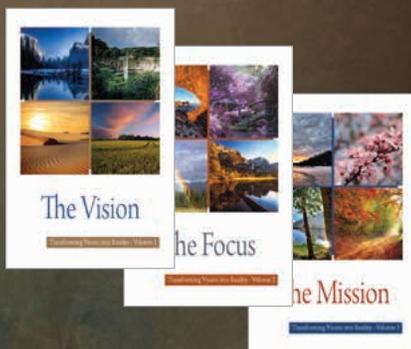


CHURCHRIGHT

Doing church right



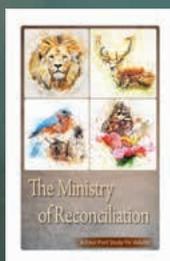
Transforming Vision into Reality Book Series

Four quarterlies in each volume

Volume 1 (*The Vision*) details the ten-point Vision of a Vibrant 21st Century Church, and Volume 2 (*The Focus*) is all about Jesus. In the final volume (*The Mission*) we learn how to follow His plan.

Each student book has 52 lessons and sells for \$12 each, and the teacher's guidebook sells for \$10 each.

Also available: the four-part *Ministry of Reconciliation* Bible Study



Follow His Plan?

The rallying cry of the Church of God (Seventh Day) United States and Canada is "Focus on Jesus and follow His plan." But what is His plan? What does it entail? At least the following:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37, ESV throughout).

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (v. 39).

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34).

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

All these expressions of Christ's plan for His followers fall into the categories of evangelism and discipleship. We are to share the good news concerning Jesus, and when someone receives Jesus as Lord, we are to teach that person to focus on Jesus and follow His plan.

Many Christians seem somewhat afraid of the word (*evangelism*), but that fear may be caused by a misunderstanding of what evangelism should be. It is not trying to convince others that they are wrong and we are right. A Bible-waving Christian in an old Charles Schultz comic exclaims, "I take my religion seriously. I get into arguments almost every day!"

Jesus did not tell His disciples, "You will be My debaters" but "You will be My witnesses." A witness simply tells what was seen, heard, and experienced. A witness for Jesus simply tells what has been learned and experienced concerning Him, and not only with words. Evangelism is how we live, not just what we say.

Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). That's a great place to start. Focus on Jesus and follow His plan!

— Loren Stacy



District News

Southwest

Contributor: Jamin Teran

SWD photos taken by SWD Media Ministry



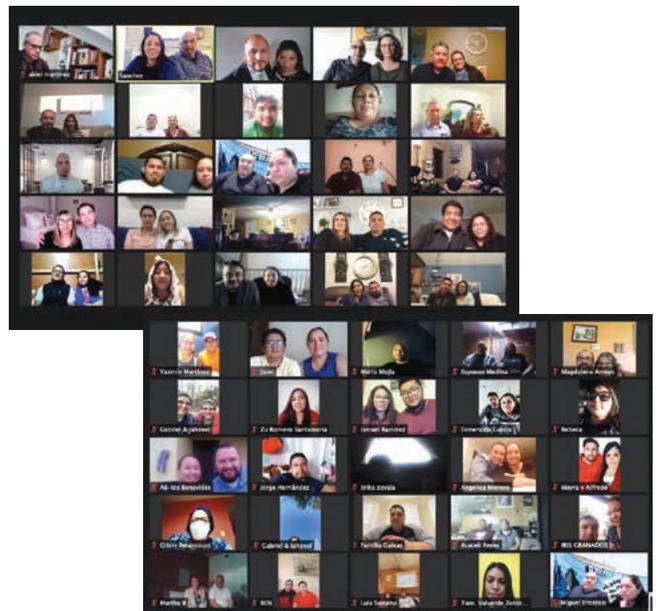
Are You Faithful?

The SWD had its first Super Sabbath of the year February 26-27. Speakers were Pastor Barry Mauldin, Superintendent Chip Hinds, and Elder Antonio Vega, who urged the church to walk by faith and endure in trials and tribulations. They encouraged listeners to live by God's principles regardless of what we face. The theme "Are you Faithful?" confronted the Church on her commitment to the Lord in the midst of our political, personal, and spiritual environment.

