New Adventist medical school in Peru is denomination's fifth
School to serve Northwest South America; Peruvian national is founding dean

Adventist Church launches committee to study theology of ordination
Report expected in 2014; stems from request at 2010 GC Session

North America’s Let’s Move! Day promotes fitness for children
Medical Expert Dr. Ian Smith commends Adventist community involvement

Remembrance: Nebblett helped develop ADRA, secured early grants
Tailor, pastor brought experience from refugee work in Vietnam
The Seventh-day Adventist Church today inaugurated a medical school in Peru, the first Adventist school of medicine in the Northwestern region of South America.

Church leaders said the School of Human Medicine at Peruvian Union University in Lima expands the church’s capacity for healthcare ministry in Peru and surrounding Spanish-speaking countries, an area with great demand for Adventist physicians.

At today’s inauguration ceremony, church officials praised the vision of local leaders and Peruvian expatriates who have returned in recent years to help establish the school.

“A medical school has always been a necessity in Peru, and today that dream has become a reality because Peruvian Union University dreamed it,” Erton Kohler, president of the denomination’s South American Division, said at the ceremony this morning.

The school’s founding dean, Dr. Carlos Alfonso Balarezo, is a Peruvian national who has served as chief of surgery at Riverside County Regional Medical Center in Riverside, California, United States, and as an associate professor of surgery at nearby Loma Linda University’s School of Medicine. He also holds the title of Master of Peruvian Surgery, a distinction awarded by the Peruvian Surgical Society and held by only three people.

Balarezo said he left the United States five years ago to join the team that established the school.

“It’s a tremendous opportunity to help mold these students,” Balarezo said in an interview. “Like Loma Linda [University], we want to place a lot of emphasis on preventative care. This will differentiate us from other medical schools here.”

The school’s curriculum is a seven-year, post-secondary program. Classes actually started last month with 80 students. School officials say the program will continue with about 60 students each year.

Peru is underserved with physicians compared to the rest of the world. The country has nine doctors per 10,000 people, according to the World Health Organization. The global mean average is 14.
On campus this morning, student Flor Cari said, "It’s wonderful to now have this program, which will prepare us to serve those who have needed us for so long."

Peruvian Union University has about 8,100 students, making it the second largest university by enrollment in the Adventist world church. Brazil Adventist University in São Paulo has slightly more than 10,000 students.

Church leaders said the new medical school has a strong Adventist base to pull from in Peru, a country with one of the highest proportions of Adventist Church members. There are more than 410,000 church members in the nation, which has a population of roughly 30 million. Approximately 60 secondary Adventist schools enroll a total of roughly 10,000 students.

Officials said the new school would also draw students from neighboring countries, including Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil.

Dr. Allan Handysides, Health Ministries director for the Adventist world church, said he expects the school to thrive because of the extensive planning by school officials over the previous five years.

“I think it’s going to be a great success because they were extremely focused on following to the exact detail the recommendations from the [Adventist world church’s] Education department," Handysides said.

The new school is the Adventist world church’s fifth medical school. Today’s inauguration comes three months after the Benjamin S. Carson Sr. School of Medicine opened at church-run Babcock University in Nigeria.

The Adventist Church also operates medical schools at Adventist universities in Montemorelos, Nuevo León, Mexico; Liberator San Martín, Entre Rios, Argentina; and its flagship school in Loma Linda, California, United States.

Adventist Education leaders say a sixth medical school is being developed in the Philippines.

Several world church officials have complimented leaders in Peru for their collaboration across church institutions to help build the school over the past five years. Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Adventist world church Education director, said church administrators and university officials coordinated the effort with Adventist healthcare institutions and community hospitals to establish the new school’s training capacity.

“There is a tremendous team spirit in support of the medical school," Beardsley-Hardy said. "It means a lot for the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Peru."

―additional reporting by Angela Brown

Adventist Church launches committee to study theology of ordination
Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders yesterday voted to establish a Theology of Ordination Study Committee, with a goal of delivering a report to the 2014 Annual Council, a yearly meeting of world church administrators.

Four committee sessions, each meeting for up to three days, will precede the October 2014 report, leaders said.

“We want an open process,” Pastor Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, told the group’s Administrative Committee, or ADCOM, before the vote was taken. “We want to hear what God and the Holy Spirit want to tell us, through Bible study, study of the Spirit of Prophecy, and prayer.”

Yesterday’s move comes a year after the 2011 unveiling of a roadmap for the study process. Church officials meeting in ADCOM yesterday affirmed that outline and provided terms of reference for the study committee.

The committee is a direct response to a request during the 2010 General Conference Session for a church-conducted understanding of ordination.

The denomination’s Executive Committee at the 2014 Annual Council may decide to recommend action to the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas.

The committee will be comprised of a wide perspective of individuals to include “women, men, younger and, older members, theologians, Bible students, those who have written or spoken on the subject and some others.” The Committee will have no world church officers on it other than chairman, vice-chairman and secretary, though the three executive officers will be ex officio members.

Wilson added, “There is no one who wants to do anything other than God’s will.”

The committee launch comes on the heels of independent actions taken by three of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s union conferences. The unions – North German, Columbia and Pacific – voted to ordain pastoral candidates without respect to gender. World church leaders had asked the unions to refrain, pending the committee’s formation and conclusions.

