



SUMMARY

American Union Conference

**Wednesday, December 31, 2025, to Sunday, January 4, 2026
Norman College, Norman Park, Georgia**

*Barbara Watts
Norman Park, Georgia*

The last day of 2025, Wednesday, December 31, found God’s people gathered together at Norman College to begin the American Union Conference. The delegates met from Monday through Wednesday, as well as frequently during the conference.

Although it was quite cold outside, at 5:30 p.m., *Pastor Idel Suarez, Jr.*, extended a warm welcome to all and introduced the conference theme, “The Way,” in John 14:6. In the following days, verses chosen from the gospel of John were examined in morning and evening worship services, workshops, and other services by presenters from the U.S. as well as from other countries. The background, setting, and context of the verses were seen, along with the present-day applications for us who live in the last hours of this earth’s history. May you be inspired and spiritually strengthened as you read this summary.

Pastor Suarez spoke about the

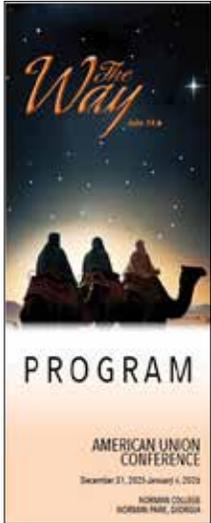
Jewish Levites in John 1:19-20, who asked John the Baptist, **“Who art thou?”** Hundreds and thousands came to hear him and to be baptized in the River Jordan. Then and now, this was an important question, because men had arisen who claimed to be the Messiah. There was a religious identity crisis, just as now, in the United States, there is confusion on numerous levels. In fact, Pastor Suarez experienced this firsthand when his identity was stolen. The perpetrator got copies of his driver’s license and Social Security card and bought a lot of things. When the thief attempted to make a \$5,000 purchase at a jewelry store, an investigation was triggered that took four months to clear Pastor Suarez’s record. Societies around the world suffer greatly when honesty and integrity are lost.

When John was questioned about who he was, he answered first who he was not—Elijah or “that proph-



Elder David Moreno presented the evening worship on Wednesday.

et” whom Moses prophesied would come. He said simply that he was “the voice of one crying in the wilderness,



Some of the American Union delegates, officers, and translators.



Brother Jonathan Figuereo presented the morning worship service on Thursday.

Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." John 1:23. He also proclaimed the coming Messiah by being a moralist, reformer, vegetarian, and example in simple living and dress. He called the people to repentance. God's people today have a similar mission and a similar manner of life, upholding the Sabbath of the Lord with the same attitude as John—"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30. Do not be proud of who you think you are or the position that you hold. Devote your life to the Lord. With these words, Pastor Suarez wished everyone a Happy New Year!

After dinner, *Elder David Moreno*, from California, presented the evening worship service, which was based on the question asked by another of John the Baptist's disciples and Andrew in John 1:38: **"Where dwellest Thou?"** Andrew had previously told Peter, "We have found the Messias." Verse 41. How do people first come to Jesus? Through the faithful witness of someone else, such as a relative, a friend, or a person who follows the leading of the Holy Spirit. The two disciples followed Jesus, and He asked them, "What seek ye?" Since they wanted to meet with Him, they asked where He was staying. Jesus replied, "Come and see." Verse 39. It is not just a matter of following Him. Deep in our hearts we need to know what is seen in Him. We need to experience His goodness, mercy, and miracles!

John pointed consistently to Jesus and away from himself. Our message is the

same. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. When He knocks on the door of one's heart, when one is called, the Holy Spirit awakens in his heart a burning desire to come close to Jesus, to abide with Him, to experience His character. And more. When we find the Messiah after searching for Him, will we let Him dwell in us? Will we desire to be transformed into His image? It is a personal work for each individual. In the words of the psalmist, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Psalm 34:8. Heaven begins today.

A large circle was formed within the perimeter of Hope Chapel, and we wished each other, "Happy New Year!"

Thursday

The morning worship service was presented by *Brother Jonathan Figuereo*, from Florida, with the words of Nathanael in John 1:48, **"Whence knowest Thou me?"** In the Christian life, questions may arise, such as, Am I saved if I die? At such times, one longs for God to cleanse him of doubt. If he will wrestle with the Lord and not stop praying until he receives the peace of God, he will be blessed. That can be our experience every day as we are born again and walk with God.

It was Nathanael's great longing for the Messiah to come, and he prepared his heart to receive Him. He was a sincere searcher of the Scriptures. He was praying alone under a fig tree, which was a place of prayer in the Jewish culture, wrestling with God to reveal the Messiah to him. When Jesus saw him, He said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" John 1:47. This made Nathanael ask the question how Jesus knew him. Jesus replied, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." This was amazing to Nathanael. And even though he previously expressed prejudice ("Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Verse 46), he openly expressed his conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus sees the honest, seeking heart! In that there is a

warning, for it is possible for one to be versed in the Scriptures and yet fail to know Jesus.