Joining worship teams from our sister churches in Brownsville, Texas (Shalom); Jasper, Arkansas; and San Antonio, Texas (Ceralvo), we worshipped virtually for the honor and glory of our Lord. The children participated with their own program, exploring through the life of Daniel what it means to be faithful at their young age. We had a blessed weekend!



Training teachers. The SWD's children's ministry started its teacher training workshops January 31 for all leaders who work with children in the district. This training will be yearlong, providing basic structures, classroom activities, and prior knowledge that can be used with children of any age. Sixty brethren have registered and are taking the courses, with room for more.



Virtual marriage conference. On February 7, the Marriage Ministry of the SWD held a virtual conference called "Biblical Sexuality," led by speakers Zuri and Raquel Gutierrez. Over 100 couples in this Zoom conference were encouraged to work on their communication skills and to explore more details through some of the Church's books on the topic, like Sex: Created, Fallen, and Redeemed.

SWD Upcoming Events

- May 9 - Marriage Ministry Virtual Conference
- May 16 - SWD Men's Ministry Prayer Service



Mini Super Sabbath. The SWD children’s ministry held their mini Super Sabbath on Sunday, February 21, focusing on the theme “My Best Friend.” Children learned that Jesus is their best friend and that He is always there for them. Meeting virtually on their ministry Facebook page, children had opportunities to win prizes during the service.



Senior painting classes. Every Thursday during January, February, and March the seniors ministry of the SWD has provided free painting classes for all our brethren in that demographic group. Folks from all over the district have enjoyed their classes and fellowshiped with others during the sessions.

Central

Contributor: Ken Lawson, superintendent

Zoom!

In my current world, *zoom* has a whole different meaning than the one in the dictionary. And while I am adjusting to it, *I don't like it!* Zoom now means I work many different hours in Zoom meetings.

I sometimes teach a Sabbath school class by a Zoom connection at 9 a.m. on Sabbath. Then I

preach at noon on Zoom with a church in another time zone in our district. During the week, I connect some evenings to local church Bible study groups. We meet often with local church boards on Zoom.

From January to March in this new year, I have had over 25 of these meetings in our “new normal.” These include meetings with the other superintendents and GC officers, board of directors, and NAMC. I have even joined in Zoom meetings with other countries. Some meetings have had well over 100 people connected.

Our Central District board met on March 21 via Zoom this year to plan activities for the rest of 2021 and into 2022. We set our budget (balanced) and planned some evangelism, Super Sabbaths, camps, retreats, and more. For now, our district Super Sabbaths will connect virtually with the Southwest District in their awesome Super Sabbath productions.

Our NAMC License and Credentials Committee met for two long 14-hour days and five straight evenings in February and March. We even had the option to hook up on Zoom from our homes to do a Lord’s Supper!

The Central District has no ministry pictures to share in this *Churchright*. Activities during the pandemic and this past year have been minimal. But most of our churches are back in meetings, and we hope that activity this late spring, summer, and fall will begin to return to normal.



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Congratulations, Pastor Mata! Elder Oscar Mata, pastor in Sioux Falls, SD, was named Hero of the Month for January. The last issue of Churchright reported about his work as a hospital chaplain ministering to COVID-19 patients. As a frontline worker, Oscar has witnessed both victory in recovery and sorrow in watching many people lose their lives. Oscar, you are a hero, and we commend you for your courage and faithfulness.



Central servants. Working out of their home office in Cottage Grove, MN, Ken and Sandra Lawson faithfully serve the district, with Ken as superintendent and Sandra as administrative assistant and coordinator of District Ministries.

This has been their main assignment since May 2016. Ken and Sandra put out the Ministerial Forum, the quarterly magazine for the NAMC. Ken is also the assistant chairman of the License and Credentials Committee. They both retired once and are looking forward to another retirement soon!



