

AMERICAN UNION NEWSLETTER

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

REFORM MOVEMENT

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SMALL CLOUD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Opened in January, 1996, in Wilton, California, by Sr. Sandy Nelson (then Schendel) and Sr. Margie Seely (then Holmstroem)

It's a shame we can't share all the stories of the great things God does at Small Cloud, but here is one we can. It involves some necessary details, but it's worth reading

What problem in your life seems too big for you to handle? God, we assure you, can take care of it.

God has greatly blessed Small Cloud Christian School, and we want to thank each of you for your prayers. It has been seven-and-a-half years since the school opened and five years since we first applied for a use permit—a County requirement to operate a school on a particular piece of land. Perhaps you will remember that we were granted only a five-year use permit in 1998. This was disappointing, because obtaining a use permit was expensive (about \$3,000).

Last year our five-year use permit expired and we had to apply for a new one in order to keep Small Cloud open. (The use permit fees have, of course, increased since last time, but, thankfully, we had to pay only half of the regular fees, about \$2,500). Since we had not received any complaints from the neighbors during this five-year period, we assumed we would have no difficulty obtaining another use permit. Wrong!

Before the County hearing, the local Cosumnes Community Planning Advisory Council (CCPAC) had to review the application. Here, anyone interested in the case may come to present his views and opinions. To our surprise several neighbors attended and adamantly opposed having a school in their neighborhood.

Thankfully, it was voted that a Board member should arrange a meeting between the neighbors and the school in order to come to a workable compromise. (Another Board member asked if he could also come.) This meeting took place on July 31, 2003. Although there were some tense moments at the beginning of the meeting, we are very happy and grateful to the Lord for again softening the hearts of our neighbors. Bro. Mike Alford explained that the school staff had no objections to periodic reviews. The problem we had was a financial one. Obtaining a use permit every five years is costly, and something the school can ill afford. The meeting ended on a very friendly and positive note. Praise be to the Lord!

The two attending Board members said they would write up their recommendations and present them at the next CCPAC meeting. This meeting was held on August 27th—the day before school opened. At this meeting one of the two Board members read the report that had been written concerning the findings of the meeting held between the neighbors and the school. Two use permit options were suggested:

- 1) A ten-year use permit with three-year reviews by CCPAC; and
- 2) A five-year permit with a three-year review by CCPAC and an automatic extension to maintain a five-year permit period absent significant valid concerns. The writer of the report asked the Sacramento County representative who was present if this could be done without incurring the normal use permit fees.

The County representative explained that the County does not usually issue such a limited permit. The neighbors still had the power, he explained, to bring about a cancellation of the use permit, if necessary. Supposing the school was in violation of the agreements stated on the use permit, neighbors could appeal to CCPAC for a hearing. If problems could not be resolved at that level, the next step would be to ask the County to cancel the use permit.

When the opportunity was given for anyone in the audience to speak concerning the issue, we were greatly encouraged as one of our neighbors spoke, stating that she and the other neighbors **desired a decision that would cause the least financial impact on the school.**

The writer of the report for CCPAC then made the motion that the school be given an **open-ended use permit**, a motion that was seconded by the second Board member. **The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.** If accepted by the County, this recommendation would mean that we would not be required to go through the periodic use permit application process or pay further application fees.

Some stipulations were attached to this recommendation. For instance, at the neighbors' request, the small school bell was relocated to the back of the building to decrease noise. It was agreed that landscaping would be done and vegetation planted which, hopefully, will decrease the amount of noise from school activities.

With this last CCPAC meeting behind us, another hurdle had been crossed. Just one last step stood between us and our much prayed-for use permit—the approval of Sacramento County. **This was granted to us on October 16, 2003.**

Thanks be to our Father in heaven for His goodness and for showing us the direction in which we are to go. Since God has opened the way for us to continue at the present location, the work of educating children in the ways of the Lord will continue at Small Cloud as the Lord leads and according to the strength He provides.

This is a work of faith. It is a ministry, not a business. Does it pay? Monetarily, barely enough to cover necessities. But only eternity will reveal the results of the work being done. Presently one family is receiving Bible studies from Bro. Shawn and Sr. Margie Seely, and others (including parents and students) have asked us many questions regarding our beliefs over the years.

Do you have a desire to train up children in the ways of the Lord? Are you interested in doing missionary work? Have you ever considered volunteering at Small Cloud? There is so much work to be done and so few people to help. Is God calling you?

You don't have to be a teacher. You don't have to commit for the rest of your life. But we do need help, and the field is white for harvest.

You may contact us at:

Phone: (916) 687-8329

E-Mail: SmallCloud@juno.com



NOTE: Small Cloud Christian School celebrated its 8-year anniversary on January 24 with an evening of reminiscing about what God had done for the school. Pictures were shown and food served and there was a good attendance.

AMERICAN UNION BOARD MEETING

The American Union Board will meet on March 28, 2004, at 9:00 a.m. in Tampa, Florida.

This meeting is open to all members wishing to attend as observers. You will be able to attend but it will be at your own expense and you will not have the right to vote.

For more information contact:

Sr. Maggie Troncoso

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Have you checked out the American Union Website yet? It's very attractive!

"www.SDA1914.org"

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

SOUTHWEST AND NORTHWEST FIELD CONFERENCE.

Dates: July 1 - 4, 2004

Location: Camp Alta, Alta, CA.

Hosted by the Northwest Field

Plan your vacation so that you can spend the whole time at the conference and receive all of the blessings God has for us.



"...work with all your might to answer the prayer of Christ, that His disciples may be one as He is one with the Father." *Manuscript 82, 1894*

NEWS

Elder Idel Suarez was in Ecuador for ten days during the month of February, conducting a health seminar with Guatemalan church member and doctor **Edward Chan**.

Elder Henry Dering and **Br. Brian Igaarta** of Hawaii will be conducting evangelistic meetings in Ecuador, Argentina and Chile for about one month. Please pray for them in their work for souls.

Thought you might be interested in these news tidbits!

IMPORTANT!!!!

HAVE YOUR MOVED? OR ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?

Mail is still being returned to us each month because someone has moved and has not notified us.

Please be sure to notify us as soon as possible if you have moved or will be moving so you will not miss one issue of the *American Union Newsletter*.

E-mail address is: jennings61@sbcglobal.net



PRAYER CHAIN

Do you have something vitally important to pray about in your church? Is it something you would like to involve the whole church with?

In Sacramento, CA, we have been unable to find property upon which to build a church.

We have, therefore, started a prayer chain wherein members have committed to pray at a certain time each day for this endeavor. This may be something your church could do.

Give it a try! Prayer changes things!

The *American Union Newsletter* is published for members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement, American Union.

This publication is complimentary and carries items of interest submitted by members of the church. We reserve the right to make changes as necessary.

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The original Seventh-day Adventist Movement for Reform of 1914, built upon the firm foundation of the Adventist Movement of 1844.