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# Conference PRIORITIES

## Receive the Holy Spirit

There are churches in North America and Europe with long histories that have now become bars, nightclubs, bookstores, and even skateparks. My heart breaks when I see those churches, which were once full and filled with energy and vitality, being closed down. We feel that with enough education, training, and skills, we can revitalize our churches and fulfill the Great Commission.

In Southeastern California Conference (SECC), we are committed to expanding God's kingdom.

We have resources, knowledge, and learning opportunities, but without the Holy Spirit, it will only get us so far. We need the Holy Spirit in this conference, in our churches, and in our individual lives.

Christ's disciples spent three and a half years with the best Teacher in the world. One would think they would be equipped enough to run the church to expand God's kingdom. Yet after the resurrection, Jesus didn't tell His disciples to go do their work. He told them to wait until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. As a result, the followers of Christ spent time praying for this indwelling.

They were already equipped with various talents, but it was the Holy Spirit who would enable them to maximize everything that God had given them: spiritual gifts, personality, and knowledge. The Holy

Why not spend more time praying for the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we, the church, become a catalyst for a renewed mission to reach our own neighborhoods, campuses, or offices?

Spirit was the one who moved behind them, with them, and ahead of them to position the church to explode with growth and power.

If it was that way for the church in the beginning, will it not be that way for the church at the end? Like Christ's followers of old, we too must pray for the Holy Spirit to fill our lives. Why not spend more time praying for the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we, the church, become a catalyst for a renewed mission to reach our own neighborhoods, campuses, or offices?

This year has been designated by Pacific Union and SECC as the year of evangelism. There will be extra funds that will be allocated to our churches for church growth and evangelism. We are excited for church pastors and congregations to learn how to better reach out to their communities and bring people to Christ. Yet it is my prayer that, before all of that, we prepare for those special events by praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

As Ellen White reminds us, "The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it (*The Review and Herald*, March 19, 1895).



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*FAR LEFT: Volunteers smile during toy giveaway.*

*LEFT: Volunteers prepare toys for families.*

## Sixteenth Street Church Brings Cheer to 550 Families

By Andrea King

The Sixteenth Street church in San Bernardino, California, spread health and holiday cheer as they hosted their annual toy giveaway. They have been committed to sharing God's love in tangible ways in their community, even in the pandemic. During their December toy giveaway, they provided over 550 families with toys, groceries, and COVID tests.

Through their community partnerships, they received toys from Toys for Tots, sponsored by the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment in Pasadena, and Spark of Love, a program sponsored by the San Bernardino County Fire Department. The church recognized these organizations with plaques for their continued support of the church and community.

In addition to toys, the church distributed groceries. Sixteenth Street church hosts a food pantry where they supply food to local families and organizations. They decided, in addition to their normal food pantry times, they would also distribute groceries at the toy giveaway. Panera Bread, Lassonde Pappas, Feeding America, and the Community Action Partnership helped supply the groceries that were given.

*"It's fun to see the smiles on the faces of the kids and parents, knowing that others care for them."*

Families also had an opportunity to get tested for COVID-19. Sixteenth Street has been hosting free COVID tests on Sundays and Mondays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. since February 2021. With the current surge in COVID-19 cases, they have administered over 350 tests in a day.

Sonjanetha Scott, community service leader at Sixteenth Street church, has been leading this program for 17 years. She recognizes the need in the community is great. "One family told me that the only gifts her children were getting were the gifts from us," said Scott. "She said she was going to go home and wrap them and put them

under the tree. That made me feel really good."

Scott was elated that there were so many volunteers who came out to help. Patsy Direux, one of the volunteers, makes it a point to help every year. "It's fun to see the smiles on the faces of the kids and parents, knowing that others care for them," said Direux.

As a result of the community service ministry, there are some community members who now attend the Sixteenth Street church. "We are hoping that we can feed their body and bring them in the church and fill their mind with what they need," said Scott.

# SECC Welcomes Isaac Kim as Associate Youth Director

By Andrea King

The Southeastern California Conference (SECC) is thrilled to have Isaac Kim serve as the associate youth director. Kim brings a wealth of experience in children and family ministry, as well as a Master of Science degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. SECC President Jonathan Park said, "Isaac Kim is a pastor who has received strong support from his peers and congregation. He has performed exemplary service as the children and family pastor at Calimesa church."

For 20 years, Kim has served the Calimesa Church as the young adult pastor, the young families and children's pastor, the family and administrative pastor, and even the interim senior pastor. Although his job title has changed, his commitment to the kingdom of God has remained the same.