“When the process starts there are two issues that will be really studied,” said Artur A. Stele, head of the world church’s Biblical Research Institute and chairman of the new committee. “Number one, the theology of ordination, what ordination is or isn’t. Then, the second one, ‘What are the implications for Church practices with a special emphasis on women’s ordination?’”

Suggested names for the committee’s membership were requested from ADCOM members as part of the selection process. Names of the committee members have not yet been released, but it is
expected that at least 24 members of the 102-person group will be women. ADCOM members of varying viewpoints expressed appreciation for a balanced listing of potential committee members.

Members are expected to represent a wide perspective of thought on ordination, and it is hoped they will also interact in a highly respectful and spiritual discussion setting. The committee will also include two delegates from each of the 13 world church divisions, which will work with regional Biblical Research Committees in the study.

An official statement voted by ADCOM emphasized that, unlike many church committees where actions are voted up and down, the panel’s terms of reference include “an aim of reaching consensus on as many points as possible.” Where differences are evident, they will be carefully noted for the final report to the 2014 Annual Council.

According to the statement, “Through strong prayer sessions, study of the Bible, study of the Spirit of Prophecy and the resulting careful discussion, the Theology of Ordination Study Committee should focus on solutions that would support the message, mission and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Adventists participate in the Vibrant Life Health Expo and Fun Run in Hagerstown, Maryland, United States, on September 23. The 5K was one of many health and fitness events held across North America on Let's Move! Day. [photo courtesy NAD]
Thousands of Seventh-day Adventists in North America on Sunday headed to tracks, parks and gyms to participate in the annual Let’s Move! Day, a church-sponsored program to fight the epidemic of childhood obesity.

The Adventist Church holds an annual day to promote United States First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! initiative. The Adventist Church is among some 50 other faith and community organizations that pledged to support the initiative during its 2010 launch.

The flagship event was held in Flushing Meadows Park in Queens, New York. There, Dr. Ian Smith, a medical expert who appeared on VH-1’s Celebrity Fit Club television show and a member of the President’s Council of Sports, Fitness and Nutrition, commended the Adventist Church for its commitment to promoting healthful living.

“Seventh-day Adventists being involved in something like this is not only a blessing to the parish and the congregation, but also to the larger community who also feed off of that,” Smith said. “The idea that a group such as large and prestigious as this will do this means that other groups will follow.”

The Adventist Church has incorporated Let’s Move! as part of Adventists InStep for Life, an initiative of the Adventist Church in North America to promote exercise and better nutrition.

On Sunday, dozens of Adventist churches and schools across the United States hosted a variety of events, from health fairs and screenings to walks and 5-kilometer races.

The Apopka Adventist Church in Florida hosted a 5k run and a health fair. Across the country, in Tacoma, Washington, the Mount Tahoma Adventist Church held a fitness walk at a local middle school track.

Sensational Seniors of Bellfort Adventist Church in Houston, Texas, hosted a walk in a park, as did the Knoxville First Adventist Church in Tennessee.

The bulk of events were held by Adventist churches and schools in Maryland, a state home the church’s world headquarters near Washington, D.C. The Northeast Adventist Church in Parkville hosted active games. Other church members and their community friends walked and biked along the C & O Canal starting in Williamsport.

The United States’ northern neighbor of Canada also joined in. The Prince Albert Adventist Church in Saskatchewan hosted a six-mile hike, while Spanish and Filipino churches in Montreal organized a 5k fun run.

Katia Reinert, Health Ministries director for the church in North America, said the Let’s Move! Day is an opportunity for the church to bring its message of healthful living to the community.
“As a church we have long talked about the importance of not just healthy minds and hearts but also healthy bodies,” Reinert said. “Our culture is coming to grips with its health crises and we have a message for our times.”

Remembrance: Nebblett helped develop ADRA, secured early grants

Milton E. Nebblett helped expand the trajectory of Adventist humanitarian outreach by securing the first major grant for the organization now known as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. Here he appears in a 2010 family photo. [photos courtesy Nebblett family]
Milton E. Nebblett was a driven force who helped transform local Seventh-day Adventist humanitarian outreach in the early 1980s into a major player on the international development scene.

The former refugee advisor for the U.S. State Department in Vietnam secured the Seventh-day Adventist World Service’s (SAWS) first grant – $10 million from the United States Agency for International Development – based largely on his understanding of government agencies.

Nebblett, who died September 13 at age 88, served as deputy director for SAWS, which then employed 12 people in its home office and 300 people worldwide. After securing the grant, the organization soon afterward became the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), which now employs 85 people in its international office and 6,000 people worldwide.

Nebblett worked non-stop on multiple projects and traveled extensively throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America to assess humanitarian needs with government leaders. Colleagues said he constantly pushed the agency to expand its operations. It's estimated that he helped to secure roughly $100 million in grants for ADRA’s projects.

“Milton was someone who I would try to emulate and replicate his passion in my work,” said Mario H. Ochoa, ADRA’s vice president for Network Relations, who worked with Nebblett. “He was a dynamic, vibrant, exuberant guy. He did a lot of mentoring for me and others in the office in those days.”

Nebblett’s wife, Ivy, said he visited 150 countries, and the couple lived in 42 different houses during his ministry.

Nebblett was the son of a custom tailor in Honduras. