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# Conference PRIORITIES

## Center for Evangelism and Discipleship

By Jon Ciccarelli

Our mission as a conference comes directly from Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV): “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Even though the mission given has clear action steps, it seems somehow we have missed a major step.

As a denomination, we have done a lot of teaching. We have done a lot of baptizing. We have proclaimed the need for obedience. Overall, we have done an amazing job carrying the unique Adventist message to the world.

While we have had many baptisms and have seen many people decide to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, is it possible we may have missed one of the critical action steps in the mission Jesus gave to us? For every 100 baptisms in North America, 39 leave the Church.

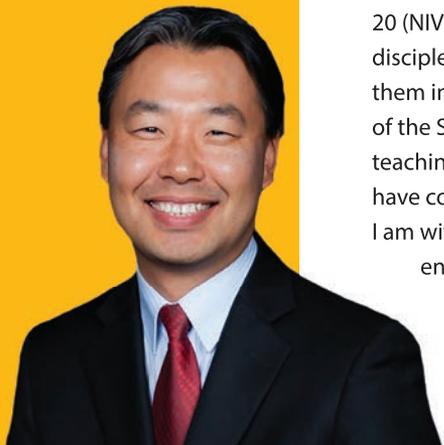
Our mission is often referred to as The Great Commission. Some have also said it has turned out to



be The Great Omission! While the action steps in the mission seem clear, we may have left out one of the most important steps in the mission process. Jesus said, “Go make disciples.” In other words, go make apprentices for Me and of Me. Train people how to learn from Me and to live with Me. Train people how to sit at My feet.

Train them how to believe in Me and to believe in what I have done for them by My death and resurrection. Also, train them how to believe Me. Train them how to live life at My feet, to follow My feet into solitude, to grow together in community as My Church. Train them to go out into the world to reach people with My love and grace. Southeastern California Conference (SECC) is intending to do this.

SECC is planning to launch a Center for Evangelism and Discipleship in 2023. It will be a resource available to all SECC church members, in person and online, where training and mentoring will take place to grow and develop our God-given gifts and skills. We will learn to reach people for Jesus and to grow as His disciples while we learn how to train and disciple others for His kingdom, now and in the future. We look forward to sharing more details soon on how everyone is invited to grow as His disciples and to share together in His mission!



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*LEFT: Donny Boadway, from Boadway Barber Shop, and Israel Peralta, ReNew coordinator, provide free haircuts for the community. ABOVE: Linda Mendez, outreach pastor, and Randy Roberts, senior pastor, wait for the first shower client to arrive. BELOW: ReNew shower is transported to serve the homeless.*

## LLUC Implements Shower Trailer in Homeless Ministry

By Ezrica Bennett

During the pandemic, Loma Linda University Church (LLUC) had an influx of visitors seeking access to showers and essential hygiene products. LLUC realized that many of the resources for individuals experiencing homelessness were no longer available. They sought to address this deficit by creating a ministry that brought care directly to the homeless. The shower trailer project, spearheaded by Israel Peralta and Ian Poujoul, developed from this desire.

UReach, LLUC's outreach department, has several ministries, including Meals on Wheels, transit, tutoring, a thrift store, and a cafe. The shower trailer is a part of the ReNew Clinic, the branch of UReach's ministry dedicated to their homeless neighbors. The clinic provides haircuts, hygiene products, clothing, diapers, no-fee ID applications, résumé help, military dog tag replacement, food, and an array of other services. The shower trailer is open at San Bernardino Spanish church and at Crosswalk church twice a month. LLUC also partners monthly with Kansas Avenue church and San Bernardino City Senior Center monthly.

This ministry is volunteer-dependent. Before engaging with the guests, volunteers complete the required background check and training. UReach's priority is that each visitor has a safe and positive experience. When setup and registration are complete, each guest can visit the station that best fits their needs. The priority is to ensure that everyone gets a clean and safe shower. The shower trailer serves approximately 90 people each month.

UReach believes that members of the homeless community should have their

needs met. They aim to ReNew not only the bodies but also the souls of all the people they encounter. They consider it a blessing to share God's love by addressing the practical needs of their community.

"This ministry has changed me because I have seen Jesus in the faces of the people we serve, and it's a constant reminder for me to love others as I would want to be loved and to serve others as I would want to be served," said Linda Mendez, pastor of outreach at LLUC.



