local churches to participate in the *Blended & Blessed* event next year (April 25, 2020) and minister to the need our church families are facing. We are in this together! Contact sword.socal@gmail.com with any questions.



Free Indeed!

A bonfire overlooking a San Diego sunset kicked off this year's SoCal SWORD Rally (June 7-9). The San Diego worship band led a beautiful time of praise on Friday night, followed by Elder Hector Tavarez encouraging everyone to be "Set Free" and not be afraid. He reminded us that God told a young Jeremiah, "Do not say I am only a youth." God will use you regardless of your age!

On Saturday, Pastor Ruben Davila (Hayward church) focused on the evidence of God and how the truth will set you free. The message on Sunday

morning was that God will remove doubt that seems to overpower us like a mountain. When we seek God, He will remove the doubt from on top of us and place it under our feet.

The weekend ended with a hike up San Diego's Cowles Mountain. It was a powerful gathering, knowing we are free indeed through Christ!



Central

Contributor: Ken Lawson, Superintendent



Battling the Giant

"Fight the Battle Well" was the theme for the Area #1 Men's Camp held in May at Inspiration Point Camp in northwest Minnesota. A main feature was the visit of "Goliath." We fashioned our weapons and pulverized him! This illustrated how we must rely on our Lord's help and use the weapons He has provided so we can defeat the enemy of our souls. Jesse Hopewell, the main speaker, identified who our enemy is (Satan) and taught us the joy of learning the weapons – through the Word – that give us total victory over this persistent enemy.

The camp ended with a powerful prayer time for specific issues men face. Besides the excellent food,

fellowship, and recreation, this camp focused on the spiritual battle we all face. Victory comes through men having a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and being filled by the Holy Spirit. No GIANT issues common to men can ever defeat us. *Victory is ours!*

Northeast

Contributor: Esther Winchell



Super Sabbath. Area 3 held its Super Sabbath May 11 at the Tranquil Valley Retreat Center in Tranquility, NJ. Churches from New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Michigan gathered to celebrate “All in One Spirit and in One Accord.” A beautiful worship time filled the entire Sabbath day.



Special service. On April 27, the new Warsaw Street church in Fort Wayne, IN, held a “Welcome to the Family” service and anointing time for five newly appointed elders. Pastor Heber Vega is pictured praying over the elders.

Faithful servant. You are never too old to serve the Lord! Sister Juana Ayala, a member of the Edison, NJ church, just turned a young 95! She is pictured with Superintendent Heber Vega and Juanita Ayala.



ASLEEP IN JESUS

Wesley Walker

1927 - 2019

James Wesley Walker (92) was born April 27, 1927, in Stanberry, Missouri. He passed away May 26, 2019.



Wesley took his spiritual life seriously. He went to church, hardly ever missing a Sabbath. He met Darlene Poff at the Stanberry church, and they married December 26, 1951.

Wesley became active in the Sacramento, California church as a local elder. As district overseer, Elder Israel Haeger sent Wesley to various churches in the area to speak when there was a need. Over the years the Walkers pastored churches in Lodi and Stockton, California; Tacoma, Washington; Eureka, South Dakota; and Fort Smith, Arkansas.

In 1969 Wesley was elected to the General Conference board of directors and served on it for eighteen years. Since “retiring” from eighteen years of pastoring at Fort Smith, he helped out at various churches in Wister, Shawnee, and Claremore, Oklahoma. In 1999, at age 72, Wesley began pastoring at the McAlester, Oklahoma church, driving 95 miles one way. He retired in December 2018, and in January 2019, began preaching at the church in Kibler, Arkansas.

Wesley is survived by his wife, daughter Orene, son Gilbert, and other family members.

Velma Helen Samson

1922 - 2019

Velma Helen Samson, wife of former evangelist and pastor Emmett Samson, passed away on April 16, 2019, at age 96. Emmett preceded her in death in January 2003.

Velma faithfully supported her husband in his ministry. They resided in many locations in Missouri, Texas, California, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. For the last 54 years she served the church in Portland, Oregon, as custodian, Sabbath school secretary, and greeter.



Convention 2019 News

Business Session

In addition to electing members to the board of directors and Nominating Committee (see “Board of Directors”) and receiving reports, the members-in-session considered a number of proposed amendments to our bylaws. Those that were approved 1) allow members registered to vote at convention but serving the convention outside of the business meeting (for example, in the children’s program) to participate in electing members of the board of directors and of the Nominating Committee; 2) provide for a more efficient balloting process; 3) make the GC president responsible to appoint GC district superintendents, GC Ministries directors, and other administrative personnel (after required consultations with and approvals from district boards and the GC board of directors); and 4) update language regarding the membership of district boards.

Proposed amendments that failed would have 1) enabled members to participate in electing board of directors members via the Internet, without being present at convention; 2) allowed persons to be voting members of General Conference congregations without being members of the General Conference; and 3) clarified the responsibilities and prerogatives of the Amendments Committee.

Other proposed amendments had been given previous notice, but time ran out before they could be brought to the floor.

