

Adventist Review

January 13, 2011

Bradshaw New Speaker
for It Is Written **8**

I Just Wanted to Volunteer **16**

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare **23**

The Call

RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

GYC
2010 NO
TURNING
BACK

PAGE 20

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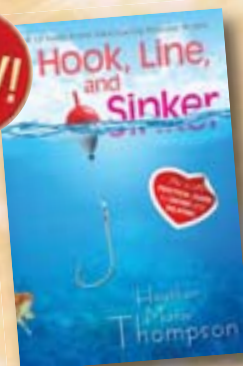
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Adventist Review

"Behold, I come quickly..."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ by presenting stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.



16

COVER FEATURE

16 I Just Wanted to Volunteer

DIXIE RODRIGUEZ

The Holy Spirit whispers different things to different people.



23

ARTICLES

20 "We're All in One Army"

Editor Bill Knott interviews Justin McNeilus, president of Generation of Youth for Christ.

23 Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

DAVID ASSCHERICK

Don't wait; do it now!

26 He Called, God Answered

WILONA KARIMABADI

Matthew was searching for God; and God was searching for him.

28 An Appeal

ELLEN G. WHITE

It's a simple question; how will we respond?



8

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters

7 Page 7

8 World News & Perspectives

13 Give & Take

14 Back to Basics

15 GLOW Stories

27 Introducing the Why

31 Reflections



6

EDITORIALS

6 E. EDWARD ZINKE I Underestimated His Power!

7 WILONA KARIMABADI Practicing Versus Preaching

ON THE COVER

The fulfillment of God's promise "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Joel 2:28) is as individual as we are.

Illustration for Adventist Review by Doila-imeji

NEXT WEEK

Adventist Megachurches
Is bigger always better?

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CELESTE RYAN BLYDEN/COLUMBIA UNION VISITOR

Looking Outward

» The article regarding the Pennsylvania Conference special constituency session, “Pennsylvania Adventists Discuss Future of Their Camp,” by Celeste Ryan Blyden (Dec. 9, 2010), failed to mention the missional context that introduced the session. It was shared that summer day camps could more effectively reach the non-Adventist kids in communities where our churches are dying from a lack of young families and a lack of contact with non-Adventist families. This is at a fraction of the cost of maintaining and operating a camp property to support one week of summer camp for mainly Adventist kids.

Last year the Pennsylvania Conference summer day camps had 250 campers, with 140 non-Adventist campers. Two adults from the local community were baptized as a result. Perhaps it is time for conferences and churches to consider a more “outreach approach” to summer youth ministries.

RAY HARTWELL

Reading, Pennsylvania

Coming Out on Top

» Regarding “The Place That Made Me Stay,” by Wilona Karimabadi (Nov. 25, 2010): Thank you for the endorsement of Adventist education, in this case one obtained from La Sierra University.

I’ve followed the trials and travails of La Sierra both in the *Adventist Review* and on many blogs that dealt with the issue of La Sierra’s biology curriculum, and this is an example of finding what you look for.

I remember when I was in an Adventist college we knew there were students with low morals, as well as those who used and abused drugs and alcohol off campus. But thankfully, most of my friends and professors were people I looked up to as friends and role models. Was everything perfect? Not by a long shot. But I’ll take the education I received there over anything offered on a secular campus.

We have to make sure our campuses first of all reflect Christian values; the curriculum will take care of itself.

CHARLES BLACKBURN

Chicago, Illinois

Meeting the Challenge

» The feature about Lisa Beardsley, “Adventist Education Leader Up to the Challenges,” by Mark Kellner with Ansel Oliver (Nov. 18,

2010), brought to mind two concerns.

1. Adventist schools are closing one after another even while the church is growing. See Shane Anderson’s *How to Kill Adventist Education (and How to Give It a Fighting Chance!)*.

2. Research could be done to see how many parents remove children from Adventist schools and send them to other more expensive Christian schools.

Sometimes discipline is the concern, as Anderson points out—students have less respect for teachers, are less motivated now to perform basic schoolwork functions; and many more have significant behavioral issues than in the past. If we expel them, we close the schools for lack of students. Keeping them is not an option either: good students will leave, and we will close the schools for lack of support. Salvation is also our concern.



MARK A. KELLNER/ADVENTIST REVIEW

The solution? A well-defined discipline program that teaches students how to be Adventist students. Expulsion doesn’t mean lost forever. “Redemptive expulsion” has successfully been used in some places, where a student is given the requirements for a path back if he/she wants to return.

God bless Lisa Beardsley.

RUTH DEGROAFF

Eagle River, Alaska



Unity Among Us

» Thank you, thank you, thank you for the one-page piece by Ross Calkins, “150 Years and Counting” (Nov. 18, 2010). I loved it!

As we see the church becoming more and more diverse (and diversity is not a bad thing), it’s nice to know we have so much in common. The lines “One thing common to all of us is that our favorite stories all come from the same book. And our favorite character is Jesus” are precious. What a wonderful reminder that in spite of all our differences in lifestyle and even doctrine, our loyalty to Jesus will keep us united.

KENT STEPHENSON

Arlington, Texas

» I absolutely loved the article “150 Years and Counting.” Calkins did a great job with all the comparisons and contrasts. My very favorite is “At any given time there are some of us who are struggling, and some who are breathing a sigh of relief. Some are beginning the race, and some are just crossing the finish line.”

We are all in this together. What a neat reminder to look at each person as an individual in whatever stage of spiritual growth rather than with disdain at anyone, anywhere.

JAY THOMAS

Portland, Oregon

» Thank you for the good articles you are putting in the *Review*, such as “150 Years and Counting.” I laughed when I read that one—Ross Calkins had it down in a nutshell! I would never have thought of what is in that article.

The article about Arminianism and Adventism, “Grace, Free Will, and Judgment,” by Woodrow W. Whidden II (Oct. 14, 2010) goes along with *The Great Controversy*, which I am reading now.

I’m going to miss Roy Adams very much. He helped me over a difficult part of my life.

FAYE JULL
Auburn, California

The Cross Makes the Difference

» Wow! I enjoyed the parable by Julian Lines, “The Man, the Banker, and the Priceless Gem” (Nov. 18, 2010). What a clever, unique way to bring such an important truth to light. If we realized how rich we are in Christ, this church would have a real revival. This is what I’m praying for.

I also enjoyed “The Devil Doesn’t Play Games,” by Wilona Karimabadi (Oct. 28, 2010), about the Raos and



“What a wonderful reminder that in spite of all our differences in lifestyle and even doctrine, our loyalty to Jesus will keep us united.”

—KENT STEPHENSON, *Arlington, Texas*

their parents in India. I knew them very well for the 1½ years we lived in Singapore. I had no idea of their background, except they had come from India.

LILLIAN R. GUILD
Loma Linda, California

Don’t Be Afraid

» Hyveth Williams’ “No Fear” (Oct. 28, 2010) is right on. Trying to control people by fear is a tactic of Satan. The end never justifies the means. If perfect love drives out fear, we can estimate how perfect our love is.

CAROL GRADY
Snohomish, Washington



Timely

» Stephanie Knight’s article “A Caterpillar’s Message” (Oct. 21, 2010) came at just the right time for me. As in her experience, I had just lost my precious kitty of many years. Her article gave me

comfort. Thanks.

Thanks to the *Adventist Review* for the many uplifting stories and articles.

MILLICENT DUNN
Gaithersburg, Maryland

I Wish

» I’ve been a subscriber to the *Adventist Review* for, well, never mind for how long. But I’ve read the *Review* for decades, not just years. And I’m writing about the way the news has been treated over the past few years.

Why are we only treated to a handful of stories, reported in depth, rather than a wide variety of stories mentioned in highlight form? I noticed, for example, that when Dorothy Eaton Watts died, the story went on for more than a page, with a prominent photograph. As I mentioned before, I’ve been around long enough to remember when the death of a notable Adventist leader got at most a quarter page, with a small photograph. With Watts (and with others who died earlier this year) we got an entire life sketch.

I, for one, would like shorter, more concise news reports, and more of them, rather than ones that go on for hundreds of words. If

network newscasts can give us the headlines in a couple minutes, why can’t we? It seems that Adventists do enough good in their communities to have lots of good news to share.

GLORIA HARDESTY
Tujunga, California

Thanks

» We have received the *Review* for 60-plus years, and it keeps getting better!

FRANK AND DOLLY DE HAAN
Hagerstown, Maryland

We welcome your letters, noting, as always, that inclusion of a letter in this section does not imply that the ideas expressed are endorsed by either the editors of the *Adventist Review* or the General Conference. Short, specific, timely letters have the best chance at being published (please include your complete address and phone number—even with e-mail messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: letters@adventistreview.org.



E. Edward
Zinke

I Underestimated His Power!

DAN, MY LITTLE BROTHER (THREE AND A HALF YEARS YOUNGER), AND

I used to enjoy wrestling each other in little boys' play. Well, at least I enjoyed it; I have no idea what he thought about it. As we grew older we seldom saw each other, for Dan was off to academy while I was off to college. My summers were occupied at Wawona summer camp, while his were spent at jobs near home.

I came home one day, and to my surprise, Dan greeted me at the front door. This seemed like the perfect time for another friendly wrestling match. Did I have a surprise! In no time at all he hoisted me onto his shoulders and started carrying me around the house like a sack of potatoes. Firmly in his grip, there was nothing I could do except ask for mercy, which gentle Dan obligingly gave. My "little brother" had become a strapping teenager. (Now his mantra is "If you hit me and I find out about it, you're going to be in trouble!") I had grossly misunderstood and underestimated his power.

In the meantime, I was studying theology in college and at the university; training to think systematically and critically. Our task was to place the biblical text under the microscope, dissect it, attempt to understand its meaning, and determine its truth value, if any. The power of my scholarship was brought to bear to enlighten the text. The task was similar to a critical understanding of a Shakespearean text, or a concerto by Mozart. I was working with dead words on a page; it was my job to bring them to life. I hoped, under the power of my controlling hand, the magic would happen. If the task was handled appropriately, the genius of the text or concerto would occasionally be brought forth in a moment of inspiration. The power of my insight brought life to the text.

Had I misunderstood the power of the Bible? God's Word, the Bible, was patiently waiting for me to see the light! I had come with the *flashlight* of my mind to illumine the text, yet it is Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who is *the light of the world*. David applies the same concept to God's Word: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Ps. 119:105).