When Nathanael understood that Jesus knew him personally, he was transformed. In just one encounter with Jesus, he was changed. His conversion was not emotional; it was personal, leading to obedience, dependence, delight, and joy. It was the result of connection with the Saviour, with the living Word, under the fig tree. When no one notices us, we need to seek and find Jesus and submit to Him. "Lord, do You see me, too?"

The kingdom of God is beautiful, spiritual, and full of overwhelming love; it is not cold and theoretical. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13.

There were four workshops on the conference program for Thursday. Almost all of the workshops during the conference had two presentations, one in English and one in Spanish. This summary is written from notes taken during the English presentations. We hope to receive some articles for the *American Union Newsletter* written by speakers at this AU Conference and based on the topic that they presented. The names of the Spanish presenters are also given in case you wish to communicate with any of them and receive a summary of what they presented in Spanish.

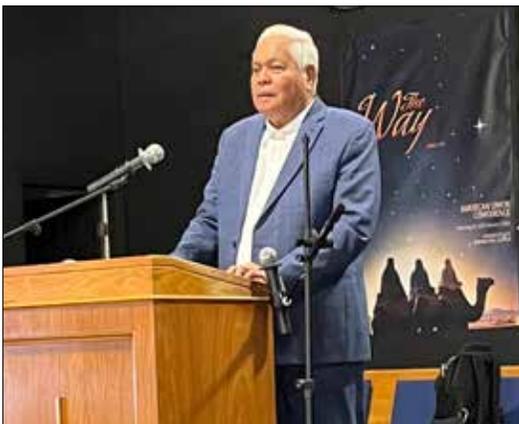
Workshop 1 was based on John 2:3-5, in which Jesus said, **"What have I to do with thee?"** The English presenter was *Pastor Inayat Daniel*, from New York; and the Spanish presenter was *Elder David Cabrera*, from Texas. Pastor Daniel was most interested to look at what Jesus said to His mother at the wedding in Cana from the aspect of respect. The English translation might seem to imply a rebuke of Mary by Jesus when she informed Him that the wine had run out and they were unable to obtain more. Mary looked for a miracle from Jesus.

Jesus already knew that there was no more wine. In essence, He replied, Do not worry; I will do it. Mary was certain of this, for she told the servants to do

whatever Jesus instructed them. And when He said, "Mine hour is not yet come," He was referring to His ministry, saying that He would nevertheless help in this situation. In performing the miracle of changing the water to wine, He created the very best beverage. And the fact that Jesus quietly withdrew from the place before it became known what He had done as a blessing for the wedding feast put His disciples in a position to testify openly of Him as the Messiah.

Jesus had already been introduced in Israel as a prophet and the Son of God. As His teaching, preaching, and healing ministry expanded, everyone was given the chance to decide whether to embrace Him as the Messiah or be influenced to reject Him by the Jewish rulers. Let us seek a deeper and deeper relationship with Him who created and redeemed all mankind and offers everlasting life to all.

Workshop 2 followed. The English presenter was *Pastor Joel Barnedo*, from California, and the Spanish speaker was *Pastor Danilo Monterroso*, from Guatemala, leader of the General Conference Ministerial Department. The subject matter was taken from John 2:18, in which the Jews asked Jesus, **"What sign showest Thou?"** Jesus had just performed His first miracle by turning water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. It was right after the Passover when He found the temple full of clamor and racket. There were salesmen and hawkers, animals, and people talking loudly so they could be heard over the noise. Jesus was totally insulted for the temple. He cleansed the building of all the commercialism by driving out the merchants and animals. Because of His holy demeanor and authority, the people obeyed Him



Pastor Joel Barnedo gave Workshop 2.

without hesitation.

His actions in cleansing the temple caused the Jewish leaders to question His authority to do what He had just done. They asked what sign He could give to justify His actions. His response was, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Verse 19. After the resurrection, the disciples understood what He meant by this. But the people marveled at what they saw, and not only that; His ministry in preaching, teaching, and healing was over the top—far more signs than were necessary for the rulers to know what was happening. Let us watch our own attitudes and actions. Let us not ask the Lord for more miracles and ignore what He has already done. The greatest sign of one's relationship with Jesus is a changed character. The Holy Spirit convicts people, and conversion leads to Jesus' divine character abiding in each of His children. We must reject spiritual adultery, which is shown when one is dissatisfied or restless, craves excitement, and allows the things of the world to take Christ's place.

"Christianity will make a man a gentleman. We are the purchase of Christ's blood, and we are to represent Him, to pattern after Him." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 296. Remember God's merciful kindness every day and "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. There is deep comfort and joy in God's service.

Workshop 3 focused on the words of Nicodemus in John 3:9: **"How can these things be?"** It was presented by *Elder Cadmiel Hunger*, from California, in English, and *Pastor Pablo Hunger*, from Maryland, in Spanish. Nicodemus had observed society and was no doubt troubled by what he saw. He was intrigued by the young preacher and what He was saying and doing, so he went at night to have a talk with Him. But Jesus read His heart and went straight to the point by saying, "Except a man be born



Workshop 3 was presented by Elder Cadmiel Hunger.

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Verse 3.

