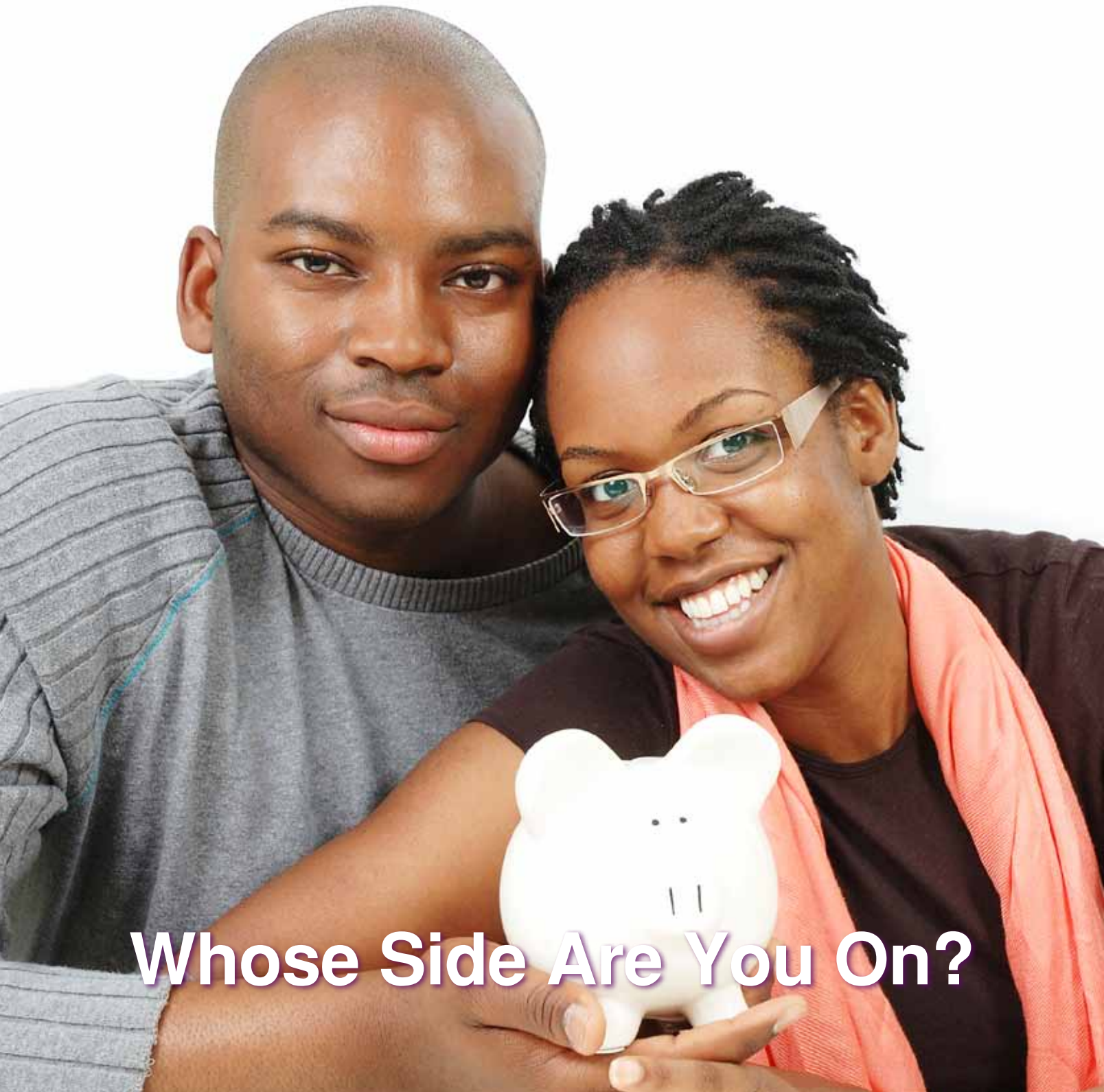


December 2011

TSOUTHERN TIDINGS



Whose Side Are You On?

Simple Church: A Very Old/New Idea

Simple Church is a term used to refer to small congregations that primarily meet in homes. These Sabbath home gatherings start with a team of four missionary-minded Adventists (commonly called a CORE 4 missionary team) who focus on reaching 90 percent of America's



Unchurched, secular, and front-line missionaries meet in homes on Sabbath.

population. This group of people typically will not walk into a conventional church on a given weekend. Simple Churches are not small groups because they are not a side activity of a regular church. They are full churches on par with conventional churches whose congregations own, lease, or rent a building where worship and ministry are conducted. Simple Churches tend to be smaller in membership

and have a simpler worship format and organizational structure. Research by George Barna at www.barna.org reveals nearly six million Americans currently attend a church of this kind.

Simple Church is more effective at reaching some groups than a conventional form of church, especially for the unchurched and younger adults. Since the largest number of Florida's

residents are not active in any religious congregation, this is an approach that can be used to successfully achieve the mission of the Adventist Church in Florida.

This is not a new form of church. The New Testament clearly reveals that early Christian believers met for worship in homes (Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, and Colossians 4:15).

Surprisingly, this is not

in homes or rented lodge halls. In fact, this concept lives on in Adventist heritage under the old-fashioned terminology of cottage meetings. Current church attendance statistics indicate it is time to dust off this old concept and reinvent it for the 21st century.

"Milton Adams has had success with a pilot project here in Florida where Simple Church was first birthed," says Florida Conference President Mike Cauley. "He is also directing a Simple Church global network for www.Adventist-Mission.org and the North American Division. The

Conference is now inviting lay people to explore and pray about the possibility of becoming modern-day missionaries."

More information and online training is available at www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

—BY MILTON ADAMS



a new form of church for Adventists. During the early decades of the movement, most local churches met

Bellevue Members Break Ground

After many years of planning, it was a joyous day for members of Bellevue, Fla., Church as they broke ground on June 12, 2011, for a new 250-seat sanctuary. Mike Cauley, Florida Conference president, participated in the groundbreaking service.

The 160-plus members and Ric Pleasants, pastor, expressed excitement that their dream

for a new sanctuary will soon be realized. The new edifice will be built on the present church property.

—BY ZLATA SABO



Thirty years of saving and planning for a new church sanctuary led Bellevue, Fla., Church members to the joyous June 12, 2011, groundbreaking.