What's more, the power of God is conveyed to us through His Word when we read it with openness under the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of God's Word was manifested in the creation of this world (Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6-9). It was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3; Phil. 3:10, 11). It is displayed in the upholding of the universe (Heb. 1:3). It is made known in the power of the gospel that makes foolish the wisdom of the Greeks and the empiricism of the Jews (and my critical, systematic methods) (Rom. 1:16, 17; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 1 Thess. 1:4, 5).

The Reformers and Ellen White taught that when God's Word, the Bible, is read with openness, it's as if God Himself is in the room speaking to us. There is a transforming power in the Word of God. The Word of God is living and powerful (Heb. 4:12). It is through the Word of God that we may be born again (1 Peter 1:23) and receive a new heart (Eze. 36:26). John promises that the love of God is perfected in those who keep God's Word (1 John 2:5). The Word of God gives us strength so that we can overcome the evil one (verses 14, 15). We become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world (2 Peter 1:4-10).

Wow! I had thought that the Bible became a partaker of my scholarly power! I was relying on my power rather than on the power of the Word of God. I was the loser. I had grossly misunderstood and underestimated the power of the Word of God. ■

Practicing Versus Preaching

I HAVE A CONFESSION.

I happily encourage others. I happily encourage others to believe in themselves. I happily encourage others to believe things will get better.

But I don't always practice what I preach.

My husband has always known this about me. In fact, one of the first things he gave me when we were dating was a little book about worry. This is something we talk about frequently still. It shouldn't be this way, but it is a struggle I have, and one that I'm being candid about, because I know others struggle with it too.

For whatever reason, it sure is easier to root for people who share their struggles with us than it is to root for ourselves. I can easily turn molehills into mountains regarding my own issues, but will work hard to squash *your* mountains and help you see them for the little bumps in the road that they really are. And on the inside, I can certainly be a Debbie Downer to your Suzy Sunshine—even if I don't show it outwardly.

So what do I do about that? My husband reminded me the other day. "Seriously?" he said. "What do you have to be upset about? God loves you. That's all that matters."

Is it really that simple? Yes, it is. As I thought about that, I could hear God say to me, "I love you, and you are never alone." And if I have to keep repeating that and repeating that, it is worth the practice.

We have the love of God with us, and His Word says that nothing can separate that from us. In any problem, great or small, that simple and powerful fact trumps everything else.

So let me go now and practice what I just preached. ■



Wilona

Karimabadi



I HAVE RESOLVED

One hundred Seventh-day Adventists were asked to give one New Year's resolution. Here is what they said:

Exercise more and lose a few pounds! • Develop one new habit a month. • Always trust in His power. • Put Christ first. • Be more tolerant. • Keep in touch—Jesus, family, friends. • More time with Jesus. • Be on time. • Healthy living. • Spend more time in communion with God. • Actively be happy. • Eat Less. • Keep doing what works. • Exercise! • More of *You*, dear Jesus. • Slow life down. • A closer relationship with God. • Back to basics. • Diet, diet, diet. • To exercise more! • Start a prayer journal. • A better relationship with my daughter. • Eat better chocolate. • More personal time with God in prayer. • All for Christ. • Be ready every day for Jesus' coming. • More prayer time. • Spend more time praying. • Help an orphan. • Make more time for God. • Study the Bible more. • Become more like Jesus. • Better decisions and more consistent. • More Bible study and prayer. • Pray more! • Consistent exercise. • More of Jesus in everything! • Maranatha! • Lose 20 pounds. • Exercise, exercise, exercise much more! • Become closer to God. • Love more. • Daily study of my Sabbath school lesson. • Pray more, do less. • Spend more time with my Lord. • Spend more time with family. • Be more efficient with my time and money. • To love the unlovable. • More grace . . . less grouch. • Spend more time with God and family. • Slow down. • Stress less, pray more. • Finish my dissertation and graduate with a Ph.D. • Continue improving spiritually and physically. • Contemplate the Word more. • Less silicon, more carbon. • To follow God more wholeheartedly. • Draw nearer to God. • Receive the outpouring of Holy Spirit. • Diet. • Read more. • Study to be an interpreter. • Spiritual moral professional integrity. • A better practice of stewardship. • To stop rehearsing my complaints. • Exercise on a consistent basis. • Exercise more spiritually. • Make Jesus real. • Get to know Jesus better. • Revival of my spiritual experience. • To enter heaven when Jesus comes. • To win souls for Jesus. • To choose Jesus. • To love large. • To keep at least one of the Ten Commandments in my day-to-day life. • Kiss sugar goodbye. • Study the Bible more! • Holiness. • To never make any more New Year's resolutions. • Get closer to God. • Live in the moment. • Implement resolutions on 2010's list! • Get closer to God. • Support missions. • Better time management. • To be a healthier person spiritually, mentally, physically. • Early to bed. • More of Jesus. Less of me. • Better understanding of the heavenly sanctuary. • Make no resolutions—just try to live right. • Be happy every day. • One goal a month. • Get healthier, stay healthy, stay young! • To memorize a Bible book every year from now on. • To get married. • To go to bed earlier. • Don't complain as much. • Be a blessing to someone every day. • Try to curb impulse buying. • Spend more time in Bible study.



NORTH AMERICA

Bradshaw Named It Is Written Speaker/Director

Succeeds Shawn Boonstra, who is stepping aside for health reasons

By **MARK A. KELLNER**, news editor

IT WASN'T exactly the Damascus road, but John Bradshaw's conversion experience began on a street in Limerick, Ireland, more than 20 years ago.

Bradshaw, 43, is the new speaker/director for It Is Written, a pioneering television ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, succeeding Shawn Boonstra, who is stepping aside for health reasons. The New Zealand-born Bradshaw has an interesting background: he was not raised Adventist, and came to the church after growing up and becoming a successful radio disc jockey in his native land.

"I was a big fish in a small pond," Bradshaw recalled in a telephone interview. He had hosted radio programs that were broadcast in several New Zealand cities, including Hamilton, Wellington, Taupo, and Auckland. But, he added, as many of his countrymen do, he was feeling a bit of wanderlust and "decided I'd leave, go overseas, see the world, and then come back," returning to his radio host lifestyle.

"But while I had left the country, that's when I ran into God," he recalls.

A self-described spiritual searcher, Bradshaw was raised a Roman Catholic and, while in Ireland, went to a worship service to "find deeper meaning in my faith." He left somewhat disappointed.

"After I'd left a Mass one Sunday morning, at St. Saviour's [church] in Limerick, I stopped in the middle of the road, pointed my finger at the sky, and told God, 'I'm not going back to church until You show me the truth.'"

Satisfied this would resolve the matter, Bradshaw returned to the London flat where he was staying. A package from his brother, Wayne, awaited, containing a copy of *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, a pioneering cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



PHOTO CREDIT: IT IS WRITTEN

TAKING OVER: John Bradshaw is new speaker/director for It Is Written, the television ministry started in 1956 by evangelist George Vandeman.

It was Bradshaw's third copy of the book, each having been provided by his now-Adventist brother. This time Bradshaw started reading in the middle of the book, spending long stretches reading in the bathtub. During one of those sessions, at 2:30 in the morning, Bradshaw was convicted of the truth of the Adventist message. Six months later he was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

"That was when everything turned around and changed," he said. "I knew I wasn't going to go back to being a radio disc jockey. God gave me something new to talk about."

And talk he did: instead of spinning records and telling what he called risqué jokes, Bradshaw started talking to people about Jesus. He spent 12 years as an evangelist with Amazing Facts, a supporting Adventist ministry in Roseville, California. He was a pastor in Lexington, Kentucky, for two and a half

years, and has been pastor of the Village church in College Place, Washington, for 15 months. Bradshaw and his wife, Melissa, have two children, Jacob, age 10, and Shannon, age 8.

His College Place sermons are broadcast on the Hope Channel, where he also is the voice of the church-owned network's announcements. Bradshaw and Hope Channel vice president Gary Gibbs cohost the *Bible Talk* radio program, where they address Bible topics in a contemporary manner.

"John is an excellent preacher, pastor, and evangelist," Gibbs said. "Wherever he and Melissa have pastored or held meetings, people have loved their rich spirituality and warm, friendly personalities. John's engaging and strong biblical messages have blessed thousands, and, [now that he is] the speaker/director for It Is Written, millions more will also benefit."

Bradshaw comes to the new position with a consciousness of what is involved: "I have a strong conviction that It Is Written isn't 'my' ministry," he said. "It's God's business, and we're kind of stewards of that. I'm convinced God has exciting things ahead."

He also expressed appreciation for Boonstra's six years at the helm: "How thankful I am for Shawn and [his wife] Jean's leadership over the past [few] years. It's a team effort, and Shawn's leadership has been outstanding. He did such a fine job. Everywhere I go people talk about how much they enjoy Shawn."

In an e-mail message to the ministry's supporters, Boonstra described Bradshaw as "a man with a deep commitment to the cause of Christ and an obvious passion for soul winning. . . . He has natural, God-given talents that make him an excellent fit for your It Is

Written team, and a warm, Christlike manner that immediately pulls you in to his experience with Jesus.”

Earlier, in discussing his departure from day-to-day responsibilities for *It Is Written*, Boonstra wrote that because of health issues, “I am relinquishing my duties as speaker/director of *It Is Written*. I take this step with considerable regret, because I believe the work of *It Is Written* is the most important and the most exciting work on earth. . . . I would like to thank all of those who support this ministry, and all of those who have prayed for me during these past few months.”

North American Division president and *It Is Written* board chair Dan Jack-

son endorsed the succession: “I firmly believe in this ministry and the team God has brought together to work for *It Is Written*. This ministry is playing a major role in finishing the work on earth so Jesus can come soon!”

In the coming months Bradshaw will spearhead *It Is Written*’s evangelistic endeavors in Las Vegas—including the worldwide Internet-based *Babylon Rising* series slated for May 2011. Other ongoing projects include the ministry’s “Godpod” outreach to Papua New Guinea, the *My Place With Jesus* Bible study Web site for kids, Spanish outreach through *Está Escrito*, the weekly telecast, *It Is Written*’s newly rede-

signed Web site, and much more.