The Lord added more concepts to what He told the ruler, including that of the Holy Spirit. This was difficult for Nicodemus, because he was used to human ways of thinking. It was like trying to be a theological engineer. That was why he asked, "How can these things be?" We like the word "how." It implies mechanics, blueprints, the inner working of things. We can get caught up in such things to the point where they rob us of sleep and proper thinking. The assumption is that if one cannot see the way (John 3:8), it cannot exist. That is why Jesus used the example of the wind for the work of the Holy Spirit. For another example, think of a compass, which is necessary in the forest to stay on course. One cannot see how it works; but if he refuses to use or follow it, he will for sure get lost.

"While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life.... No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

Later Nicodemus understood and defended the Saviour. Do we understand that we have to be transformed? That is how to answer the question that Nicodemus asked. Each person who will inherit the earth is a new creature.



Elder Elvis Feliciano presented the Thursday evening worship service.

We must seek to know “who,” instead of “how.” According to Ecclesiastes 11:5, we do not know the works of God. Creation, salvation, the movings and fruit of the Spirit, conversion, and so much more all take place in the supernatural realm. Let us look at the cross—at Jesus.

After lunch, Workshop 4 was conducted by *Pastor George Gowie*, from Jamaica, President of the North American/Caribbean Division. The Spanish workshop was led by *Pastor Edison Henriquez*, from Texas. The topic was the question posed to Jesus by the woman at the well in Samaria in John 4:12: **“Art Thou greater than our father Jacob...?”** Jesus was traveling with His disciples from Judea to Galilee, and they stopped at the well of Sychar in Samaria. The woman came for water at midday, and Jesus asked her for a drink of water. This surprised her, because the Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans, and furthermore men did not converse with women in public. This was one of several incidents that were recorded in which Jesus had a very rich conversation with a single individual. We all need to spend time with Jesus alone. No forefather can compare with Him; He is the Source of water, living water, and life.

What transpired in those few minutes testified to what God can do in a person’s life. Jesus offered the woman living water—Himself abiding in a person’s heart. He is eternal, transformative, overflowing into everlasting life. This is far greater than anything that Jacob ever was or did. He himself was transformed by Christ. The well represented heritage, tradition, identity, and history; but Jesus gives

what Jacob never could. In fact, for us today, He is our Advocate who cannot die, having given His life once for the world. The one single thing that we must do to inherit the kingdom of God is to believe that we have salvation in Jesus. He is God. His ultimate plan is to live on this world with the redeemed humanity for all eternity. That is greater than everything that we can think of for our entire lives. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—the embodiment of the Ten Commandments. Through Him we can be people of the law of God, people of righteousness forever.

The evening worship service was presented by *Elder Elvis Feliciano*, from Pennsylvania, based on John 5:6, in which Jesus asked the paralytic by the pool of Bethesda, **“Wilt thou be made whole?”** The Master had come to Jerusalem for the second time during His ministry. He stopped at the pool, where many suffering people waited for what was believed to be a chance to be healed when the water moved. “Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” Verse 4.

When Jesus saw the paralyzed man, He knew that he had been like that for a very long time—thirty-eight years! The Saviour asked him if he wanted to be healed, for Jesus can make a person whole only if he wants it. The man explained that he did not have anyone to help him into the water; or, even if he did, someone else would crowd in front of him. Jesus did not hesitate. He simply said, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” Verse 8. This instant physical healing was an illustration of salvation through Jesus Christ.

When He later found the man in the temple, He warned him, “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” Verse 14. Jesus not only justifies the sinner, but also gives him strength to live a victorious life without sin. He has conquered the leprosy of sin and will give eternal life to everyone who desires it with all his heart.

Friday

The morning worship service was presented by *Brother Wikler Moran*, from Florida. The topic was **“Who can hear it?”** in John 6:60, spoken by the disciples of Jesus who were identified

as “the seventy” (besides the twelve who were ordained). Jesus spoke to His disciples in a manner that was different from how He spoke to those outside His circle. In John 6, He spoke about His life, where He came from, and what His purpose was. In referring to Himself as the Bread of Life (verses 35, 48) and the living bread (verse 51), along with the necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (verses 53-58), He was speaking spiritually; but these disciples did not understand that. “Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” Verse 60.

The problem was in their hearts and minds. They were on a different track—a different wave length. Jesus was tasked with reaching the people’s minds so they could grow in knowledge and in the grace of God. We can see in the world around us that it is fashionable to listen to other voices, such as those found on YouTube and in social media. There are also voices in the church and in other churches. “When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you?” Verse 61. Or, Why does this bother you? The concepts that He presented were not new; they were the words of life and part of the ancient Jewish faith. It is sad but true that a person can be in the church for many years and be an active participant but still not have spiritual understanding.

Those who hunger for the word will find that Heaven supplies their every need. They hunger and thirst for righteousness. With what attitude did we come to the conference? Was it to enjoy the meals (as in a restaurant) or to chat with friends? Or are we longing to hear God’s word and obey it? Do we humbly, honestly accept the word exactly as it is, with a contrite heart? As we study the word every day and receive spiritual nourishment through the work of the Holy Spirit, we will grow strong, ready to testify of Jesus and share Him, the living Bread, with others.

Two workshops were presented on Friday. The first was given by *Pastor Larry Watts*, from Georgia, in English, and by *Pastor Humberto Avellaneda*, vice president of the General Conference in Cedartown, Georgia, in Spanish. In John 7:45-47, when the Pharisees asked the officers why they came back

without seizing Jesus, they replied, "Never man spake like this Man." Then the Pharisees asked them, "**Are ye also deceived?**" Who will be deceived? In Matthew 24:24, Jesus said, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." And in Luke 21:8, He said, "Take heed that ye be not deceived." Many people believe their own lies. And others assert, "Whatever you believe, that is true for you." At the very end of this earth's history, "the spirits of devils, working miracles," will "go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 16:14; 13:8.

That will be a very difficult time, and it is already here in many ways. Deception is generally driven by fear, media, and impersonation, to the point where the common person does not know what is real and what is not. If a person is a liar, will he be able to find the God of truth? "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. How we think will determine whether or not we are or can be deceived. Indeed, the Pharisees themselves were the ones who were deceived, and they did not know it. In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, the apostle Paul wrote that Satan is behind all deception and that people will perish because they "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." When one loves the truth,

he does the truth. He is ready to die for the truth. Furthermore, John 7:17 states the principle that if a person does God's will, he will know the doctrine. After all, how can one grasp the truth if he is not willing to follow it?

God will save all who are willing to accept the truth about themselves—that everyone in this dark world is a sinner saved by grace through faith. "The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 189. If our foundation is not God's holy word, we will automatically be deceived. If we have not given ourselves to God, we will not be able to give one another to Him. Jesus is everything—the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Our will cannot save us, but the right use of the will that is submitted to God's will leads to the eternal kingdom, where no one will enter who "loveth and maketh a lie." Revelation 22:15.

Workshop 2 was presented only in English by *Sister Paula Prendergast*, from Australia. In John 8:5, the Jews presented a case to Jesus that was intended to trap Him so that they could condemn Him: "**What sayest Thou?**" "The scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act." John 8:3-4.



The three graduates from Orion Christian Academy were (left to right) Maya Seely, Talitha Hunger, and Shiloh Suarez.

These Jews were not looking for guidance, but Jesus did not refuse to answer their question. He transformed it. Personal responsibility and moral courage are required of everyone, but note what happens when man's way takes the place of God's way. "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." Isaiah 9:16. In the case of the Jewish leaders, religion became a cloak of cruelty. "And they [the scribes and Pharisees] watched Him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of His words, that so they might deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor." Luke 20:20. Such deceit had been seen before in the history of Israel.

Indeed, it will be seen again in the crisis that is just ahead of us. Every soul will be tested, so we need to give the warning. The world, tradition, and peers ask similar questions for their own reasons. But divine wisdom is not pressured by tradition or anything else. Everyone is called to lay down self-righteousness, and everyone will be blessed in doing so. Indeed, we will be blessed by asking Jesus the question in all sincerity, "What sayest Thou?"

The next event on the program was the **Graduation Ceremony of Orion Christian Academy's Class of 2025**. The three students who received their diplomas were Maya Seely, Talitha Hunger, and Shiloh Suarez. *Sister Margie Seely*, Director of Orion Christian Academy, led the event. There were special music and poetry. Pastor Pablo Hunger presented the address to the graduating students, stressing that every person is a unique masterpiece from God. In accepting Jesus as Lord



Elder Cadmiel Hunger conducted a workshop for the young people.



and Saviour, the student's life is established on God's word and sustained supernaturally. He loves God supremely and his neighbor as himself, which is possible through the relationship that He has with Jesus. Although a citizen of earth, he is in the Master's school, where trials and tests refine and polish the character for the heavenly abode. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3. Ask God what He wants you to do. Walk with Jesus every day.

Pastor Larry Watts gave the graduating students an acronym of what God

has given them to use in their lives: MIT, which stands for Means, Influence, and Talents. What you give attention to will grow. Pastor Idel Suarez, Jr., prayed the closing prayer and pronounced the blessing.

The Sabbath opening service was given by *Pastor Idel Suarez, Jr.*, from Georgia. The service was based on John 8:57, in which the Jews asked Jesus, "**Hast Thou seen Abraham?**" On the basis of what they thought they knew for sure, the Jews called Jesus a liar, because they said He was not even fifty years old. He replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." This was stunning! Of

course He was before Abraham! And using the words, "I AM" solidified His claim to be equal with God. He created the world and everything in it. Colossians 1:16-17. But the Jews had placed themselves in a position where they had to reject Jesus as the Son of God, no matter what, while the disciples by faith saw that the Scriptures were fulfilled by His every word and act. He was and is Jehovah, the self-existent One, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [or tabernacled, put His tent] among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14.



"... Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Genesis 26:5. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, and He wanted to come to earth to save man. In this conference, we come to the Father's house, and Jesus wants to come to our house. Pastor Suarez told the story of a little girl who was so allergic to bee venom that she could die if she was stung. One day she was in the car with her father. When they stopped at a stop sign, a bee flew into the car through the window and buzzed around. The father grabbed the bee and was stung, but he could say to her, "Don't worry! It will not sting you!" He took the sting for her.

And that is what Jesus did for us. Because of Him, who came from heaven and returned there, we can spend eternity with God!

The evening worship service was presented by *Elder Addin Ajucum*, from Puerto Rico, based on John 9:2, in which the apostles asked Jesus, "**Who did sin?**" This was when the man who was born blind was healed by Jesus. The common belief in Jewish society was that sins were punished and righteousness was rewarded in this life. Even though the disciples worked closely with Jesus as He preached, taught, and performed miracles, this false idea from the Jewish culture was

still deeply ingrained in them; it was simple theology. The disciples were looking to accuse someone.

Not much has changed. Still today, it is all too human to see people wrongly. The perception is that everything must be someone's fault; suffering is punishment for sin. Someone failed. But are we willing to help and restore? Jesus was. We need to learn how to see things properly, because religion without Jesus, the Way, becomes accusation. Why? Because one sees souls as case studies or numbers. Just as the disciples were looking for something that might be hidden, the vision of one who may have correct

doctrine but is not guided by the Holy Spirit is distorted. The disciples were looking backward for guilt, while Jesus was looking forward to glory. Living in the past gives a very different picture than does living in the present, which is really the only time when action is possible.

Who was really blind? It was ironic that the man who was born blind lacked physical sight, while the disciples lacked spiritual perception; they could not see who was really blind! Thus, when the disciples asked Jesus who had sinned (the blind man or his parents), His reply was, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." John 9:3. Jesus' words exposed what was not correct.

The Way is for us not to blame, but rather to teach and preach that through Christ redemption is possible. This is action, not just Jesus' words. How can the works of God be revealed in this conference? We do not understand everything, so we need the eyesalve of the Holy Spirit and the counsel of the faithful Witness. The blind man needed sight, but the disciples needed vision. Christ actually heals the way one sees so that restoration can take place. Praise God! It is the right thing at the right time with the right words!

Sabbath

The morning worship service was given by *Pastor Ciro Arevalo*, from Texas, based on the words in John 9:40, when the Jews asked Jesus, "**Are we blind also?**" After healing the man who was born blind and then meeting him after

the Jews cast him out of the temple, Jesus spoke of His own mission: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Verse 39. This led to the Jews asking if they were blind. The Messiah was in front of them, and they could not recognize Him. The disciples were also blind, because they believed some of the things that the Jewish leaders taught. Jesus worked hard to enlighten their spiritual vision.

All too often, we do not understand things properly. Spiritual blindness makes us see others' sins and overlook our own. River blindness, caused by black fly larvae from Africa, takes 12-18 months to produce disfiguring skin rashes and 10-15 years to cause permanent blindness. It has spread to many countries. So, we need to ask ourselves, what kind of blindness do I have? Every type is frightening; but spiritual blindness is especially dangerous, for it is the result of pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency. We live in a world that is full of corruption in every country. The only protection is to receive the living Christ in our hearts, believing and carrying out His words, being convinced and converted.

If someone says something negative about us, do we get upset? The example was recorded in the holy Scriptures of James and John in their attitude toward the Samaritans. Jesus told them, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:55-56. "... The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who

is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:4. According to the prophecy of Revelation 3:23, the Laodiceans at the end of time believe that they are rich, while they are actually blind to their own spiritual condition. Jesus heals spiritual blindness if such healing is desired. We do not need to defend ourselves to a corrupt world, but we can

be filled with the Holy Spirit so that Jesus' light will reach all who want it!

The Sabbath school was led by *Elder David Moreno*, from California. Pastor Pablo Hunger told of opportunities to share the message of salvation in 12 languages, including Arabic and Swahili. Even people in countries that forbid the preaching of the gospel find and request Bible studies online. Let us pray for every effort made to present the gospel to searching souls. For the health minute, Sister Persia Suarez explained how to use first aid in cases of choking.

The Sabbath School Lesson was taught by Pastor Douglas Francis in English and Pastor Danilo Monterroso in Spanish. The lesson was No. 1 in the new half year about "The Prophets Speak," Part 2, on the books of Ezekiel and Daniel. The lesson introduced the prophet Ezekiel and told of the heavy burden he carried as God's prophet. "Ezekiel made very plain the folly of trusting to the false predictions of those who were causing the captives to hope for an early return to Jerusalem. He was also instructed to foretell, by means of a variety of symbols and solemn messages, the siege and utter destruction of Jerusalem." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 448. These lessons are very applicable to us today. "The Lord is coming very soon, and we are entering into scenes of calamity. Satanic agencies, though unseen, are working to destroy human life. But if our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall see of His grace and salvation. Christ is coming to establish His kingdom on the earth. Let our tongues be sanctified and used to glorify Him. Let us work now as we have never worked before." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 62.