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# Youth Rush and the Triple Blessing

By J. Lynn Martell

This summer, Los Alamitos church was blessed to host students from the Youth Rush program. Led by Eric Isaia, the coordinator for student literature ministries for Southeastern California Conference, the youth spent the summer going door to door, selling Christian books and earning money for their college education. Los Alamitos church had adequate facilities to enable the young people to stay at the church for several weeks as they engaged in the ministry.

It was exciting to witness the enthusiasm of the young people as they shared their ministry experiences of how God opened doors for them to communicate the love of Jesus.

For these young people, the summer experience was transformational as they prayed in the morning for God's guidance in opening doors and leading them to just the right people for the day. God answered their prayers day after day!

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Anna Chang shared that when she was canvassing, a woman opened her door and, before Chang could even finish her canvas for the health book, she interrupted her saying, "How did you know?" The woman hugged the book and said she'd had a spiritual awakening 24 hours earlier and was seeking guidance in her spiritual life. She gladly accepted *Steps to Christ* and said, "This is the very book I need! Thank you so much!"

Chang was convinced that God had divine appointments waiting for each of those who listened for His direction.

Gabby Mendoza shared that each morning she would pray that God would lead her to the people who needed spiritual help. She discovered that God was faithful and would open the way to the right person needing help.

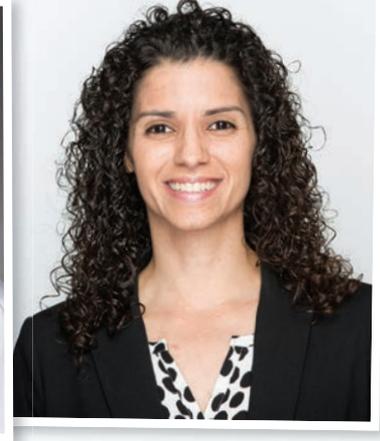
Mendoza met Tina, who had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and had been given four months to live. Her experience of having cancer resulted in a closer relationship with Jesus. Mendoza was impressed that even though some may go through the valley of the shadow of death, they can still have the assurance that God will always be by their side.

The young people were blessed as they participated in a faith journey each day and watched the Lord open doors to meet the very people that needed their books and prayers. The community was blessed to have a group of young men and women—committed Christians—sharing the love of Jesus. And Los Alamitos church was blessed! These are triple blessings, and that's the way God works! He is faithful!



LEFT: Anna Chang (left) and Lauren Ortiz (right) go from door to door. RIGHT: Youth Rush students hike with the Los Alamitos church family.

LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Mark Tatum and  
Marlene Ferreras



## SECC Welcomes

# Mark Tatum and Marlene Ferreras to New Positions

By Ezrica Bennett

Southeastern California Conference (SECC) is pleased to introduce two of its newest hires, Mark Tatum and Marlene Ferreras. Tatum will serve as the assistant to the president, and Ferreras will serve part time as the assistant to the ministerial department for women pastors.

Tatum joins the team after his most recent position as the senior district pastor for the Anaheim and Orange churches. He believes that great leaders and administrators make all the difference. He deeply cares about the success of individual churches, and he now takes great joy in being able to foster strong and faithful witnesses for Christ on a broader level.

It is his hope to be the best help possible to SECC President Jonathan Park and the rest of the officer team. He desires to alleviate some of the duties the officers have, so they will have more time for creative visioning. Tatum is well-traveled and has been able to preach the gospel on several continents. His diverse background and passion for ministry will offer meaningful experience and insight as he serves SECC.

Of his many accomplishments—including learning Spanish and the guitar in adulthood—Tatum believes that becoming a father has been one of his greatest milestones.

As an employee of both SECC and La Sierra University, Ferreras looks forward to bridging the gap between institutions

and using her connections to extend more resources to the women in her care. She currently serves as an assistant professor for practical theology.

Ferreras is highly trained in theology and therapy. She has three master's degrees—two in theology and one in marriage and family therapy—and a PhD in spiritually integrative psychotherapy. Her goal is to help create a supportive space, whether through continued education, fostering meaningful connections, offering valuable resources, or just being a listening ear to SECC women in ministry.

Ferreras aims to help women engage in healthy practices that enable them to attend to the care of their own

spiritual needs while they care for their congregations and communities. She believes that for progress, it is imperative to be at the forefront of and attentive to the unique needs and experiences of women in ministry.

"I have fond memories of serving in SECC as a pastor for 14 years. Ministry is as beautiful as it is challenging, and I am looking forward to supporting women pastors in their local congregations," reflected Ferreras.

Outside of her career, Ferreras enjoys playing with her five-year-old daughter, Xin-Xin.

SECC is grateful for Tatum and Ferreras and the unique gifts they bring to this new chapter of ministry.

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