Founded by Seventh-day Adventist pastor George Vandeman, *It Is Written* was launched in 1956 on 13 television stations and was the first religious program to be broadcast in color. Mark A. Finley, an Adventist evangelist, now editor-at-large for *Adventist Review*, succeeded Vandeman in 1992. Boonstra took over for Finley in 2005.

It Is Written is a donor-supported ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The ministry is headquartered in Simi Valley, California, and the weekly program may be viewed around the world in 12 languages. Learn more at www.itiswritten.com. ■

■ SOUTH PACIFIC

Adventist to Walk Length of New Zealand in Anti-Suicide Bid

World church plans conference addressing emotional health

By **PABLO LILLO**, *South Pacific Division Record*

A **LAY** member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Zealand is on a 1,250 mile (2,012-kilometer) walking journey, the length of the country, to raise awareness about suicide, an often taboo subject, he said.

Karl Taaffe, from the Ilam Seventh-day Adventist Church in Christchurch, began his Dare2Hope initiative after losing a cousin to suicide.

His journey began in Bluff on the South Island of New Zealand and will end at Cape Reinga on the North Island. He walks an average of 18 to 25 miles (30 to 40 kilometers) a day and will spend about 75 days on the road.

“My journey has been full of blessings as I’ve connected with so many people, many who’ve been suicidal. They’ve greatly encouraged me to continue to the end,” Taaffe said.

Taaffe, 31, said he’s talked in the streets, churches, and community halls about suicide. “I didn’t realize how big an issue it really is. We haven’t met a



WALK FOR HOPE: Students from the Belfast school near Christchurch came to support Seventh-day Adventist Karl Taaffe as he passed through town. Taaffe is walking across New Zealand to raise awareness of suicide, which is responsible for more deaths than auto accidents in the nation.

person yet who hasn't known someone who committed suicide."

"Suicide is quite a taboo subject and people aren't wanting to speak about it, and if you don't speak about something then it isolates people," Taaffe told national broadcaster TVNZ News.

After a small-town radio station interview, several residents came to the studio to talk with Taaffe about their experiences of having lost loved ones to suicide.

About 10 people in New Zealand commit suicide every week, according to the Office of the Chief Coroner. In 2009 the figure was 541 suicides, more than those killed in car accidents. Of those, 401 were males and 140 were females. That's approximately one out of every 7,000 New Zealanders taking their lives each year.

Taaffe said in December 2007 the tragic reality of suicide struck home. "My 17-year-old cousin took her life, leaving my family and a community devastated," he said. "I'm sure many can relate to my experience and have asked, 'What could have been done?'"

Health experts say untreated depres-

sion is often a leading cause of suicide.

"Although suicide is very difficult to predict, a profound sense of hopelessness and helplessness pervades the mental attitude of the person, and likelihood is increased when the person is not receiving adequate treatment," said Carlos Fayard, an assistant director of the Adventist Church's Health Ministries Department and an associate professor of psychiatry at Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

Fayard said depression may be the result of such factors as medical conditions, genetic vulnerability, and external stressors, such as a serious loss, complications from the use of mind-altering substances, or a feeling that "there is no way out" of a financial predicament.

The Adventist Church next October will address mental health issues in an international conference entitled Emotional Health and Wholeness: A Biblical Worldview in Practice.

"[Our church] has proclaimed for many years that the goals of education should be the harmonious development of the physical, mental, spiritual, and

social dimensions in the human experience . . . and yet issues related to emotional health have lagged behind," said Fayard, the conference's organizer.

"Local churches, schools, clinics, and hospitals could bring about healing by developing programs that are mindful of the blessings found in God's Word, and reaching out to those in need of emotional healing where they serve, while at the same time remaining on the cutting edge of scientific knowledge and 'best practice' models of service delivery," Fayard said.

In New Zealand, Paul Rankin, health ministries director of the Adventist Church's New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, said he supports mental health awareness programs and has committed US\$373 (NZ\$500) in support of Taaffe's walk across the nation. He said he sees Dare2Hope as an important ministry for those who see no hope in life.

Taaffe is scheduled to complete his walk on January 28. For more information on his journey, as well as resources on mental health, visit dare2hope.co.nz. ■

■ TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION

New Opportunities Drive Church's Trans-European Region

Goal is to facilitate, inspire, and give direction to church, leaders say

By TED NEWS

ONE HUNDRED nine delegates from 13 union conferences and three attached fields, which constitute the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division (TED), met from November 14-17, 2010, in Becici, Montenegro. The year-end executive committee meetings of the division took place under the theme "Boundless Grace."

Bertil Wiklander, TED president, said, "Our meeting was carefully planned to underline the mission of the church. Much time was given to the new strate-

gic plan that focused on growth in nurture (reaching up), evangelism (reaching out), and community (reaching across). The spiritual tone of the meetings, with prayer that flowed through the business sessions, beautiful music, excellent devotionals, and a wonderful group of committed Adventists, made this meeting a delight to chair."

Pardon Mwansa, a general vice president of the world church, and G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division

executive secretary, attended the meetings to provide counsel as representatives from the General Conference.

In his keynote address Wiklander emphasized the task of the division to facilitate, inspire, and give direction to the church: "In these meetings we focused on planning how local churches can be active communities that are being nurtured by God, that are filled with commitment to God's mission to the world, and that grow together as a faith community," he said.

He continued, “The expression ‘revival and reformation’ comes from Ellen G. White, where she underlines that it is the Holy Spirit that drives both elements together: both the revival of our spiritual lives and the resulting changes in behavior and priorities. Since this is something that God does, our work is to be focused on Him, being open to Him, knowing Him more deeply, growing in Him, and making Him known wherever we are. Ellen G. White says that this is our ‘first work.’ In order to accomplish this work, we need to discover the biblical theme of God’s faithfulness to His creation. The Creator’s faithfulness to His creation drives His mission to destroy evil and restore the world to what He originally created it to be [Rev. 21:1-5],” concluded Wiklander.

During four intensive days the committee listened to reports and the plans from administration and departmental directors, discussed numerous policy changes, processed various items of business, and discussed current and future major initiatives such as KIDs in Discipleship, Relay (Institute of Youth Evangelism), LIFEconnect (Internet ministry), and Al Waad (media ministries in the Middle East).

Furthermore, it approved the 2011 division budget, as well as the European Pastors Council to take place in Slovenia August 21-26, 2012.

Having informed the committee of the 15 percent membership growth during the last quinquennium, Audrey Andersson, executive secretary of the division, said: “During this quinquennium secretariat’s key focus is ‘Mission With Maintenance’; finding ways to retain members and train them for mission will lead to greater growth in the next quinquennium.”

Johann E. Johannsson, treasurer, reported about the financial situation and the plans for the next year, saying that “on average the division’s regular operations have been relatively stable during the year, despite fears to the

contrary. I am, however, concerned about the developments during the next year, as many of the governments of countries in our division are planning drastic cuts in their budgets, as well as tax increases that may affect the members of our church and ultimately the income of our unions and fields. We therefore want to move cautiously into the future. The division has a balanced budget for 2011, but we continue to have challenges in the operations of Newbold College. We need to find ways to balance the college’s budgets. In part, we hope to resolve this through additional income from increased enrollment, but drastic cuts will also need to be made in the operational expenses of the college. This process has already started. I want to thank all our faithful church members around the division for their support, faithfulness in returning tithe and offerings, and for their prayers for the work within our territory and in the mission fields. God has led us in the past, and He will lead our church as we move into a new year with its opportunities and challenges.”

The executive committee also voted new assignments: Miroslav Pujic has been asked to be director for publishing, ministry to postmoderns, and worship and music ministries; Clair Sanches-Schutte and John Sanches, director and associate for family ministries; Paul Tompkins, ministries to adventist youth on secular campuses (AMiCUS); Clair Sanches-Schutte, ministry to clergy families; Audrey Andersson, office personnel manager.

Reports from individual union con-

ferences and fields indicated the full commitment of the leaders in mission outreach and evangelism. All of them recognized the challenges faced in Europe and the Middle East: postmodernism, secularism, materialism, traditionalism, and a resistance to Christian beliefs. Each report pointed out the special role of the church, namely, that the church is more than a social club, more than a group of men and women with common interests. Rather, it represents God’s activity in the world and people’s response to that activity with thanks and willing obedience.

Wiklander said, “As we focus on God, we become a deeply spiritual community, revived by the Holy Spirit, who leads us to change our priorities, improving the quality of our work and leading many to Christ. This is how I envisage the Seventh-day Adventist Church, being a prophetic church at the end of time and being charged with vision and energy in spreading the gospel to the world; knowing that, as His church, we are God’s repository on earth of the riches of the grace of Christ. Revival and reformation means to become what God intended us to be. It means change, spiritual change, with an enormous impact on our lives and the world in which we live.”

The Trans-European Division executive committee is made up of church administrators, departmental directors, pastors, and lay members representing each of the 13 union conferences and three fields of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 40 countries in Europe and the Middle East, including Israel, Egypt, Sudan, and Pakistan. ■



YEAR-END MEETING: Delegates at the 2010 year-end meeting of the Trans-European Division in Becici, Montenegro

■ SOUTH PACIFIC

Massive Growth, Challenges Confront Adventists on Papua New Guinea

One mission drops leaders to add 10 new pastoral positions

By **JARROD STACKELROTH**, assistant editor, South Pacific Record, reporting from Goroka, Papua New Guinea

MASSIVE GROWTH in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's membership in Papua New Guinea is causing church leaders to take drastic steps to accommodate growing needs. One mission will replace its officers with representatives from the union mission, freeing up funds to pay for 10 needed pastoral positions.

Delegates representing the nine missions and one conference of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM)

an active part in finishing God's work.

Incoming PNGUM president Joseph Talipuan and incoming general secretary Leigh Rice shared chairing duties for the reports with outgoing president Thomas Davai. Church membership will soon reach 250,000, making it the largest union mission in the South Pacific Division (SPD).

However, according to outgoing general secretary Neone Okesene's report,

the number of people who have left the church is alarming: "In the past 15 years we brought in 152,843 new members but lost 55,046, or 36.02 percent," the report states. "This is equivalent to losing one whole Australian Union Conference in 15 years! Or one

North New Zealand Conference every three years."