The following new officers were introduced for the 2026-2028 term as elected by the American Union delegates. *Pastors George Gowie*, North American/Caribbean Division President, and *Humberto Avellaneda*, General Conference Vice President, officiated.

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| President: | Pablo Hunger |
| Vice President: | Ciro Arevalo |
| Secretary: | Edison Henriquez |
| Treasurer: | Enid Tapia |
| Assistant: | Lisbeth Hunger |
| Missionary Leader: | Cadmiel Hunger |
| Assistant: | Humberto Ajucum |
| Family Leader: | David Moreno |
| Good Samaritan Leader: | Linda Suarez |
| Youth Leader: | Melite Hunger |
| Health Leader: | Damaris Hunger |
| Assistant: | Erica Murua |



Special music was sung by the Hunger family and Brother Wikler Moran.



The newly elected American Union officers pledged to be faithful to God, the holy Scriptures, and the church standards.

- Education Leader: Idel Suarez, Jr.
 Assistant: Lorena Ajucum
 Multimedia Leader: Gary Ajucum
 Assistants: Esly Arevalo, Addin Ajucum
- Canvassing Leader: Edward Kennedy
 Music Leader: Joami Barnedo
 Assistants: Wikler Moran, Karola Kraenzmer, Jonathan Figuereo, Esly Arevalo
- Orion Christian Academy Director: Margie Seely
 Auditor: Lorena Ajucum
- Financial Advisors: David Cabrera, Samuel Alejos, David Moreno
- Executive Committee:
 President: Pablo Hunger
 Vice President: Ciro Arevalo
 Secretary: Edison Henriquez
 Treasurer: Enid Tapia
 Counselor: Addin Ajucum
- Full Committee:
 President: Pablo Hunger
 Vice President: Ciro Arevalo
 Secretary: Edison Henriquez
 Treasurer: Enid Tapia
 President, NE Field: Joami Barnedo
 President, W Field: Joel Barnedo
 President, PR Field: Addin Ajucum
- Delegates to the General Conference:
 Idel Suarez, Jr., Joel Barnedo, Ciro Arevalo
- Alternate Delegates to the General Conference:
 Addin Ajucum, Margie Seely, Edison Henriquez, Larry Watts, Humberto Ajucum

Pastor Humberto Avellaneda administered the pledge of faithfulness to the incoming officers, and Pastor Danilo Monterroso prayed and pronounced the benediction as the congregation stood and the new officers knelt.

Pastor Pablo Hunger requested prayer for the incoming officers and expressed his gratitude to the outgoing administration.

The conference choir sang "Then Sings My Soul" in Spanish and English.

The Sabbath sermon was presented by Pastor George Gowie, from Jamaica, based on John 14:5-6, in which Jesus said, "**I AM the Way.**" God has great love and compassion for the beings He created in His own image so they can, though having fallen natures, inherit eternal life and know who He really is. Looking at significant characters in the Bible, it can be seen that many people left Jesus, even though God had great blessings in store for them. Judas left when it was night and very dark. Jesus told the Jews in John 8:22, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Something was going to happen that had never happened before—the resurrection. After that, He was on the earth for 40 days and then ascended to heaven as man's great High Priest, Substitute, Mediator, Saviour, and King.

He had told His disciples in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." We tend not to show emotion, but Jesus wept over Jerusalem and the folly of mankind. He loved man so much as the Creator! God Himself came to earth, where men are like grass. He showed the way to salvation by becoming one like us. In fact, that is the way people know that His people are His chosen ones—because they love one another. He asks each of us, "Will you follow Me? Will you understand Me?" He is the Way, because of His great love and mercy. We should err on the side of mercy. Indeed, despite everything that Jesus knew about what would transpire before He gave up His life—including Peter's denial of Him—He still spoke with great love to His disciples. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." "I will come again." John 14:1, 3. I am going home; but I will come back and take you to Myself.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." Verse 6. Many people are on the wrong way. In Scripture, we are told that patriarchs, prophets, and others (Moses, David, the woman at the well) found the way. So did the Adventist pioneers. Each one was transformed and became a new creature. Even more, when we have Jesus (and He has us), we are in the Father. That means that we are filled with His power. At the same time, there are things that we will never do, because we are in Jesus. All who are redeemed find the Way!

You must stand up for God. The world is coming to an end; and in the process, cities will be destroyed and there will be earthquakes. Many times we think that we will be strong, but actually that is not the case. Jesus alone can make a person strong. He needs men who will stand up for Him and for His Father. Indeed, only with Jesus in us can we be strong.

The Sabbath is a sign that God is the great Creator. People—including us—think that certain things belong to them; but that is not so. When people accept the mark of the beast and claim for themselves many things that belong to God, they will see their possessions crumble. Soon after that, Jesus will come for all those who died in faith. Together we will be caught up to be with the Lord forever. Are you ready? Make your life right with God!

Pastor Gowie called to the front all who desired to commit or recommit their lives to God. Today there is still time to choose the Way!