Kim's ministry has had one location base, yet its impact has rippled throughout the nation and beyond. Kim was a part of the core team that visioned the Growing Together Sabbath School



curriculum. This curriculum provides lessons for families to study the same Bible passages together on their own level. The aim is to get "every age in the same page." Kim serves as the executive director of this endeavor.

Kim has also been instrumental in leading mission trips to Roatan, Honduras. Under his leadership, Calimesa church adopted two communities there. Since 2009, he has organized eight mission

experiences that have brought dental and medical care for the community and media and education supplies for the local school. "That has been an enduring legacy of the church that we helped to start," said Kim.

"Pastor Isaac also has established relationships with many of the pastors he will be serving, making him the ideal new lead for Family & Children's Ministry," said Aren Rennacker, SECC youth director. Sensing a calling to this position, Kim looks forward to spending time with pastors in prayer to see what God lays before them. "I pride myself in being cheerleader-in-chief," he said. "If you are going to work, you might as well have fun."

Kim has shared the love of God abroad, but he shared it at home first. He and his wife, Grace Kim, disciplined their boys to know Christ. In December, he had the privilege of baptizing both his sons, Christian and Noah. He also saw and shared God's love during his wife's health journey. Grace had a rare form of cancer and passed away in August 2021. As he prepares to lead in this new capacity, Isaac Kim remembers the phrase that helped them get through dark times. "We choose happiness, and we love Jesus. We can do that because we have hope."



"Pastor Isaac also has established relationships with many of the pastors he will be serving, making him the ideal new lead for Family & Children's Ministry."

A graphic for the SECC NOW newsletter. It features a red and yellow background with the text "SECC NOW" in large white letters. Below it, in smaller white text, is "News and events from the Southeastern California Conference". At the bottom, it says "Text SECCNOW TO 22828" and "or visit <http://bit.ly/seccnow> to subscribe to the SECC Now newsletter to receive news, resources, and upcoming events from around our conference territory!". There is a small white logo of a dove in the bottom right corner.

# Building Momentum: Literature Evangelism Team Breaks Records

By Becky St. Clair

Going into summer 2021, Eric Isaia, assistant literature director for Southeastern California Conference (SECC), assumed it would be a low year for literature evangelism. Due to the pandemic, their three regular programs were reduced to one, and instead of its usual 20-25 students, it would have only 12. It also seemed less friendly to approach a stranger's door wearing a face mask, and therefore less likely to result in that door being opened.

"I'm really happy I was wrong," Isaia said with a grin.

On average, summer literature evangelism efforts in SECC garner around \$120,000. Though the 2021 team was half the size they would have been in a regular year, and were operating during a pandemic, which complicated their work, the team earned nearly \$192,000. This was not only a record amount in the SECC but also in the history of the Youth Rush literature evangelism program across the entire North American Division.

"With all that's been going on in the world, people are recognizing even more their need for the Lord," Isaia said. "That, factored in with the loneliness a lot of people have experienced in recent months, played a huge role in our success this summer."

And that success was not just monetary; it was personal.

Nicholas Lesch, a 2021 student colporteur, shared a story about a woman who gave him her last dollars in exchange for three books: *Lessons of Love*, *Habits that Heal*, and *The Answer Book*. She told him, "I am giving you this money because I need love, I need healing, and I need answers."

Joshua Roman, another student, shared about a man he'd encountered who had recently lost his mother and had been experiencing panic attacks, anxiety, and depression. He was taken to the hospital three times in the space of



ABOVE: The SECC Youth Rush Team works in San Bernardino County. RIGHT: The SECC Youth Rush Team prays before going out into the community.



a week for severe chest pain and had made up his mind to take his own life.

"He told God that if He truly existed, He would show Himself," Roman recalled. "That was the day I arrived at his door, offering to pray with him."

God showed Himself this year in a big way, including to the students. At the end of the summer, eight of the 12 made a decision for baptism or re-baptism, and several have gone on to receive additional training in order to be leaders in the 2022 program.

"We don't know what the program will be able to safely do next summer," Isaia admitted, "but we're confident that with God's leading we can build on the momentum from this year and reach

even more of our communities—and our young people—for Christ."

Anyone interested in being part of the 2022 SECC Youth Rush literature evangelism team can learn more and apply at [seccyouthrush.com](http://seccyouthrush.com).

**Vacation Bible School Training**

March 20, 2022  
9am- 12pm  
Loma Linda Korean Church  
[seccyouth.com/vbs](http://seccyouth.com/vbs)