During the past five years 29 new members were added through baptism and profession of faith per day. The number who left the church was 14 per day, and the death rate was two per day. The limited number of church workers contributes to these losses. Church members are not nurtured, and with low literacy rates and expensive resources they are often unable to read the Bible for themselves. The ratio of ministers to members has improved slightly during the past five years from 1:678 to 1:643, and ministers to churches from 1:10 to 1:9.1. During this period 75 new ministers were added to

the workforce. At the same time church membership grew by 24,909, while 226 new churches/companies were added.

One of the biggest decisions brought forth was a recommendation from PNGUM and SPD that the South West Papua Mission (SWPM) be administered by the union. This decision is subject to the action of the SWPM session. SWPM will keep its identity and boundaries, but the positions of president, secretary, and treasurer will be removed. The PNGUM undersecretary will administer the region, and the associate treasurer will be in charge of finances. Because of the costs involved, there are only seven ministers for the whole area, which has 12,000 members. This frees up enough budget to increase from seven ministers to 17. The arrangement would be reviewed after three years, and would be brought up again at the next business session in five years' time. Delegates of the PNGUM session voted the matter through to the SWPM to take final action.

Education director Joe Ponduk's report prompted much discussion. Enrollment has grown from 8,323 students in 2005 to 18,644 in 2009. The Adventist school system in PNG has struggled with enrollments; however, the past few years have seen a significant increase due, in part, to the Adventist system's integration into the Unified National Education System. The PNG government, through the Teaching Services Commission, now pays Adventist teachers. Primary schools, which had closed, have been reopened, and school fees have become more affordable to Adventist parents. Schools are owned and operated by the church, and teachers have to comply with church policies and philosophies. ■



PROCLAIMING GOD'S GRACE: Choir sings at the Papua New Guinea Seventh-day Adventist Church's business session.

gathered at Kabiufa Adventist Secondary School, Goroka, for the recent business session. The session was to be held in Lae, but was moved to Kabiufa after unrest in the area. Even with the late change, 228 delegates attended and the program was conducted without mishap, with administration, ministry, and mission reports all being delivered.

The theme of the meetings was "Proclaiming God's Grace," and the week was just as much about revival as it was about business. The morning and evening devotionals, taken by Pacific Adventist University (PAU) theology lecturer Scott Charlesworth, examined themes of God's grace, law, and covenant, and encouraged members to take

PHOTO: JARROD STACKELROTH/RECORD



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THE FAMILY OF GOD

Ronald C. Thompson, a retired pastor originally from South Africa, was inducted into the South Carolina Senior Sports Classic Hall of Fame in May 2010. Thompson began swimming competitively at the Prince Edward High School for Boys in what was then Rhodesia. After immigrating to the United States, Thompson again began competing. The past 14 years have seen him compete at the South Carolina Senior Sports Classic, where this year he won three gold medals and two silver medals. At the age of 73 Thompson ranks among the United States' top 10 swimmers in his age group.



In remarks while accepting his Hall of Fame plaque, Thompson spoke of the debt he owed the Seventh-day Adventist Church: "I found that the church had a very strong health message—no drinking, no smoking. It also introduced me to the original diet God gave as recorded in Genesis 1:29, that is, the vegetarian diet." He concluded by saying, "I hope I'll still be swimming at the age of 90."

ADVENTIST LIFE

At first I was puzzled by my 9-year-old daughter's question: "Lincoln lived in Gettysburg, didn't he, Mama?"

"H'mmm. I don't think so, sweetie. Why do you say that?" I asked.

"Well, he *had* a Gettysburg address, didn't he?"

I had to laugh at my daughter's very logical conclusion!

—L. JOHNSON, APISON, TENNESSEE

SOUND BITES

"The Lord is able to render futile every agency that works for the defeat of His chosen ones."

—ELLEN G. WHITE,

FROM PROPHETS AND KINGS, P. 487.

SHARE WITH US

We are dependent upon reader submissions, and our inventory is very low! We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

Adventist Quotes (profound or spontaneous)

Adventist Life (short anecdotes, especially from the world of adults)

Dreams (hopes and dreams for the church in your part of the world, short)

Camp Meeting Memories (short, humorous, and/or profound anecdotes)

Photos (church life, family life, unique)

Please send your submissions to Give & Take, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; fax: 301-680-6638; e-mail: marank@gc.adventist.org. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be acknowledged or returned.

Winds of Renewal, Flames of Reformation



Hyveth
Williams

ON JANUARY 12, 2007, A YOUNG MUSICIAN DRESSED IN JEANS AND A BASEBALL

cap took his place against a wall in L’Enfant Plaza Metro station, Washington, D.C. He opened a violin case, removed his instrument, threw a few dollars into the case as “seed” money, and began to play.

After 43 minutes and five classical pieces, the 1,097 people passing by tossed a mere \$52.17 into his case. Of the 1,097 people, only seven paused longer than a minute. And of the seven, only one recognized the world-famous violinist, Joshua Bell, and gave \$20 of the meager sum collected.

Three days prior to this appearance, staged by the *Washington Post* as a cultural experiment, the world-famous musician filled Boston’s Symphony Hall, where good seats went for \$100. Two weeks prior to that, this man whose talent commands \$1,000 a minute, played to a standing-room-only audience in Maryland.

But that day, when Bell played Bach’s *Chaconne* on a \$3.5 million Stradivarius in the subway station, he barely caught the attention of a few passersby. Why? Because no one expected such majestic and beautiful music in the bowels of an underground station.¹

The call of God runs a similar risk of being ignored by many in today’s busy communities of faith. Although Jesus said, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27), few seem to expect to really hear Him; or do, above the din of worship dominated by strident, condemnatory voices who lord it over His people despite the contrary testimony of His Word in 1 Peter 5:2, 3. Every day in the midst of our sacred assemblies comes the earnest call of Christ “to place all on the altar of service” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 221).

But many believers still testify that they have never heard His voice. Maybe they are too engrossed in having the right form of worship, even as they lack the spirit thereof; that they have the perfect interpretation of doctrines, even if they are deaf to the voice of the One crying in the wilderness of their experience; that they identify and mark off as lost those who disagree with their rendition of righteousness, even though they themselves cannot hear and do not know the voice of the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Thankfully, winds of renewal and flames of reformation are sweeping through this generation of Adventists. Many young adherents embody Os Guinness’ definition of “the call” as “the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion and dynamism lived out as a response to his summons and service.”² They seem to take seriously the mission of Christ to seek and save the lost and bring revival to a Laodicean church.

We must encourage them to not just talk or take a stand in rousing meetings where the focus is on our own spiritual deficiencies. It’s time to launch out into the deep of human despair and minister to “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40).

The early church accepted this challenge and grew exponentially as believers served Christ by serving others (Acts 2:42-47). The founders of our movement understood it, and their mission exploded across the world so that our church is now present in more than 200 countries. The work they started is not finished. The call they heard and was motivated by has not been silenced. Opportunities to capture the attention of the world for Jesus are still being extended to this generation despite the follies of our emerging culture.

True, “no one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone,” especially those waiting for a helping hand in blighted neighborhoods just around the corner from our neatly organized and comfortably carpeted churches. Or those Jesus referred to as “the least of these” who are dying in faraway places with names we cannot pronounce but with hearts we can touch and change with the Word of God.

So get revived in Spirit-filled gatherings; then answer His call to go where the needs are great and make a difference for Jesus.

¹ “Joshua Bell Plays D.C. Metro,” www.suite101.com/content/joshua-bell-plays-dc-metro-al8825. Also cited by Max Lucado in *Outlive Your Life: You Were Made to Make a Difference*, p. 167.

² *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (W Publishing Group, 1998), p. 29.

HYVETH WILLIAMS IS A PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS AT THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

GLOW Stories



Giving light to our world—GLOW—is an outreach initiative in multiple NAD conferences based on the concept of church members carrying Adventist literature with them wherever they go and handing it out, free of charge, at every opportunity. Here are two short stories of lives touched by GLOW:

Giving Light to Our World

Story 1 While on vacation in Alabama a pastor and his wife visited a botanical garden, but when they couldn't find the exit, they asked directions from a passerby. After the man gave them the information they needed, the pastor's wife handed him a GLOW tract on the topic of the Sabbath. As she started to walk away, the man said, "Wait! Don't you want to talk to me about this?" So she and her husband began a conversation with him. The man told them that he was a member of a church that was cur-



COURTESY OF GLOW

rently experiencing controversy over whether to keep Saturday or Sunday as the Sabbath. He asked them numerous questions, which the couple gladly answered. They later called the encounter "a divine appointment."

Story 2 Two church members were meandering through a car lot checking out the vehicles for sale. Just as they were about to leave, one of them handed a salesperson a GLOW tract about Daniel 2. The conversation immediately turned to spiritual things, and the salesperson began asking about the end of time. Other salespeople joined the conversation, and soon nine salespeople were clustered together talking with the church members about what the Bible has to say about the end of time. The church members gave all of them GLOW tracts and then prayed with the group before they left. ■

STORIES COMPILED BY CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE GLOW DIRECTOR NELSON ERNST. TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GLOW, GO TO SDAGLOW.ORG. TO ORDER A SUPPLY OF GLOW'S SPECIAL HALLOWEEN TRACTS, CALL 559-347-3152.

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A HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN ENCOUNTERS BOTH HEARTBREAK AND TRIUMPH.

BY DIXIL L. RODRÍGUEZ

I have a confession: *I never wanted to be a chaplain. I just wanted to volunteer.*

»»»«««

“Left or right?” He takes a breath that sounds hollow, like a coin dropped into a tin can. He quickly gasps for more air so his lungs won’t be thirsty. *I’m witnessing death.*

“Was it the one on the left or the right?” His swollen eyes look at me. The many scars and his current injury speak of a life that I cannot understand. *You must be in pain.*

The gurney I’m lying on slides. I feel the jolt of the paramedic pulling me back, putting more room between the patient and me. There’s no way to disguise the sound of the paramedic’s shoes squeaking in the blood. I glance at the attending nurse. I watch her quick actions. She said the patient wasn’t in pain; he just wanted to talk to me. Now she carefully tends to the IV.

I wonder if she has any thoughts on

whether it’s a waste of time to keep a criminal alive so he can talk to a chaplain.

“There were two men.” *He’s fighting so hard to get the words.* “The cross ... Jesus ... left or right?”

