

THE STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS TO HELP YOU BECOME A BETTER STEWARD

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A Beacon of Hope Amidst the Flames

By Tamara Perkins

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, saying, “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men” (2 Corinthians 3:2). It is easy to forget that our lives serve as a testimony to the world. We are an open letter, revealing who God is to those around us. Just as we have the Gospel according to Matthew, there is also the Gospel according to each of us. For some, we may be the only epistle they will ever read.



In my study of the seven “T’s” of stewardship, I was reminded that the final “T” is Testimony—verbalizing what God has done, is doing, and will do in our lives. Our testimony is a reflection of God’s work through His church.

I have the privilege of being part of a church community that truly exemplifies the stewardship of testimony—witnessing to what God can do when we choose to be His living epistles.

RESPONDING TO CRISIS

On January 7, 2025, devastation swept through Pacific Palisades, Altadena, Sylmar, and surrounding areas as wildfires erupted with relentless force. Thousands of

STEWARDSHIP IS REVOLUTIONARY GENEROSITY. IT INVOLVES THE 7 T'S:
TIME, TEMPLE, TALENT, TREASURE, TRUST IN GOD, THEOLOGY, AND TESTIMONY.

families were displaced, homes were reduced to ashes, and entire communities were left grappling with uncertainty. As the flames raged on, the question loomed: where would these families find refuge?

For Valley Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church, the answer was clear—step up, serve, and become a place of sanctuary.

A DECISION OF FAITH

On January 8, 2025, in a moment of prayerful reflection, Pastor Roscoe Shields, Jr. made the bold and compassionate decision to list our church as an evacuation center. With open arms, we welcomed those who had nowhere else to go, offering not just a place to rest but also power, warmth, and safety. The church, once only a house of worship, became a house of refuge. We anticipated that people would need clothes, food, water, toiletries—everything required for survival.

AN OUTPOURING OF GENEROSITY

On January 9th, we put out a call to action. We asked our congregation and the community to donate essential items to support those who had lost everything. What followed was nothing short of miraculous. The response was overwhelming,

as bags upon bags of clothing, non-perishable food, blankets, bottled water, and toiletries poured in.

People from all walks of life stepped up, embodying the spirit of selfless giving. Then, on January 10th, something extraordinary happened. Our hospitality director, Zimry Contreras, was at the church receiving donations when she received a call from a young man named “Peysoh.”

A well-known figure in the community, Peysoh asked what was needed most. Without hesitation, Zimry encouraged him to bring whatever he could.

What happened next was a testament to the power of community. Peysoh rallied his friends and showed up with a massive donation—cases upon cases of bottled water, piles of clothing, hygiene products, and other necessities. He didn't stop there. Over the following week, he continued to return with truckloads of donations, each delivery bigger than the last. His generosity touched our hearts and lifted the spirits of so many who had lost so much.



TURNING WORSHIP INTO ACTION

As the weekend approached, we knew we had another decision to make. Our regular 11:00 AM Sabbath Worship service was scheduled for January 11th, but our hearts told us that this Sabbath needed to be different. Instead of our usual gathering, we transformed our worship into action.

That morning, volunteers from our congregation and beyond showed up in droves. The sight of so many willing hands and giving hearts was humbling. Together, we sorted and distributed food, clothing, and essential supplies to families in need. We prayed with those who had lost everything, offered words of encouragement, and simply listened as they shared their pain.

By the end of the day, we had served hundreds of people. The smiles, the tears of gratitude, and the heartfelt embraces reminded us that love in action is the purest form of worship.



Watch
a video
on T #7,
Testimony:



CONTINUING THE MISSION

The following weeks saw a continued commitment to service. While the immediate crisis had passed, the recovery process had just begun. Families were still displaced, individuals were still in need, and the weight of loss was still heavy. But we refused to slow down.

We continued distributing donations, ensuring that no one was forgotten. Our church became more than just a place of refuge—it became a hub of hope, a place where people could come not just for food and clothes but also for encouragement and community.

And then, we took things a step further. Beginning on February 8 we introduced portable showers, providing much-needed relief for those who have lost access to basic amenities.

It is a small way to restore a sense of normalcy, a reminder that even in times of devastation, we are still deserving of care and compassion.

MOVING FORWARD: A COMMITMENT TO SERVE

As we continue into the months ahead, Valley Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church remains steadfast in our mission.

The fires may have burned down homes, but they did not burn down our faith, our love, or our commitment to serving our community.

We will continue to be a resource for those in need, ensuring that the support does not end when the news cycle moves on.

Whether it's through food distribution, clothing drives, or simply being a listening ear, we are here. We are the hands and feet of Christ, and we will not grow weary in doing good.

To everyone who has donated, volunteered, or simply offered a prayer—thank you. Your kindness is the light in someone else's darkest hour. Together, we are proving that love is more powerful than loss, that faith is stronger than fear, and that, with God, even in the valley, there is victory.

The events at our church in Southern California remind me of

Jesus' words in Matthew 25:34-40:

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me'... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

I encourage you to be involved in ministry to "the least of these." Let us be living epistles, shining as beacons of hope in a world in desperate need of God's love.



(L-R) ZIMRY CONTRERAS, ELDER DARYL MEYER, ELDER DAVID PERKINS, SR., "PEYSOH", PASTOR ROSCOE SHIELDS, JR.



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