

# southernconnect



**Gerard Kiemeney,**  
*Former L.A. Metro  
Region Director*

God for this gift of “retirement” and being able to serve Him in the years to come.

However, rather than simply retiring, this transition will be more of a “reframing” adventure. So, I want to share a few insights into what we have learned along the journey of life and the opportunity of being able to reframe our future for the exhilarating time to come.

**Life is a continuum.** All the the skills and relationships of life accumulated along life’s journey are building blocks for the reframed life. Some of the skills amassed through pastoral ministry include relationship building, speaking acumen, organizational prowess, tactical and strategic planning, and more. In Jesus’ parable, the one who received five talents gained five more (Matthew 25:20). God gives us skills according to the Spirit’s choosing and our faithfulness to obey Him.

**Make the most of what you have.** The apostle Paul said the following about his transitional life journey: “I have learned to be content, whatever the circumstances may be” (Philippians 4:11, PHILLIPS). Someone once said: “Happiness in life is based not so much on having what you want but rather on wanting what you have!” Lesson learned? Live in the

## *Transitions:* Living the Reframed Life

**G**ood day, my fellow readers. This article reflects a transition time in my and my dear wife’s life—a transition phase from being duly employed as a pastor and region director in SCC to joining the world of retirees after some 44 years of service for Jesus. We thank

present and make the most of your current situation!

**Relationships are gold.** Scripture says: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19, NIV). Sure, it’s fun to have and enjoy things, but things rust and disappear. I remember the first time I realized having a “new” car was an illusion—the moment I drove the car off the lot, it instantly became used! Ugh! Relationships in life are never used nor to be used. Relationships with people develop, deepen, and become more valuable over time. Spend quality

time with the people in your life. Laugh, cry, play, work, and learn with others, and your life will truly be blessed.

**Express gratitude by living gratefully.** Living gratefully is much more than remembering to say “thank you.” It’s living humbly in the sight of God and others, knowing that life itself, each moment that we have, is an extension of God’s loving arm called grace. Living gratefully is to extend that arm of love and grace

“LIVING GRATEFULLY IS  
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to others indiscriminately and abundantly. “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth” [as well as in my actions] (Psalm 34:1, KJV).

**Share Jesus using Christ’s method alone.** Christ’s method is all about finding fulfillment in personal evangelism relationships where sharing the love of God with others is the primary focus. During my younger college years, I majored in mathematics at Cal Poly Pomona. I found great avenues for daily sharing my relationship with God as I mingled with fellow students. As in our years as a pastoral couple, so in our “reframed” life, we will continue to share Jesus by utilizing “Christ’s method alone” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

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*God proves capable of doing the impossible during summer series*



### Smyrna Celebrates Evangelism

*19 souls give their lives to Christ during old-fashioned evangelistic tent meetings*

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# Transformation in Sunland

BY LAUREN LACSON

**W**hat does your encounter with Jesus look like?

For eight weekends this summer, the Sunland-Tujunga church explored this question with a series themed “A Summer Encounter: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus.”

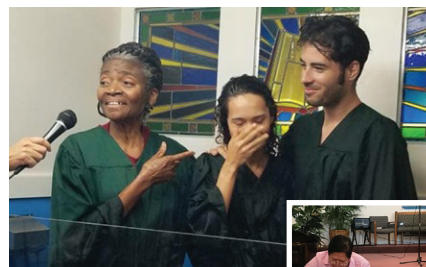
“I just wanted the topics to be Christ centered,” Associate Pastor Mabel Duncan shared. Topics included heaven, judgement, tithing, Christian lifestyle, state of the dead, baptism, and many more.

On the second weekend of the series, Duncan blurted out: “We are going to have a baptism.” “The moment I said it,” she recalled, “I gulped and was wondering why I said that.” One week later, God revealed what this statement was all about.

Part of the campaign was food demos preceding the spiritual meetings. After one of these demos, three visitors were invited to join the meetings upstairs. They didn’t know the meetings were happening, but after this, they never stopped coming.

“It’s one thing to see people accept Jesus as their savior,” Duncan said, “but it’s a whole other thing to see them fall in love with Jesus. And that family fell in love with Jesus.”