His last words come down heavy with urgency of voice. *I know what you’re talking about.* I tear the glove off my hand, and my fingers move quickly through the Bible.

»»»«««

I pull into the parking space designated “Hospital Volunteer.” I like those words. *Of all the places I could be right now, this is where my heart belongs.* I’ve volunteered in pediatric oncology wards for 10 years. The amount of love and prayers in these hospitals is more than abundant. You can’t walk down the hall without finding hope and faith around the corner. Nobody forces me to be here. I want to be here. I’m a volunteer.

At night, when I walk through the halls and peek into rooms, I see parents reading to their children or people settling

I Just Wanted to Volunteer



into a room to stay overnight before a long surgery in a few hours. This is a reverent, silent moment for me. I know that angels roam these halls. In the late-night hours I talk with parents who are ripping at the emotional seams of their lives. They cry because their beautiful child is ill. Volunteering in a hospital is a humbling privilege. I'm being invited to

"CHAPLAIN, THEY'RE NOT PAYING YOU ENOUGH FOR THIS."

witness joy and pain, and to be part of a ministry of healing.

One night, as I walked through the halls of the hospital, I had an overwhelming urgency to kneel and pray. It was a simple prayer: *God, be present in this place, and give these hurting little bodies a few hours of sleep without pain.* As I prayed, I heard a child's soft voice singing, "He's got the whole world in His hands." It was Amanda. I met her for the first time that night. I found her alone in her room. She asked me to sing with her, and without waiting for an answer she began singing, "Jesus loves me."

Amanda is the reason I'm in the volunteer parking today. After three years of fighting constant illness, this precious child has a reprieve. Today the family is packing up the hospital room, placing all the personal items that made the room "warm" in cardboard boxes with heavy lids. *I wonder if they will ever open those boxes again.*

Amanda has motivated me to talk with Caroline, the volunteer service coordinator. I am a volunteer. *Just a volunteer.* Volunteers, however, now need a chaplain's license to participate in any hospital activity that requires pastoral care responsibilities. *I never wanted to be a chaplain; just a volunteer!* Still, I can't imagine my life without these dear children. How different can it be to minister to adults in a hospital setting?

I carry the precious letter of acceptance into a chaplain certification program. I leave Caroline a note that says: "I will work on the chaplain's license." With that simple phrase, I have committed myself to on-call hours, 24-hour shifts,

and a sacred ministry that fills me with great reverence and respect.

»»»»««««

"Chaplain!" I'm running down the trauma hall with a pager, a phone, two ID badges, and my Bible. Now a hospital chaplain, I've just been paged into someone's worst day. It's a long journey to the location. Somehow the body forgets that

it's 2:00 a.m. or that it hasn't eaten. Tonight the physical assault of sprinting through one of the largest hospitals in the metropolitan area only reminds me: *I'm not moving fast enough.*

I'm humbled by calls requesting a visit with families that have lost a loved one. I've learned about trauma, loss, revenge, and peace. I realize there are more steps to grieving than I know. Sometimes it's more difficult for adults to find comfort. *I miss the laughter of the children in my volunteer unit.* I think of all this as I push through the trauma doors.

»»»»««««

"Chaplain, over here." Officer Adams is at the end of the hall. I like working with him. Next to him is a paramedic I've never met.

"I need you to put this on, Chaplain." The young paramedic hands me a gown, gloves, and booties. I watch him carefully as he opens the gown for me. *Why do you look so scared?*

"I haven't met you before. Are you new?" His hands are shaking. I smile and take the gown from him. *I don't think he can do this.* I learn that his name is Jeremy and that this is his first "real shift" as a training paramedic.

Jeremy's responsibility is to fill me in on the details of the trauma coming in. There's much commotion. "There's a live patient coming in, fatal gunshot wound, and the paramedics say he's badly injured. His name is Kevin. He's conscious but cannot move. He's asked for no extraordinary measures to save his life. Kevin's head cannot be moved, and he is lying on a gurney facing right. He's asked for a priest, and the nurse

told me to page you."

Silence. *I have an officer and a paramedic looking at me. All we have in common is an ambulance racing to our trauma room and a person who has asked for a priest and gotten a chaplain.* My mind is quickly going over the possibilities of conversation topics. *I'm running out of time.*

I hear the sirens of the ambulance. *He's here.* Officer Adams explains the patient has lost a lot of blood and might die very quickly. He reminds me he'll be close by if I need anything. Once the doctors have completed stabilizing the patient (if they can), I'll be brought into the room.

"You have all you need, Chaplain?" Jeremy has been watching me intently as I listen to the details from Officer Adams. *Noise. There's so much noise. I hear the doors and the paramedics talking very quickly, but I can't understand what they're saying. The doctors run into the trauma room. For a moment the whole world is just moving around me, and I'm standing still, watching it all go by in slow motion, knowing well what's expected of me.* The ambulance doors open again. A cold blast of air hits my face.

"I need to get in there to talk to Kevin, Jeremy." I pick up my Bible from the counter and leave my pager and phone aside. I cannot feel the Bible through the gloves. *God is here, but in the midst of this chaos I can't feel His presence.* I pray right there, among my colleagues: "*God, come into that trauma room with me, because this man is one of Your children, and I need Your strong presence in this place.*"

As I open my eyes, I look at Officer Adams. *I have an idea.* He notices, shakes his head, and smiles. *Synergy in ministry sometimes comes from people you least expect.* Officer Adams gives Jeremy orders: "Get the chaplain a gurney. She needs to look at Kevin while they pray. She's going to have to lie down."

We watch Jeremy run down the hall. Officer Adams turns to me and says: "Chaplain, they're not paying you enough for this."

"That's because I'm a volunteer." *Just a volunteer.*

»»»»««««

"Are you scared?" I'm still visiting with Amanda, and I've shared with her my new upcoming adventure of

volunteering as a chaplain.

“Scared about working in other hospitals?”

“No, about working with older people.”

“I don’t know; I haven’t done it before. If I do get scared, Amanda, what should I do?”

I watch her look at her parents for a moment. *She’s thinking.* In an honest voice she tells me: “Sometimes I think Jesus isn’t watching me, because a lot of my friends are really sick and *they* need Him watching. So I don’t ask Him to watch me; I tell Him to watch my friends. He can hear me. That’s why I *tell* Him what’s going on with me—so that He can watch my friends and still know what I’m doing. Like a story!”

She narrates her life to Jesus? She tells Him a story? I can only imagine how beautiful and honest those words must sound as they reach the ear of God.

»»»«««

Jeremy arrives with the gurney. We stand near the glass entry doors to the trauma room watching the doctors work. I watch a nurse glance our way and then say: “Kevin, hold on; the chaplain is here.”

Officer Adams lifts me up onto the gurney. The room starts to empty. All that can physically be done has been done. There’s a trauma nurse who stays behind and nods for me to enter the room. Jeremy pushes the gurney, sliding over Kevin’s blood on the floor. I lie down on the gurney facing this stranger and look into his bruised, swollen face.

“Kevin, I’m Chaplain Rodríguez.”

I don’t know how long it’s been. I’ve read Scripture, I’ve prayed, comforted, and spoken of forgiveness. I silently pray that every word that comes out of my mouth will be blessed with heavenly comfort. Kevin says he’s ready. *After all we’ve done here, I believe you are.*

“You think He’ll remember me?” *He’s getting tired.*

“He never forgot.”

“23 again?”

I read through Psalm 23, aware of the heart monitor indicating a slower and slower-paced heartbeat. Once done, I look at him. *He’s crying.* I close my eyes and begin to pray out loud. In the middle

of the prayer the heart monitor hits a flat line. I hear the nurse quickly shut it off. I complete my prayer. The room has become a gallery of observers at the doors: nurses and doctors. *Have they been there all along?*

Jeremy pulls my gurney out of the room. *I cannot move my body.* Officer Adams reaches over and carries me off the gurney.

“You OK, Chaplain?” he asks in a soft voice. I nod. “Good. Because the grandmother is in a family room, so you can talk to her. She doesn’t know. I’m coming with you, OK?”

»»»«««

“Do you think it’s a good idea, Amanda?”

I’ve just shared another project idea with Amanda. Now that I’m going to work with “older” people, I’ve decided to keep a stock of *The Desire of Ages* with me. The books have favorite psalms from my friends handwritten on the front page. I bring Amanda a sample book.

“My mom loves that book,” she says.

“HOW DID HE DIE? AND I DON’T MEAN PHYSICALLY; I DON’T WANT TO KNOW THAT.”

“Yes, I think it’s a good idea. Can I give you my favorite psalm too?” *Of course you can, and I will ask you to sign your name on the page, too.*

»»»«««

Adrenaline runs through me as I quickly get out of the gown and gloves, take my Bible, and head toward the family room. Officer Adams offers to stop by my trauma locker and pick up one of “those books” I always have. I nod and keep running.

My presence as a chaplain is meant to remind everyone (including myself) of a merciful God, who is keenly aware of what happens in these halls; a reminder that He, too, feels our sorrow.

I hope I can convey this to Kevin’s grandmother.

»»»«««

“I know he’s dead.”

I have just walked into the family

room. Kevin’s grandmother sees me walk in and whispers the words right away.

“How did he die? And I don’t mean physically; I don’t want to know that. *How did he die?* He tried so hard to put his life back together this year. His mother, my daughter, died of breast cancer, and he only got into trouble after that. So just tell me how he died. Was he angry?”

She begins to cry. I sit next to her and hold her. She looks up at me and poses the most important question: “Did he pray? Did he make peace with God?”

I open my Bible to where Kevin and I had read and begin to share. *Let me tell you.*

»»»«««

It’s almost morning, and the sun is creeping over the horizon. I walk Kevin’s grandmother to the entrance of the hospital. Officer Adams has offered to drive her home. As I give her the book, I tell her how influential it’s been in my own life. She takes it from my hands and flips through it. She stops at the story of Jacob wrestling with the Angel. She reads for a minute.

“Thank you for this.” She opens the front page. It has Amanda’s signature and pictures of sheep, a shepherd, and a copy of Psalm 23. I explain that Amanda is a 7-year-old friend and that this is her favorite psalm.

“That was Kevin’s favorite psalm, too.” *I know.*

“Thank Amanda for me.” *I will.*

As I watch her drive away with the officer, they reach the stop sign. The vehicle door opens, and Kevin’s grandmother calls out: “God bless you, Chaplain,” and waves goodbye.