Northeast

Contributors: Heber Vega, superintendent, and Esther Winchell

Facebook Blessings

The district office published 90 Facebook videos in 2020, and more than 4.3 million viewers clicked on them. Over half a million viewers watched the entire video after clicking. The promotional cost was \$0.003 per click/view (three cents per every 10,000 clicks/views). Praise the Lord!

These figures represent the results from only the Spanish videos posted on Facebook on behalf of the NED office, not any other platform or videos posted by NED congregations. Imagine if we could include figures from the entire General Conference or from all our CoG7 congregations around the world?

This item was not in the annual budget, but the Lord provided through earmarked offerings for this purpose.



Making a Difference

After recent devastating floods in Guatemala and other nations in Central America and in the Caribbean, the seventeenth district of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Guatemala received \$2,000 worth of blessings from our Lafayette St. congregation in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Guatemalan district superintendent, Elder David Villanueva, facilitated the transfer of funds and then personally delivered provisions to some families in dire circumstances in different congregations. Funds were also delivered for medical needs.

If you are a member living in the Central District and cannot attend worship services, you can obtain a member-at-large status. Please contact Superintendent Kenneth Lawson (klawson6817@comcast.net).

After months of COVID-19 restrictions that prevented him from being there, Elder Villanueva preached, taught, anointed the sick, and performed fourteen baptisms and three weddings.



WOMEN EQUIPPING WOMEN

Esther Winchell, Director | 989-574-7325 | womenequippingwomen@nedcog7.com

Mujeres Capacitando Mujeres

Women's Ministry

What a year! The pandemic forced us to cancel events, meetings, retreats and the like, but thank God, our agenda was not totally shut down. Our annual women's ministry service may not have been in person, but Zoom and Facebook Live allowed some of our groups to gather virtually and share what the Lord was doing in their lives.

One of the highlights of 2020 was the retreat, hosted by Area 3 and held virtually from New York, with 187 attending and many more watching from Canada, England, Jamaica, New Zealand, and the US. The program was well planned and included meaningful workshops, good old-fashioned praise and worship, and even a Saturday evening scavenger hunt with excellent participation and much laughter. We praise the Lord for His goodness.

We purchased our own Zoom plan and have made it available to any of our women's groups in the Northeast District. We put it to good use every week with services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and retreats. Several groups are currently using it (Saginaw, Michigan; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Ossining, New York; Lanham, Maryland). We have even done some virtual fundraising through these means. We look forward to more requests for this service so we can remain connected and informed.

Our prayer shawl ministry sends out shawls to those in need of prayer. Let us know of anyone who could be blessed with this precious gift of assurance.

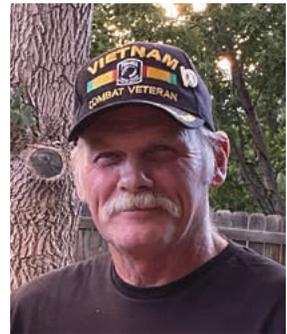
Thank you for making our women's ministry possible throughout the years.

— Esther Winchell, Director

The Power of Story

Note: The following testimony by Esther Winchell is in response to From War to Peace, the personal story of her husband, Tom, and what Christ has done in his life. It is part of the GC's "My Transformation Story" video series at cog7.org (News/Featured Videos). We invite you to view these stories and share them with others.

As Tom and I were taking a friend to the airport one day, my phone rang. I didn't recognize the number, but I had a feeling I should answer the call. The only ID was Nashville, Tennessee. When I answered it, the man asked if I was Tom Winchell. I told him he was driving and would call him back.



The man's name was Tony. He went on to tell me that he had gone to high school with Tom and had just watched his testimony on YouTube. In fact, he watched it twice and was amazed at the change in Tom and wanted to tell him that he was glad he found peace and forgiveness. He also told me that he had lost track of Tom. The last he had heard, Tom had gone into the service. Tony wanted us to know that he was going to have his kids watch the video about this man that he went to high school with and how God had changed his life.