They were eager to get involved. The Sabbath after one of the visitors, Weanchi, was baptized, she was insistent on doing the Scripture reading. Then, the week after Marianne and Daniel, Weanchi’s daughter and son-in-law, were baptized, they blessed the church with a message in song.



Photos provided by Sunland-Tujunga church.



This isn’t to say their journey was easy.

On the day Marianne and Daniel were to be baptized, “all hell broke loose,” as Duncan put it. Satan sought in multiple ways to disrupt the service —yet, God fought for these souls. “We have had some interesting things happen, to say the least,” Duncan recalled, “but God has proven Himself mighty to save.”

“If God asks you to do something, all you need to ask is, ‘How soon, Lord?’ and don’t limit Him,” Duncan urged. “Because *I saw Him work*. I saw Him do what was considered impossible.” ●



Photo by Shirley Marcelle.

**C**hoosing to lead a month-long evangelistic series after the first year of pastoring a new church may sound daunting to some, but according to Pastor Evangelist Trevor Stewart of Smyrna church, “It’s in my DNA for evangelism.”

During August, Stewart hosted an old-fashioned tent meeting in the Smyrna church parking lot, an effort that has not taken place in the Los Angeles area in more than 25 years. “I’m used to doing tent meetings,” said Stewart, who most recently pastored in the Northeastern Conference. “When

## Smyrna Holds Tent Meetings

BY ARAYA MOSS

you’re called to the ministry, God gives you different gifts. I realized that my passion is for evangelism.”

The crusade was themed “Victory in Jesus,” a theme Stewart uses for each of his crusades. Smyrna church worked endlessly to prepare for the event. Appeals were made on Sabbath mornings leading up to the event. A friendship day was arranged, encouraging members to invite their friends and relatives who are not Adventist, adopting the “each one reach one” method. GLAR Director Royal Harrison, 54th Street Pastor Adolphus Garnett, and Stewart also trained 10 Bible workers for nine weeks in preparation.

The revival holds a special place in the heart of Dimple Fields, a member of Smyrna church, who in 1981 was re-baptized and married at a similar

meeting. As the platform chair, Fields was heavily involved in preparing for the crusade and welcomed visitors and members to the meetings.

“The Holy Spirit moved on the hearts of the people of God,” said Fields. “Stewart preached the Word and ended with the call for people to accept Jesus Christ through baptism. They responded without hesitation.”

With the goal to maintain and retain, elders at the church plan to nurture each new member. “Every church I go to, they know that after my first year, this [crusade] is what we’re going to do,” Stewart said. “Now at Smyrna, this is just the beginning.”

“When you have a congregation that’s willing to do the work for the Lord,” adds Fields, “the opportunities are endless.” ●

# in transition

## TRANSFERS IN SCC

*Voted September 12 and 26, 2019*

**Jose Alejandro Diaz** | From Pastor, El Camino a Cristo, to Pastor, San Gabriel Valley Spanish church, as of September 14, 2019.

**Guillermo Garcia** | From Pastor, San Fernando Spanish church, to Pastor, Spanish American church, as of September 14, 2019.

**Javier Huerta** | From Pastor, Los Olivos / Shalom churches, to Pastor, San Fernando Spanish church, as of September 14, 2019.

**Gustavo Cruz** | From Pastor, Ebenezer / Mid City Spanish churches, to Pastor, El Camino / Mid City Spanish churches, as of September 14, 2019.

**Kathleen Diaz** | From Chief Accountant to Associate Treasurer, SCC Accounting, as of September 16, 2019.

**Oliver Enriquez Martin** | From APC, Central Spanish church, to Part-Time Pastor, El Monte / La Puente Spanish churches, as of September 14, 2019.

**Ellis Flores** | From Pastor, El Monte / La Puente Spanish churches, to Pastor, Highland Park / Ebenezer Spanish churches, as of September 14, 2019.

**Celeste Harrison** | From APC to Associate Pastor, South Bay church, as of September 1, 2019.

## TRANSFERS OUT OF SCC

*Voted September 12, 2019*

**Derrick Cruz** | Associate Pastor, Vallejo Drive church, as of August 31, 2019.

## RETIREMENTS

*Voted September 12, 2019*

**Florence Sunico** | Secretary, San Gabriel Academy, as of August 6, 2019.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

Jesus met, mingled with, and ministered to people—and *then* bade them follow Him. This way of living life is what we call “Shift,” utilizing the four Ms of life: meeting people, mingling with them in the journey of life, ministering to their needs, and mentoring others to do the same. After all, it has been shown that effective evangelism must be personal if it is to be lasting.