I watch them drive away. I take it all in, and narrate it to God.



DIXIL L. RODRÍGUEZ IS AN ENGLISH PROFESSOR AND A VOLUNTEER HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN IN TEXAS.



LAY LEADER: Justin McNeilus, a businessman in Minnesota, is current president of Generation of Youth for Christ.

**“WE’RE
ALL
ONE
ARMY”**

Adventist Review editor Bill Knott recently sat down with Justin McNeilus, president of Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC), to talk about where the rapidly growing organization fits among other Adventist youth ministries.

Generation of Youth for Christ is now approaching 10 years of ministry to youth and young adults. What’s distinctive about your organization?

First, it’s important to note that everyone who’s working for the Lord and serving His people is building from the same foundation. Sometimes we hear comments that suggest that there’s more than one movement within the Seventh-day Adventist Church—and an implication that the different approaches are somehow competitive. In my opinion, there’s just one movement of God, and that’s a

movement of young people who are excitedly proclaiming God's last-day message to the world. Whether it is under the banner of GYC or a ministry of the denomination, it's all one movement. We're all one army. It's all one message.

But something called GYC forth to address a need that some felt wasn't being met. What's the need GYC is intended to meet?

I think it's a call back to what Ellen White termed "primitive godliness," meeting the God who raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to share His end-time message with the world. There's nothing remarkable or trendy about GYC or its annual conference: there's nothing that sets us apart from what dedicated Adventists have always been about. It's simply about getting back to the fundamental truths of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It's a call to Bible study, a call to prayer, a call to let the good news change the way we live and witness.

GYC didn't grow out of some administrator's strategic vision, though, did it?

No, you're right: it didn't come about that way. It began with a handful of young people, all about the age of 18, talking and praying one evening about a need they sensed for an organization that would challenge them to really live out their faith. In its first phase, it grew up to minister to young Adventists on secular college campuses—to give them a sense of connectedness and purpose as they prepared for their careers. Obviously, the scope has broadened since then, but it's still built on the same principles. One of the things that has driven GYC from its first days is the fact that the young adults who choose to get involved understand that this organization is led top to bottom by young adults. They have a sense that "Hey, I could be doing this. I could be doing what Justin and the others are doing. God has given me talents just as He's

given them talents. I could be serving my church in some way." That's the flame that keeps us burning.

Organizations, including religious ones, often go through predictable development cycles. Where is GYC in its growth curve just now?

Many ministries develop into institutions, with regularized calendars and annual events. But when you're participating in a movement, you don't want to get caught in the status quo—simply repeating what you've experienced before. God has a purpose and a place for institutionalized ministries, and I'm not discounting their importance. But GYC is not one of those ministries. We don't want to become simply another annual camp meeting or convention—a stop on the ministry calendar. We keep praying and looking for the new things God has out ahead of us.

Some other youth ministries have voiced criticism of GYC, claiming that it's just an outlet for dissident conservatives. What do you say to those critics?

Quite frankly, they don't know us: they haven't found the incredibly positive core of what GYC is all about. This movement isn't "conservative"—it's Adventist; it's centered on the Bible; it's right in the center of God's will for His remnant church. Interestingly enough, most of those who have critical things to say have never attended a GYC conference or seen for themselves what we're about. If being passionate about the future of Adventism and the soon coming of Jesus earns critics for GYC, we welcome that!

Your organization seems to begin with the premise that young adults are fully capable of handling strong spiritual content and intellectual challenge.

You're right: that's the approach that we've taken. Some ministries seem to believe that young adults can't handle solid spiritual food yet, but we've never believed that. We don't believe you have

“WE DON'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE TO LOWER EXPECTATIONS WHEN YOU FOCUS ON OUR GENERATION.”

to lower expectations when you focus on our generation. We've consciously set the benchmark high because we know that our generation is fully capable of "getting it"—wrestling with the most urgent and profound truths human beings can know. We're challenging each other: this organization is primarily about young adults calling each other to a deeper experience with the Word of God and full participation in His remnant church.

Tell me about the relationship between GYC and church leaders.

We want a strong working relation-

ship with the youth ministries of the Adventist Church. GYC has a lot to offer the ministries of the organized church, and we gain so much by working alongside them. About four years ago GYC found itself at a crossroads: we could either just keep doing our own thing, or we could accept the responsibility to communicate our love for the Lord and this church effectively by engaging proactively with church leaders—sharing with them our mission and objectives. And we did that. The benefit that has come to both GYC and the church has been remarkable. We were officially part of the delegation to

the Atlanta General Conference session; we've been invited to serve on key committees, such as the new Revival and Reformation initiative. We're meeting and interacting with top church leaders in youth ministries and other departments. God clearly led us to take that step. Church leaders genuinely want our input; they want our participation; they ask to hear from us. Young adults are gaining a greater presence in the decision-making of this church—not by pounding on the door and demanding a role, but by proving that we deeply love this message and by rolling up our sleeves.

MORE THAN JUST A WEEK- END

The ministry of GYC reaches much further

**BY GERALD A. KLINGBEIL, ASSOCIATE EDITOR,
ADVENTIST REVIEW**

The Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC) movement is known primarily for its inspiring and stirring annual conventions. For five days a year one city in the North American Division is being swamped and impacted by thousands of young adults (and an increasing number of older folks equally on fire for God) who are keen to learn about evangelism and interested to search Scripture and discuss Seventh-day Adventist theology and practice. However, GYC is not just a once-a-year long-weekend ministry.

Over the past years GYC has cosponsored year-round evangelistic programs for young people (such as the iPreach program, cosponsored with It Is Written), has helped to organize regional conferences, and has begun to export some of the energy and enthusiasm to other parts of the world. The programs began in 2002 in Pine Springs Ranch, California, with an unexpected 425 registered participants; seven years later the 2009 Louisville, Kentucky, conference brought more than 5,700

attendees on Sabbath morning together who covenanted to be "unASHAMED" of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This phenomenal growth is reflected not only in the increasing numbers of registered participants, but also in the reach, throughout the year, of events sponsored or associated with GYC—all over the country.

For example, under the title of "So Much to Share . . . So Little Time," GYC coordinated the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference camp meeting young adult program at Highland Academy, Portland, Tennessee, from May 28 to June 5, 2010.

Prior to the fifty-ninth General Conference session in Atlanta, the South East Youth Conference organized a full-time "Summer of Evangelism" training program in Atlanta, Georgia, that, over a period of five weeks, helped young adults share their faith more effectively.

GYC Southwest partnered with Iona Missions and invited young adults for one week in June 2010, to discover precious gospel truth in the book of Galatians—premium personal Bible study moments that equipped the participants to understand Scripture better and help others rediscover the joy of the Word.

October 13-17, 2010, saw a crowd of eager young adults from the southeastern part of the U.S.A. gather at Southern Adventist University for five days of study, seminars, passionate preaching, and practical outreach. This event was organized by the South East Youth Conference (SEYC), a regional chapter of GYC.

Another five-day event, July 14-18, 2010, took place at Weimar College, California, and was organized by the Western Youth Conference. It featured dynamic preaching (by, among others, Doug Batchelor) and, you guessed it, seminars that equipped the participants to be more effective gospel communicators.

But the influence of the GYC movement is not limited only to the U.S.A. Youth training events in Canada, Australia, Germany, and other places around the world have been inspired by the successful GYC grassroots movement. These young adults are serious about finishing the work and are not bashful when they talk about their soon-coming Savior. This is definitely more than just a weekend—it is a call to the larger church, you and I, to step out of our comfort zones.

PREPARE. PREPARE. PRE- PARE.

RUNNING THE GOOD RACE

BY DAVID ASSCHERICK

Twenty-six point two miles. 138,435 feet. 1,661,220 inches. There are many permutations, but the distance remains the same: *long*.

For reasons not perfectly clear to me, running a marathon seemed like a good idea. That was six months ago. It's easy to say yes. It's easy to go online and register. It's easy to read a book on running the marathon. It's easy to tell people that you're going to run a marathon. It's easy to buy the shorts, shoes, and shirts.

The marathon itself, of course, wouldn't be easy, but, hey, it's six months away. Plenty of time to get ready. Plenty of time to get in shape. Plenty of time ...

Then suddenly it's three weeks away. Not three months—three weeks! Somehow I resist the urge to panic. Sure, I've trained, but I know inside *not enough*. Nervousness starts to set in, and I begin to contemplate rescheduling or canceling altogether. But how would I break it to my training partner, Gerard? Or to my younger brother, Robert, who's training faithfully so he can run it *with me*? Then there are the dozens of people I've told confidently and a little too proudly, "Yup, I'm running a marathon on December 5." How could I face them? And how could I face myself?

So I cancel my cancellation plans.

I run my last long training run two weeks before the big day. It's 15 miles, and I feel great the whole way. Confidence begins to build. But my confidence, I know, is a bit of a trick I'm playing on myself. I know both psychologically and mathematically that there's a considerable difference between 15 and 26.2. I also know that the first three months of my training regimen went better than the last three.

At first there was the enthusiasm and the excitement of setting the goal. I was neither dissuaded nor discouraged by some of my friends' apathetic amusement. I remember, for example, when I first told my best friend, Nathan. "You're just having a midlife crisis," he announced, "and when men have a midlife crisis they either buy a Harley or run a marathon."

His dismissive words served only to further cement my resolve.

The first three months of training were a glorious, exciting blur. My lungs and legs were strengthening rapidly. My times and distances were ahead of schedule. My first race, a preparatory half marathon, went really well.

In fact, I think it went too well. In retrospect, I now know it put me at ease. I began thinking and saying really foolish things. Such things as "I feel great; I could run a sub four-hour marathon tomorrow." I mistakenly assumed that a marathon would be exactly twice as hard as a half marathon.

It was a mistake I would soon regret.

So my training regimen took a hit the

IT'S ONE THING TO BE SEEN AT THE START LINE OF A MARATHON; IT'S QUITE ANOTHER TO BE SEEN AT THE FINISH LINE.

last three months. I ran a little less and I ran a little slower. I fooled myself into thinking I was fitter than I was. I skipped some long runs and some speed work. More than a few times I stayed in bed, under the warm covers, rather than going on my morning training run. I began to coast. I let yesterday's success lull me into a false sense of security about today's fitness.