After lunch, there was a very special event as Elder Addin Ajucum was **ordained to the ministry**. Pastor Henry Dering began with a description of what it means for a minister to be ordained. The example in the holy Word told how Heaven is heavily involved in such a choice and dedication. "As they



The conference choir sang "Then Sings My Soul" in Spanish and English before the Sabbath sermon.

ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13:2-3. The minister carries distinct responsibilities—to preach the word, to reprove, to rebuke, and to exhort with all longsuffering. He shepherds the flock and is an example of Jesus Himself.

Pastor Idel Suarez, Jr., called the ministers and their wives up to the platform, where they remained for the duration of the service, to witness the proceedings. Both Elder Addin Ajucum and his wife, Sister Lorena Ajucum, were asked questions that served as promises and acceptance of the responsibilities of a gospel minister. Pastor Humberto Ajucum, Elder Addin Ajucum's father, also spoke words of counsel for this solemn moment and expressed his

joy at being able to participate in this dedication.

The ordination then took place, with Elder Addin Ajucum kneeling in the center of the platform and the other ministers kneeling around him, with their hands on his head. He was then presented to the congregation as a minister and greeted by the ministers and their wives.

Afterward, Pastor Addin Ajucum expressed his great joy and how his heart was moved by this solemn dedication in the presence of God's people and the heavenly beings. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jeremiah 17:8-9.

The Sabbath closing service was presented by *Pastor Humberto Ajucum*, based on John 16:5, where Jesus' words to His disciples were recorded, "But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, **Whither goest Thou?**" At the same time, Jesus warned them that they would be persecuted. Sorrow gripped their hearts when they thought of His going away; but this was necessary, for then He would send the greatest

of all gifts, the Holy Spirit. He told the disciples that they would follow Him later. So, here we are, 2,000 years later. The question comes to us, "Where



Pastor Addin Ajucum was ordained to the ministry.



Pastor George Gowie preached the sermon..

are you?" To the disciples Jesus said, "And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. Jesus' absence would actually be a benefit to them. More heavenly resources would be poured upon those who followed the Saviour. He even said that if He did not go, the Comforter would not come to them. But now the gospel would be preached and Jesus would be glorified, although amid persecution and sorrow. Joy would come in the future. And in addition, Jesus would enter His office as the great High Priest in heaven, receiving the prayers of His children on earth and completing the next phase of the plan of redemption. Let us prepare to participate here on earth as Heaven prepares for the latter rain and the earth's final events.



Pastor Addin and Sister Lorena Ajucum.

The **Winter Concert** was led by Sister Melite Hunger and Pastor Larry Watts. The voices and instruments joined in praising God. There was the trio from Cedartown, Georgia, as well as other small groups from different churches. The children presented a song called "Walking with the Lord." There were also a flute choir and a guitar group. The Youth Choir sang, and the concert was closed with the congregation singing "Amazing Grace" with accompanying flutes. Even though the concert was too short, the music was wonderful.

The evening worship service was given by Pastor Uldarico Alejos. It was based on John 16:31, in which Jesus asked His disciples, "**Do you now believe?**" Psalm 77:14 says, "Thou art the God that doest wonders: Thou hast declared Thy strength among the people." The Old and New Testaments provide testimonies concerning what God can do. Is there a reason to believe in God? Each person can ask himself, What has God done in my life? There are many miracles, but do we see and recognize them? Too often we hesitate to believe. The disciples became most aware of who Jesus was after He was crucified.

But our faith should grow and strengthen, because we have seen His miracles. Belief begins small and humbly. David's experience became strong after he faced a lion and a bear with God when he was taking care of his father's sheep. We can likewise speak of the wonders that God has done for His people when they moved forward in faith. There is more than enough evidence to believe God. In fact, Jesus said, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Beth-

saida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." Matthew 11:21-22.

Let us look carefully at what we have experienced in our own lives. We are dependent on the Lord for everything. Let us draw nearer to Him, for that is what He wants; and then our faith will be strengthened.

Sunday

Pastor Elijah Zwane, the second secretary of the General Conference, in Cedartown, Georgia, presented the morning worship service. The topic was Jesus' question to the chief priests and officers who came to find Him in the garden of Gethsemane in John 18:4, "**Whom seek ye?**" There are two ways—the broad way, in which many walk, and the narrow way, which is found by only a few. But to find the way does not necessarily mean a person walks in it. Judas was an example of one who saw the right way but despised it. He saw Jesus doing the work of a servant in washing the disciples' feet, and he thought, We cannot have this Man to rule over us. Jesus taught that the disciples must humble themselves, and "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. That is what He told the other disciples after Judas left the room.

After the last supper, Jesus went to Gethsemane with His disciples. They saw a change in His demeanor, for He faced the decision concerning the redemption of man. He went there to pray as the burdens of the world pressed upon His soul. He could be eternally separated from His Father. Satan pressed thoughts into the Saviour's mind, all of them negative. Jesus longed for His disciples to pray with Him, but they were drowsy and fell asleep. How He longed for them to watch with Him! Because they did not press through the darkness, they were unaware of what

was happening and lost the valuable opportunity to be strengthened for what was coming. But the angel from heaven ministered to the Master so that He would be able to drink the cup of the world's woes. Jesus woke the disciples just as the mob arrived to arrest Him, having been led to the quiet place of prayer by Judas, who had fully given himself into Satan's hands. Jesus told the officers to let the disciples go, for He was the One they were looking for.