I told Tony, "Tom has to hear this" and handed Tom the phone. They spoke a little while (we were in Detroit and traffic was terrible), and Tom decided to call him back. Tom told me that he was friends with Tony and another guy, and that they were called The Three Amigos.

We just never know whose life we are going to touch by sharing what Jesus has done in our lives. This call really encouraged Tom. He couldn't believe the video had reached someone he actually knew.

I thank Heber Vega and the Northeast District for giving this opportunity to Tom and investing in him.



Gjesdal Named Artios Co-Director

Pastor Loren Gjesdal has joined Makayla Ross as co-director of Artios Christian College. Having been appointed to this position by General Conference President Loren Stacy and then confirmed by the GC

board of directors, Gjesdal fills the vacancy left by the resignation of longtime co-director Israel Steinmetz. Loren Gjesdal is an Artios graduate (BA in Christian Leadership, Pastoral Ministry), with education and experience in business and management. He resides in Albany, Oregon, with his wife of thirty years, Nickki, and their three adult/teen children. A licensed minister, Gjesdal co-pastors the Marion, Oregon congregation, a ministry he continues to fulfill as he serves Artios part-time.

We thank Israel Steinmetz for his many years of service within Artios Christian College and its predecessor, LifeSpring School of Ministry, and wish him well in the next season of his life and ministry. We welcome Loren Gjesdal with gratitude for his willingness to serve in this new role and with great anticipation of all he will bring to Artios.



IMC Zone 1 Virtual Gathering

CoG7 churches in the English-speaking Caribbean came together via Zoom on Sunday afternoon, February 14, for

worship, inspiration, and encouragement under the theme "Strength for Today — Bright Hope for Tomorrow!"

Participants reflected the far reach of the work in the Caribbean in its impact on the Church around the world, including the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom. For example, the program was emceed by Pastor Robert Crawford, president of the British Conference and a son of the Church in Jamaica. He is also the IMC representative for Zone 5, which covers the African continent.

IMC secretary John Klassek brought greetings from Australia, and Paulo Coelho, Zone 7 representative from Portugal, attended as a special guest.

IMC President Ramon Ruiz and General Conference President Loren Stacy also attended.

Program highlights included worship music provided by the Treasure Coast congregation in Port St. Lucie, Florida (Al Haynes, pastor); special music by Marjolene Rose; an inspiring presentation by Pastor Troy Christopher, leader of the work in Guyana, on the need for unity and collaboration; and a message by Whaid Rose titled "Embracing Our New Reality: Three Steps Forward."

Approximately 150 attended the virtual event. The Zone 1 reps are Karell Wilson (Jamaica), Whaid Rose, and Calvin Burrell, who could not attend due to a power outage caused by ice storms that weekend. This was disappointing for all of us, since Elder Burrell was the chief organizer of this program.

Active conferences exist in Jamaica, Trinidad, Cayman Islands, St. Martin, Barbados, and Guyana, with contacts in many other countries throughout the region. The participants appreciated the encouragement and challenge, and expressed a strong desire for more events of this nature on a more frequent basis. Your prayers and support of the work in the Caribbean are much appreciated.

— Whaid Rose

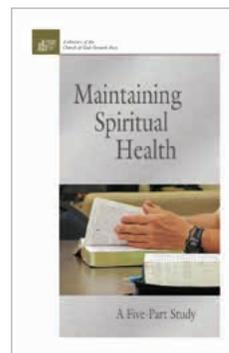
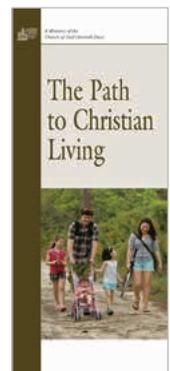
Updated Tracts

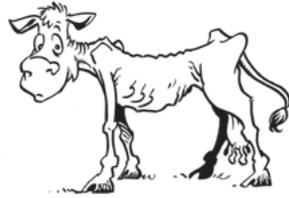
The Path to Christian Living. After we have trusted Christ as Savior and been baptized, what controls our behavior? Legalism? Antinomianism? Or the gospel of Christ? This tract helps to answer what should motivate us and empower us to right living.

