

Revival & REFORMATION

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Perfect Property

By Andrew McChesney

Seventh-day Adventists wanted to plant a church on the Navajo Reservation in the U.S. state of Arizona. Church members from around the world contributed to the project when the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering was collected in 2011. But there was a big problem: where to open the church?

The city of Page, located on the border of the Navajo Reservation, was chosen as the ideal location. However, the church couldn't simply be constructed. City authorities had a rule that all churches had to be located on a certain street. That street was so well-known for its houses of worship that it was nicknamed "Church Row" and "Holy Curve."

But there was no space left on the street to build a new church. So, the only option left was to buy an existing church building if the owners were willing to sell.

There was one church on the street that wasn't being used. The Southern Baptist church had fallen into disrepair after members had grown old and passed away. The elderly deacon responsible for the church decided to put the property up for sale.

An appraiser was summoned to determine the value of the property. He said it was worth U.S. \$850,000.

But the Adventists didn't have \$850,000. The portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that had been collected for the new church in 2011 was less. Even with contributions from the North American Division and other church entities that are usually added to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, there wasn't that much money for the property. Adventist leaders spoke with the deacon and prayed.

The Adventists, however, weren't the only people interested in the property.

The land occupied a prime spot on the main road coming into town. It was also right across the street from a public school. A popular fast-food chain thought the land would be the perfect place to open a restaurant. Contacting the church deacon, the fast-food chain offered \$2 million.

The deacon faced a serious decision. What should he do? The land was worth \$850,000, the Adventists were interested, and the fast-food chain had offered \$2 million.

The deacon prayed earnestly. As he prayed, he sensed that people needed a church more than a fast-food restaurant. He asked church leaders at the South Baptist Convention to sell the property

to the Adventists for \$250,000. Then, with the leaders' blessing, he offered it for that amount to the Adventists. The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering and other contributions were enough to buy the property.

"It was unbelievable," said Nancy Crosby, who oversees Adventist outreach to Native Americans on the Navajo Reservation as well as in Utah and Nevada. "There is no question that God opened the door."

Normally, when planting a new church, a congregation starts with a handful of people meeting in a home. When the group grows too big, it moves to a bigger meeting place. In Page, the congregation started in a building that was much larger than it needed.

"It seemed like the cart was being placed before the horse," Nancy said. "But God knew what He was doing."

Andrew McChesney is editor of Adventist Mission. This story is shared with permission of Adventist Mission.

World Church Prayer Requests

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- Pray for local government leaders. The Bible tells us that God puts leaders in position, and He takes them down that His purposes may be accomplished.
- Pray for pastors and church leaders around the world to prioritize the preaching of the Three Angels' Messages. Now is the time to share this vital message.
- Pray for our young people who live in countries where there is religious persecution. Pray that they would stand strong for the faith, and that they would be mighty witnesses for God's glory.
- Pray that God will give each one of us an extra measure of His Holy Spirit, and that He will show us how to be more effective witnesses in these last days.
- Pray that God will pour out an extra measure of the Holy Spirit upon our Church. Pray that He will work in such a powerful way that people will be drawn to come see what God is doing.