**In Jesus, the future ahead is invigorating as we live a life of “being present!”**

Friends, as Christians, we do not have to accept the false dilemma of having to choose between living only for the future or engaging with our present world. Quite the contrary! We can love both the present and the future. The apostle Paul once said: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard...the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9, NKJV). Paul was not referring to the future kingdom but to the good life we can experience in Jesus right now. As Peter said in 1 Peter 2:11 (NTE), as Christians, we live

as “resident aliens”; as such, we can both enjoy the present and look with anticipation to the future. We should always be involved in social justice issues, sharing God’s love and being an influence for good.

It has been our privilege and joy to have served the Lord in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry for more than 44 years. It has been my privilege to serve the denomination as a local pastor and as a region director in this conference. We will always feel a part of so many of you. In the L.A. Metro Region, we have a saying: “Once an L.A. Metro Region team member, always an L.A. Metro Region team member!” We have been privileged to work side by side with so many kind and generous people, and we look forward to continuing to share the gospel with old and new friends alike. The good news of Jesus will always be our passion; sharing Him with others will always be our privilege. We look forward to living in the bright and reframed future ahead! ●

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## SPOTLIGHT

# Prayer Ministry

A CLARION CALL

southern  
connect

**EDITOR**  
Lauren Lacson

**Submit a story**  
scc.adventist.org/  
submitastory

“**W**herever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us” (Nehemiah 4:20, NKJV).

We are living in uncertain times. The challenges we face each day—individually and also collectively as Christ followers—call for a well-defined course.

We can't improve on the wisdom of Nehemiah when rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem. As opposition came and challenges mounted, the trumpet sounded and the people responded. We, too, must strategically join our efforts. We must not only talk about the power of prayer. We must actually pray!

Begin now, to seek God in prayer as families, small groups, churches, and in

your communities (others are also praying). Then, plan to join us on Sabbath, January 25 for an SCC Day of Prayer.

We must once again develop the spiritual muscle that seeks God's face, His hand, and His will for us in our generation.

The counsel in 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV) may seem like ancient words, but they have been preserved for us because they still carry God's promise today: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn

from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” This is a call for a corporate experience. God will hear and respond, if we—His people—pray. ●

### SCC DAY OF PRAYER JANUARY 25, 2020

.....  
Spanish American church  
1815 Bridge Street  
Los Angeles 90033  
2:30-6 p.m.

**Southern California  
Conference of  
Seventh-day Adventists**

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Velino A. Salazar

**Executive Secretary**  
John H. Cross

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Orville Ortiz

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## REGION NEWS

### Greater L.A. Region

On October 8, the 54th Street church bustled with activity, as church volunteers greeted people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity, many of whom are living in their cars and RVs or sleeping on the streets. The occasion was the launch of Shower of Blessings—the most recent Hospitality Hub to go into operation in Los Angeles County's Second Supervisorial District. Under this designation, services the church normally provides (distribution of groceries, sack lunches, gently used clothing, and hygiene items) were enhanced with additional services from Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' office, including a mobile shower, medical services, access to outreach workers (including mental health and homeless outreach), and other service

providers, with the goal of increasing the number of entry points to the homeless services system.

Homelessness is an inescapable reality we encounter coming from and going to our church. We cannot ignore our Savior's admonition in Matthew 25:45 (KJV): “Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”

In conclusion, we are grateful for the cooperative efforts and support of the supervisor's office as well as others, including the diligent community engagement work of the Greater Los Angeles Region Health Network (GHN), which was instrumental in engaging the



(L. to R.) Deidra McAlpin, GHN Community Engagement; Elise Jonas; Margaret Carson, 54th Street Community Services; Diva Jones-Moses, Ephesus Community Services; Antoinette Simpson, BOL Community Services; Gaye Simpson, Ephesus Community Services.

support and assistance of the supervisor's office to procure the shower as well as other resources and services. Additionally, we are also thankful for the standby support provided by the Adventist Community Service Departments of Ephesus and Breath of Life (BOL) churches.

by **Adolphus Garnett, pastor**  
at 54th Street church