Maintaining Spiritual Health. "You are what you eat," many declare. This statement makes the valid observation that our health is impacted not just by our level

of activity, but by what we consume. The same is true of our spiritual health. In this five-part study, we learn about how to take care of ourselves through proper spiritual nourishment and spiritual exercise.

Visit publications.cog7.org to read these tracts. You can also order copies from the online store at cog7.org.

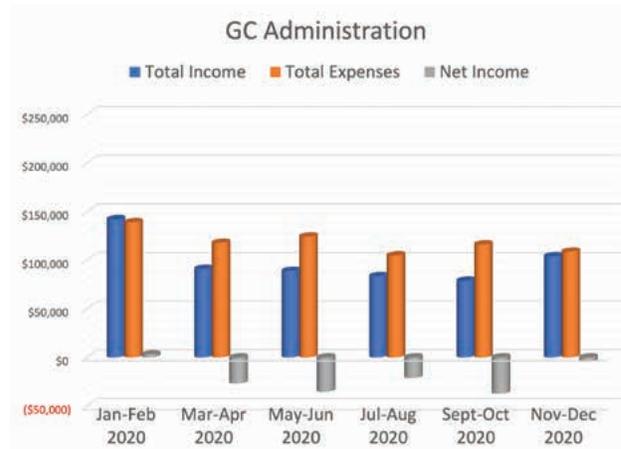




Lean Times

As with so many organizations, COVID and the related restrictions have disrupted the normal flow of tithes and offering we depend on. Now five-sixths of the way through our fiscal year of 2020/21, we find our total income is \$306,045 less than budgeted.

If you have been saving your tithes and offerings until “things get back to normal,” please wait no longer. Your local congregation, district, and General Conference need your financial support right away. Thank you for whatever you can do to help us get through this difficult time.



General Conference Administration

Total Receipts and Total Expenses

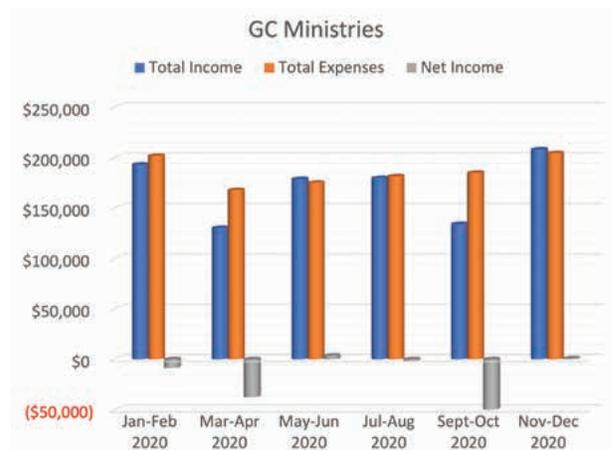
The General Conference administration (president, executive director, IT, finance, office management, and other staff not connected to a GC Ministry or district) receives financial support from 15 percent of members’ tithes (minus what is then allocated to the GC Ministries) and direct offerings. Expenditures are guided by an annual budget.