Then I blinked, and race day was three weeks away. I called an experienced local runner to ask him what my goal time should be. He was unimpressed by my hopeful estimates. Then he said ominously, "The goal of your first marathon is just to finish."

Gulp! Just to finish?

Yup, just to finish.

I thanked him and hung up the phone. His words hung in the air like a bad smell.

Reality was fast sinking in. I spoke to other runners. They all echoed the same sentiments. "You just don't know what your body is going to do at mile 20," Tony warned. "The cumulative trauma of 26.2 miles is no joke," Tim added. I was reminded that according to the Marathon legend the distance's first runner, the Greek soldier Pheidippides, died after delivering the good news that the Greeks had defeated the Persians on the battlefield of Marathon.

Uh-oh.

I swallow hard and make my way onto the bus. The day is here. I sit mostly in silence as the bus travels 26.2 miles away from the hotel. It is 5:00 in the morning. Tossing and turning, I had slept perhaps four hours the night before. As the bus motors down the highway, Gerard keeps remarking how far and how fast the bus

is traveling. I say nothing.

Too soon, I'm surrounded by thousands of other runners, and there's less than a minute to the start. It's here that I understand perfectly, if too late, that *looking the part cannot make up for a lack of solid preparation*.

The horn sounds, and thousands of runners shuffle off like the migrating wildebeests of Africa's dusty plains. Thousands move as one. I press the start button on my watch, take a deep breath, and begin my journey back to the hotel.

To my pleasant surprise, the first half of the race goes flying by. I feel good, even great. My mile splits are fast, but not too fast. I'm on schedule for a great first marathon. Then it happens. Just before mile 16 my legs go into full-blown Lucifer mode. It's all-out rebellion as my legs, rather against my will, stop running. Quite suddenly I'm just standing there in the middle of the road, runners streaming by the dozens past me. I stretch my calves and try to run. Not happening. I try to walk. Barely happening.

Then there are the cramps, followed by the pain. I can feel my marathon slipping away from me. In terror it dawns on me that I'm still more than 10 miles from the hotel. I walk haltingly for the next hour, mainly because I don't know what else to do. Runners continue to stream past by the hundreds. I try again and again to run. Still not happening.

So I walk, and I wince. All I can think about is my last three months of largely careless preparation. I chasten myself for not maintaining the same level of discipline and enthusiasm with which I began my training. I begin to see the spiritual implications immediately. In fact, it's all I can think about. With each labored step I wonder if I've tricked myself similarly about my spiritual condition and fitness. It feels almost as if this whole thing has happened *just so I can have several uninterrupted hours to really examine my spiritual condition*.

As soon as this thought occurs to me, I cannot shake it.

There is no substitute for preparation. It's one thing to be seen at the start line of a marathon; it's quite another to be seen at the finish line. A finisher is



mostly made alone. It happens on long, lonely runs, in early misty mornings, during tiring track sessions, and while shivering in the ice bath (no kidding!).

When it comes to running a marathon, image is one thing, but substance is another.

So, too, with Christianity.

Speaking of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said that though they desired to be “seen by others” as righteous (Matt. 6:5; 23:5),¹ they were actually “full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:27). He then added, you “outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (verse 28). By contrast, the psalmist spoke of “truth in the inward being, and . . . in the secret heart” (Ps. 51:6).

The Pharisees were all about image. God, though, is concerned primarily with substance. It’s the difference between the outside and the inside. The outside, religiously speaking, is easy and comparatively meaningless. The inside—true, heart religion—is what really matters. A substantive and transformative change

on the inside will always produce a corresponding effect on the outside. The converse, though, is not true.

Spiritual health and fitness are procured, largely, alone. The individual soul alone with God—“the work of preparation is an individual work,” wrote Ellen White.² This is where real religion—“realigion,” if you like—is to be found and fostered. End-time spiritual heroics, like marathons, don’t just happen in a vacuum. They require time and energy *before* the shining spotlight flicks on. They require personal preparation.

Yes, I finished, barely, but my marathon quest turned out to be about so much more than personal physical fitness. It has proved more important than toned calves and a lowered body mass index (BMI). It has opened a window to my soul. It has been a call to personal religion and personal revival—alone, in the inward being and in the secret heart. It has been a call to unrushed prayer, undeferred Scripture study, and unfeigned ministry. It has been a call to radical self-evaluation and a thorough spiritual inventory.

Am I what I think I am? Are you?

Am I ready to run this race? Are you?

Am I kidding myself about my own spiritual condition? Are you?

These are the right kinds of questions. And Jesus is the right answer! “Therefore . . . let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1, 2). Because again, it’s one thing to stand at the start line and quite another to stand at the finish line. Don’t be satisfied to *look* like a finisher. *Be* a finisher!

“Prepare to meet your God”

(Amos 4:12).

Prepare. Prepare. *Prepare!*

¹Scriptures quotations in this article are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

²Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 490.



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SPEAKER ON 3ABN AND HOPE TV.

He Called, God Answered

HOW GOD SOUGHT OUT
MATTHEW GAMBLE IN UNLIKELY
WAYS AND CLAIMED HIM.

BY WILONA KARIMABADI

Iwould pray to Jesus, Haile Selassie, Buddha, Confucius, Abraham, and Muhammad, saying ‘Whoever you are, wherever you are, please reveal yourself to me,’” says Matthew Gamble, pastor, evangelist, and self-described “vagabond servant” of God.

Gamble’s prayer to essentially anyone that would hear him was the heart call of someone searching deeply and desperately for a savior.

And the Savior is exactly the one who answered him.

“I was born and raised in a very nominal Christian home,” Gamble says. “As a kid growing up, I remember only occasionally going to church, and we never read the Bible or prayed as a family.” By age 13 Gamble had moved for the third time and was, as he put it, “depressed and frustrated with life and the world around me.”

“Not able to wrap my mind around the concept that God could be loving while permitting all the misery and suffering in the world, I became an atheist,” he states. Gamble’s downward trajectory soon picked up speed. By age 16 Gamble had begun smoking marijuana on a daily basis and becoming more and more entrenched in the Rastafarian religion. Rastafarians believe that Ethiopia’s former ruler Haile Selassie was the Messiah, and part of their belief system involves smoking marijuana for spiritual purposes. Thus Gamble found himself smoking a lot of

it in his pursuit of meditational and spiritual fulfillment.

At age 19 “I decided to travel to Jamaica in hopes of learning firsthand about the Rastafarian religion,” Gamble remembers. After two weeks in the Caribbean nation he met a Rasta named Peter who provided him with all the marijuana he desired—including two pounds of the stuff stashed in his bags as he arrived in Miami. Somehow Gamble made it through customs undetected. “When I didn’t get caught coming through customs, I started believing for the first time in my life that a power greater than me was looking out for me,” Gamble says. And in that highly unusual moment, his quest for truth and understanding of spiritual things was born.

While in St. Augustine, Florida, Gamble embarked on a self-guided study of world religions, but nothing clicked. During hours of solitude and contemplation at the beach, he pondered nature, “and it was there that God really began to reveal Himself to me in a way that had my heart exploding in faith,” he says. But Gamble needed to find a way to direct his mind to worship and didn’t know where to start.

After some time Gamble served as best man in a wedding in which the officiating minister was a Seventh-day Adventist—Chesapeake Conference president Rob Vandeman. He had never heard of Adventists and didn’t really pay much attention to the Adventist



church in which the wedding was held (Spencerville, Maryland). But he asked Vandeman to help him gain some insight nevertheless. “Pastor Vandeman agreed to meet, and when we did, I spelled out my life story, and he simply handed me a Bible and prayed with me.”

“That day I started reading the Bible every day and haven’t stopped since,” Gamble relates. “I remember my father picking me up from the airport on my return to Florida and asking me how my trip was. I responded: ‘It was great primarily because I am starting to get to know this guy named Jesus. I don’t know everything about Him, but what I do know, I really like!’”

The next day Gamble made a phone call to the local Adventist church nearest his St. Augustine home. “The following Sabbath I was there, and I haven’t turned back since,” he says.

Matthew Gamble was baptized in the Atlantic Ocean in St. Augustine, Florida, March 23, 1996, and it is true: he hasn’t turned back since.

Gamble’s story only begins at his baptism. To learn more about where Christ has taken him, watch for the April 2011 edition of Adventist World magazine.



WILONA KARIMABADI TAKES CARE OF KIDSVIEW, ADVENTIST REVIEW’S MAGAZINE FOR CHILDREN.

It's Your Call

I FIRST FELT THE CALL AT A WEEK OF PRAYER SERVICE DURING MY SOPHOMORE

year at Platte Valley Academy. From that point on—before I knew where I was headed for college or before I needed to shave every day—I began building my list of qualifications to be a youth pastor. Oh yes, I had a list.

Camp counselor: check. Literature evangelist: check. Learn to play a musical instrument: check. Tremendous grades in Bible class: check. Build vast collection of stylish neckties: check.

During freshman orientation at Union College in 2004 I immediately knew the answer to everybody's most asked question: "What's your major?"

"Theology," I stated confidently, "with a minor in youth ministry."

In college, of course, I continued to build my list. I volunteered to give Bible studies at a nursing home and gave my testimonial at vespers. During Introduction to Theology, I smiled—slightly smugly—as the professor handed out required reading: a book entitled *Call Answering*.

Well, I thought, *I'm already doing that*.

Only I wasn't. Somewhere between my freshman and sophomore years, God revealed that I wasn't supposed to be a pastor. As purposeful and motivated as I'd felt heading into my freshman year of college, I felt that much more lost and directionless entering my second. I remember walking into the career center and looking through the one-page descriptions of various degrees, which all seemed pointless and hollow compared to the one I'd left. After narrowing down my list, I settled on communications with a public relations emphasis, basically because it involved the smallest amount of math and science.

I walked out of the career center that day feeling as if I'd enjoy a competent but unfulfilling career. I was certain I'd never rediscover the calling I'd lost.

Oh, ye of little faith.

It all began before I even realized a change was coming. During second semester of my freshman year my partner for peer review in college writing class also happened to be a sports editor for Union's student paper, the *Clocktower*. Through that connection I began writing for the sports section. The year after—my first in the uncalled zone—I became *Clocktower* sports editor.