Now is the time for us to surrender to Jesus and be like Him. This is a lifelong work. After Jesus died and was resurrected from the grave, He worked to restore Peter so he would follow the Saviour, not rush ahead of Him. Like Peter, we need Jesus to go before us so that we do not face Satan alone.

After breakfast, there was one more workshop, which was given by Pastor Danilo Monterroso. The subject was Pontius Pilate's words to Jesus, "**What is truth?**" found in John 18:38. In the world, truth has been relativized. It is believed that there is no such thing as absolute truth, that my truth may not be your truth. It is tragic how truth is compromised for man's convenience. Pilate asked that question just as he was confronted with truth—God manifested in the flesh, the Lamb of God, upon whom all the services in the sanctuary rested—standing right in front of him.



Pastor Elijah Zwane gave the morning worship.



Pastor Pablo Hunger directed the orchestra for an instrumental special.

While Pilate acknowledged, "I find in Him no fault at all," and demons drove the mob into a frenzy, the governor sacrificed the truth to gain supposed peace and power. The most comfortable way—compromise—is virtually never correct. If he had followed the truth, he would have freed Jesus; but he condemned Him to please the demon-driven crowd. Following one's own mind without reference to eternity makes a person choose the same way that Pilate did. He took a bowl of water in front of everyone and washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." He turned Jesus over to the mob, and his symbolic act was worthless.

So, when one is confronted with the truth, there are three ways to respond—for, against, or take no responsibility. If one does not choose to honor truth, he actually chooses to oppose it. Pilate knew what was right, but that did not benefit him at all. Jesus, the One who was judged unjustly on earth, is today the Advocate for sinners in heaven. Knowing the truth is not sufficient for salvation. There is a famine for the word of God coming. We can already see all around us how the truth is stamped out by infidelity and is disappearing. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who died in Germany shortly before the fall of Adolf Hitler, said, "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil." The Master showed the way. Praise God!

The last meeting of the conference took place at noon. *Pastor Pablo Hunger*, incoming President of the American Union, spoke about the words of Pontius Pilate in John 19:15, "**Shall I crucify your King?**" What a question to ask! How could any situation go so far that such a question would be asked?

Throughout this conference, again and again Jesus was presented as the Way!

Now we were asked, "Why do you need the Way?" There is only one way to the kingdom of God. There are many other ways presented, but they all lead to destruction. Over and over in our lives, we are put under pressure, such as when someone asks us, "Do you believe in Jesus?" This is especially true in the university environment. One young man who met such a situation answered, "I'm not really a serious Christian." His heart was beating hard as he uttered those words! And that night, he was unable to sleep. He had betrayed Jesus.

Such circumstances can come suddenly as we go through life, and we need to think about them before they happen so that we can be ready to meet them in the Spirit of Christ. It is easy to get distracted and lose our core focus. The priests were in a charged environment, and Satan had so worked up the whole crowd that the chief priests shouted, "We have no king but Caesar!" Pilate had to make a decision, and he knew that Jesus was innocent. In washing his hands in the attempt to avoid his responsibility to judge justly, Jesus said nothing. Why? Because God forces no one. Jesus had made the decision to go to Calvary, to free you and me from sin. He was and is the King of love.

"He came to His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:11. The people, and especially the religious leaders, did not understand Jesus. They allowed themselves to become confused. When the decisive moment came, Jesus was ready. He was silent. He took the way to Calvary. Even His disciples did not understand what was really going on. Who is your king? Everyone will have to answer that question. In Joshua's day, he told the people of Israel what his decision was: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve

the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

And that decision needs to be renewed every day. God's servants are here to serve Him full time, to take action. And His servants are in this world to give glory to Him, not to themselves or the world. So, who is king of your heart, family, church, decisions, thoughts, future, goals, and projects? Look around. We have Norman College, which is big. We can do all kinds of things here—education, health support, multimedia projects, and a channel for the Internet. Let us work together in the way, let us please Jesus. What do you want to do with your King Jesus? "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14. Do not delay your decision. Let us walk together in this way.

The conference ended with the singing of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and Pastor Hunger pronounced the benediction.

On Friday afternoon as well as Sunday morning and afternoon, the suite of Religious Liberty Publishing Assn. in the Administration Building was opened for a literature display and sale. It was a blessing to be able to see how the publications are organized. There are four main categories: History, Doctrine, Education, and Outreach. In addition, the American Union website, www.sda1888.org, is operated and financed by RLP, including the online store.

A heartfelt thank you to all who carried responsibilities during this blessed conference, including the organizers, presenters, interpreters, ushers, musicians, teachers, kitchen staff, housekeepers, gardeners, and photographers. May you be richly blessed by the God of heaven, who will soon gather His people into His everlasting kingdom.

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