General Conference Ministries

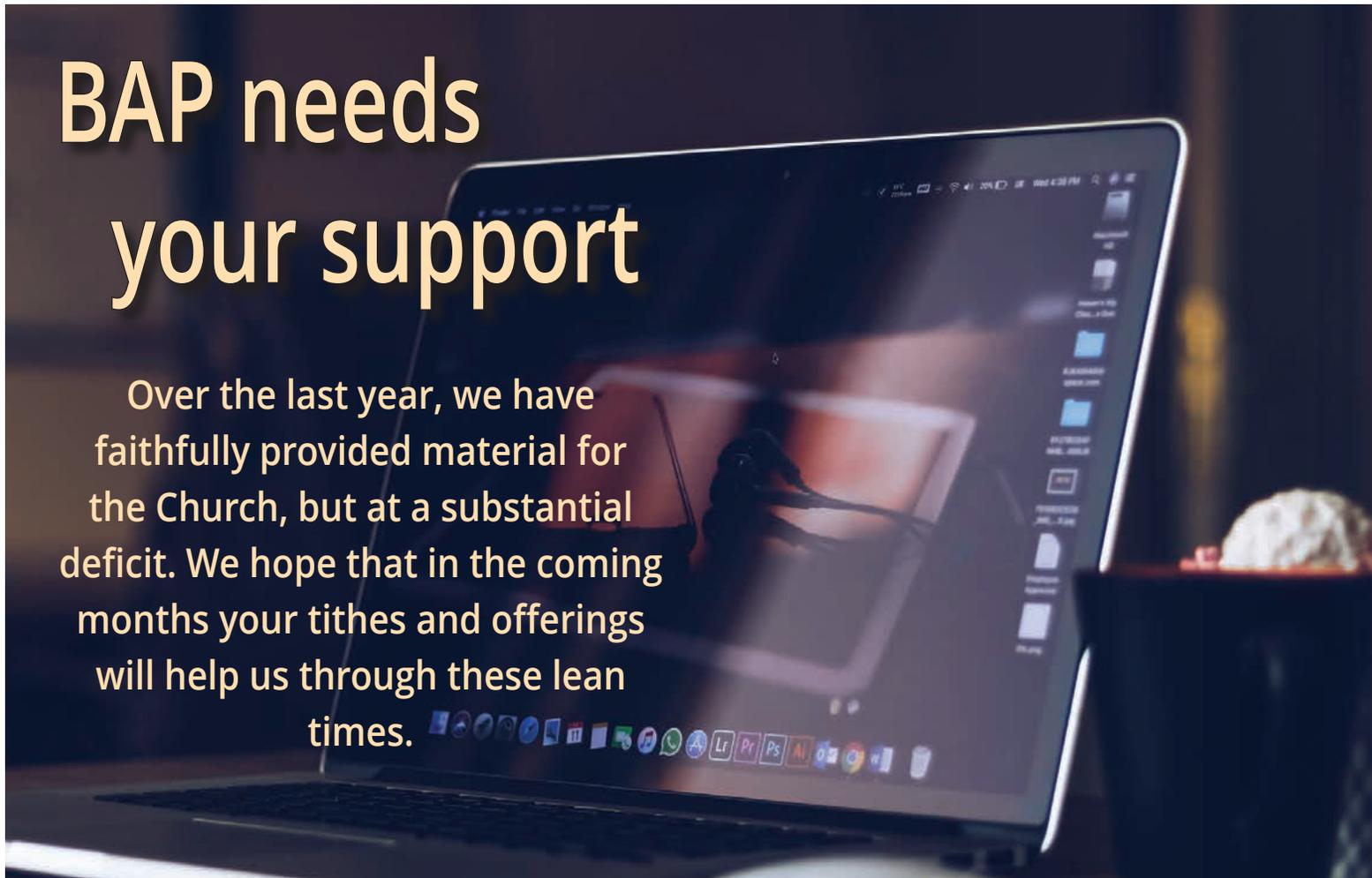
Total Receipts and Total Expenses

Artios Christian College, Missions, and Publications (Bible Advocate Press) are the current GC Ministries. They receive financial support from direct offerings and from a portion of the 15 percent of members’ tithes received by the General Conference. Expenditures are guided by each ministry’s annual budget. In addition, the General Conference manages the receipt and disbursement of your gifts to a variety of additional ministries, such as Orphans and Widows, SHINE, Cristo Viene, and Disaster Relief.



BAP needs your support

Over the last year, we have faithfully provided material for the Church, but at a substantial deficit. We hope that in the coming months your tithes and offerings will help us through these lean times.



Stay focused on Jesus!

Follow Jesus' example of service by getting involved in district ministries. Contact your local leaders for areas where you can make a difference. *Prayers and financial gifts are always appreciated!*