A few weeks before the end of the year my boss asked if I would be willing to be head editor the following year. I clearly remember my initial reaction: *There's no way!* In no manner did I consider myself a writer, much less an editor. I wrote about sports because I liked sports, and really, anybody with any college education could write a cohesive 300-word article.

But after taking some time to let the idea sink in, I decided to accept the call. One of my duties as editor was to write an editorial for each issue. As the year went on I found that most of my articles gravitated toward spiritual topics. By the start of second semester I'd developed a love for writing, a good portfolio, and, most important, a direction for my life. Armed with new confidence, I decided to apply for an internship with the *Adventist Review*. Nearly four years later I'm entering my fourth year as a columnist for the *Review*. In my other life I work in the Marketing Department at Adventist Health's San Joaquin Community Hospital.

There are many twists and turns that I don't have enough space to share. Still, the heart of my story shines through: My God, my Savior, pulled me out of a pit of hopelessness into a life I never once pursued or imagined possible. There was a time when I never thought I'd be able to have an impact unless I was called into ministry. Now I realize that despite not being called to pastoral ministry, God uses me to share His love through my writing and daily interactions.

Sometimes, despite our own list of qualifications, God calls us to something we feel woefully unqualified for. As for my list, I've pretty much narrowed it down to a one-line item: Let Him lead; even if I don't know where He's taking me.

Check.



**Jimmy
Phillips**

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An Appeal

LESSONS FROM CORNELIUS

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Our work for the new year will soon begin. . . . This is a time for all to inquire, “What can I do to advance the cause of present truth?”

I appeal to all who believe the truth, to all who can assist us in any line. Give us your help to advance the work just now. We need workers, and we need money; for there is a close relation between money and missions.

We have moved out by faith and have made large advancement, because we saw what needed to be done, what God was calling upon us to do, and we dared not hesitate. But we have not done the half of that which should be done. There is a great work before us. All about us are souls longing for light and truth, and how are they to be reached?

A Precious History

God works through heavenly instrumentalities that those who know the truth may be brought in connection with souls who need light and knowl-

edge. Read the tenth chapter of Acts. The God of Heaven beheld the devotion and piety of Cornelius. He witnessed his prayers and his almsgiving, and marked the power of his influence. He desired to give him light in regard to Christ’s mission and to connect him with His work. The Lord sent His angel to signify this to Cornelius, and to place him in connection with the Apostle Peter. The angel told Cornelius just where Peter lived, and assured him, “He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” Then an angel was sent to Peter to remove his doubt as to the propriety of working for the Gentiles. “What God has cleansed, that call not thou common.” While Peter was pondering in regard to the mysterious revelation that had been given him, the Spirit said unto him, “Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

What a history is this to show that Heaven is in close connection with our world. On the ladder that Jacob saw,

angels of God are ascending and descending. God is above the ladder, and beams of light and glory are shining the whole length from heaven to earth. This line of communication is still open.

And what was the outcome of God’s dealing with Cornelius? Read the precious history, and learn, and praise God; for its lesson is for us. Finding Cornelius and his friends gathered to hear the word of God, “Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” . . .

As Peter spoke these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon the assembly, and they were baptised in the name of the Lord. Thus in Caesarea a company of Christian believers was established to hold up the light of truth.

Work for Today

This is the work to be done today. We have a message to give to the people,

“The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” Christ declares, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and he that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

There is in every city and every suburb a work to be done in presenting the last message of mercy to a fallen world.

But what can we do? We sit down and consider, we pray, and plan how to begin the work in the places all around us. Where are the faithful missionaries who will carry it forward? And how shall they be sustained?

Money Is a Talent to Be Used

Money is a talent which the Lord desires to have put to use in His service. I see the necessities of the work, and I am determined to do all in my power, that the last merciful message of warning to our world may not be hindered. One soul is of such value that in comparison with it, the whole world sinks into insignificance.

Now we call upon all who will, to help us in the work. Of what use is it to lay up worldly treasure? Read the words of the apostle James, “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your misery which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is can-

kered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”

We certainly do not want to be of the class who have heaped together treasure for the last days, to eat our flesh as it were fire. In that fearful time all men will understand their misuse of God’s money. Those who have squandered His gifts will see how their means has been buried up in banks and stocks and mines and other enterprises where it could be of no benefit to the cause of God. They will see how their money might have been used to advance the cause of God and win souls for Him, and how through their misapplication of God’s talent they have suffered eternal loss.

Sincerity Shown by Action

Do you profess to be looking for the soon coming of Christ in the clouds of Heaven? Do you profess to believe that the last warning is now being given to the world? Do you pray that God’s kingdom may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven? The sincerity of your profession of faith and of your prayers will be shown by your works.

We want your prayers for the advancement of the work. We need them. But we ask that with you as with Cornelius, prayer and giving may be united.

If we act out our faith, we shall not be forgotten by God. He marks every deed of love and self-denial. He will open ways whereby we may show our faith by our works.

Let us carefully consider the solemn, prophetic warnings, let us receive the encouragement of God’s rich promises. Let us work determinedly, with heart willingness, with gladness of soul, in the spirit of humble obedience rendering back to God His own. We can pray with faith for God’s power to unite with our efforts when we can come before Him saying, “Of Thine own we freely give Thee.”

The Lord desires us to be living channels of light. He has made it our privilege to co-operate with Him as partners in His great firm, to act our part in promoting the prosperity of His cause.

The fields are white for the harvest. Shall we not have means for gathering in the precious grain? Will those who know the truth see what they can do to help us just now? Will everyone cut off all needless expenditures? See what you can do in self-denial. Dispense with all that is not positively necessary. Come up to the measure of your God-given duty.

Let it be known that God has a people upon the earth who have not forgotten that He has a law, binding upon all human intelligences. In all the churches, there are souls who know not that the seventh and not the first day of the week is the Sabbath, and that it is to be observed because God Himself has given the command.

Brethren and sisters, this work demands your help. Will you give it? To those who have means which they are not putting to use for God we appeal in Christ’s name. Let no talent be hidden in the earth. Undo your napkin, and put your treasure into active service for God.



THIS ARTICLE IS ABRIDGED FROM “AN APPEAL,” PUBLISHED IN THE JANUARY 1900 ISSUE OF THE AUSTRALASIAN UNION CONFERENCE RECORD. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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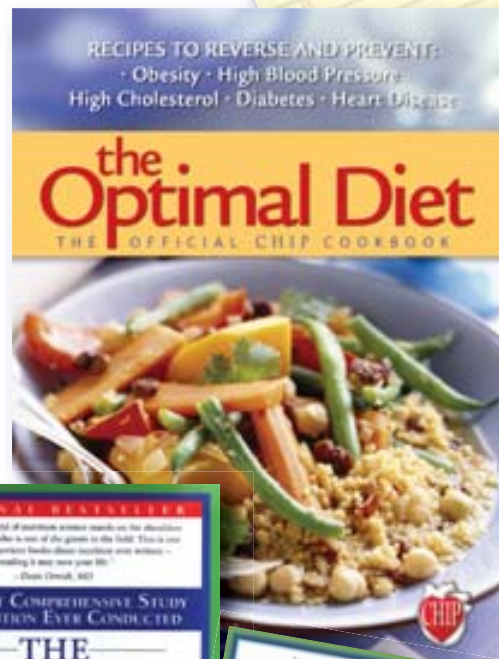
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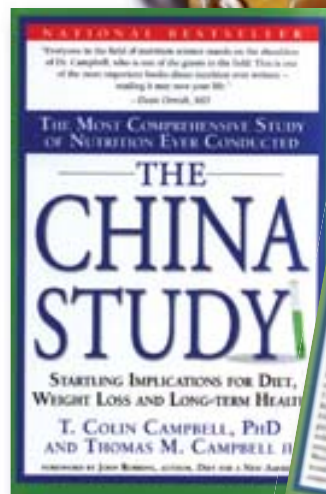
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Bucking the Trend

EVERY NEW YEAR, WITHOUT FAIL, I HEAR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

make resolutions regarding their lives. Ready for a change, they say that they will not turn back to their old ways. This will be the year to lose that weight, save up for that house, become a better person. With New Year's come new opportunities for change and improvement: the possibilities seem endless.

As Christians we aren't altogether immune from this experience in our spiritual lives. This is especially true after a powerful spiritual gathering, where the spoken Word has touched our hearts and we've seen the Holy Spirit work in the lives of those around us—and in our own. We make new commitments—to really have a deeper spiritual walk and connection with the Lord, to consecrate our work to Him, to give up cherished sin, to fully surrender to His will and go wherever He may lead in the coming months and years.

Just as New Year's resolutions often seem to be made only to be broken, spiritual commitments made with all good intentions often fall through the cracks after months, weeks, days, or even simply hours pass by. We turn back because we get tired, because the commitment is harder than we expected, or because we grow discouraged.

Jesus admonished that “no one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).¹ How can we not only anticipate but prevent turning back from the commitments we've solemnly made to our God?

The book of Hebrews offers a solution: “For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls” (Heb. 12:3). The inoculation against fatigue and discouragement in our spiritual journey is within reach: *Consider Him*. The previous two verses say it plainly: “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (verses 1, 2).

How did those who labored loyally for God in centuries past stay true to their commitment? They took Hebrews 12:3 seriously: they made God first, last, and best in their lives. And if we too make Jesus first, last, and best, we too will “run with endurance the race that is set before us.” We will be genuinely happy and fulfilled people, prepared to meet every obstacle and trial that lies ahead. We'll do our part in the ultimate goal of spreading the gospel in this generation, and soon be reunited with our Lord.²

Let's buck the trend: no more backsliding in our commitments to God. There's no reason we should fail. Jesus overcame every obstacle that threatened His mission to save us; and He promises His power to all who put their trust in Him. Those who have gone before us in previous generations are rightly honored because they maintained their commitments to Jesus through many decades. Our experience may be the same.

Let's take to heart the counsel offered us in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Let's stay focused on Jesus, the answer to all discouragement and weakness. Then, a year from now, let's offer our praise to Him as we marvel at how far He took us when we resolved that there would be *no turning back*.

¹ Bible texts in this article are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² See Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, pp. 33, 38.



AMY LEE SHEPPARD IS THE SECRETARY OF GENERATION OF YOUTH FOR CHRIST, AND IS STUDYING LAW IN VIRGINIA.

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