Board of Directors

The terms of four of the twelve General Conference board of directors members ended at our 2019 convention: Brad Ciavarella (who resigned earlier), Dennis O’Banion, Manuel Salazar, and Larry Zaragoza. During this convention, four members were elected to fill these open positions: Dennis O’Banion, Troy Gedack, Kirk Grant, and Narciso A. Betances. (Manuel Salazar declined nomination, and Larry Zaragoza was made ineligible by our revised bylaws because he serves as our West Coast district superintendent.) The eight members continuing to serve their six-year terms on the board are Mark Caswell, Daniel Flores, Joshua Gutierrez, Samuel Holland, Wayne Hrenyk, Greg Lincoln, Raul Romo, and Reuben Zaragoza.

During the first meeting of this new board (Sunday, July 7), it elected its officers for the coming two years. They are Samuel Holland, chairman; Dennis O’Banion, vice chairman; and Greg Lincoln, treasurer. Hope Dais Clark was appointed secretary to the board. Additionally, the board selected Jon Harvey and John Marlin to serve on the 2019-2021 General Conference Nominating Committee, along with Manuel Salazar and Zuri Gutierrez, the two members elected by GC members during the convention business sessions.

Thanks, Members!

Convention-related contracts with hotels and convention centers are a minefield of potential financial disasters. If enough members don’t attend and pay their registration fees, purchase enough meal tickets, or stay in our convention hotels enough nights, our church can lose tens of thousands of dollars. Promised rebates, subsidies, and free meeting rooms from the hotels, convention centers, and convention and visitors bureaus simply disappear, and we, the Church, must pay the difference. To make matters worse, contract numbers are little more than an educated guess about a conven-

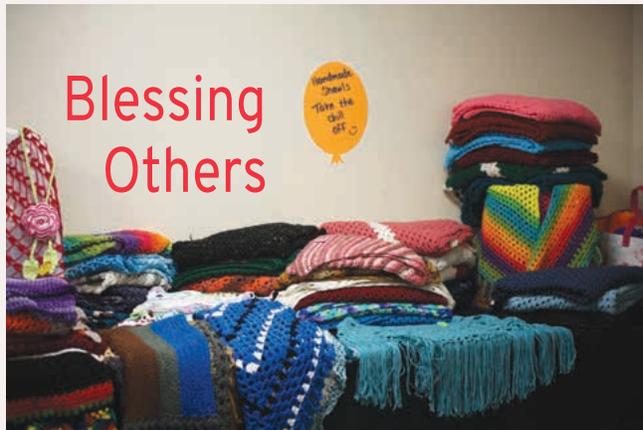




tion to be held two or more years in the future! The stakes are extremely high.

With praise and thanksgiving to God and to those who attended our convention, we are pleased (and relieved!) to report that our hotel and convention center contract obligations were fulfilled. We are receiving those vitally important financial benefits. A final financial report will not be available for weeks to come, but the wonderful cooperation of those who attended (not to mention their generous additional offerings) appear to have made this convention a financial success.

For more convention photos, visit SWD Media Ministries-COG7 on Facebook.



My heart returned to Michigan, overwhelmed by the Lord's goodness and by the sisters who gave to help free the enslaved widows of Pakistan. Compared to the 2017 convention, many sisters participated from outside the Northeast District.

The Women's Luncheon on Friday, July 5, drew 117 women. Brother Bryan Cleeton thanked them for their generosity in 2017, when we helped secure sewing machines for Pakistan widows. Brother Brian Baker gave us background on the enslaved widows and how the brick kiln owners take advantage of them. Brother Tluang also gave us information about children in the orphanage needing backpacks for school. We will have a new endeavor to help them soon.

Thanks to additional donations given at the luncheon, a total of \$1,324.10 was collected to help enslaved widows and orphans. Saturday evening the room was packed with ladies and men purchasing many items. We raised \$3,407 from sales throughout the week, so the grand total we gave to Widows and Orphans was \$4,731.10.

I praise the good Lord for all His blessings and for blessing the women with giving hearts and working hands. Some ladies are already preparing for 2021!

—Esther Winchell



Convention in Covington

The 2021 Convention of the General Conference is scheduled for July 5-10 in Covington, Kentucky, located just across the river from Cincinnati, Ohio. Our meetings will be held in the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. Three hotels will serve our event: Embassy Suites and Marriott Hotel (each adjacent to the convention center) and Holiday Inn (a short walk from the convention center).

Save these dates, watch for coming information, and begin planning now! You don't want to miss our 2021 convention.



November 2 - Annual World IMC Sabbath

Join CoG7 congregations in 44+ nations. Learn about the progress of the international Church. Pray for specific needs. Understand how you can be involved in the Church's global mission. Give an offering of \$1 or more (per local member), earmarked "IMC." Contact your local pastor or gcmisions@cog7.org.

Offerings support leadership training, developing evangelism and discipleship materials for diverse cultures, and church planting in new regions of the world.



For more information, contact gcmisions@cog7.org.



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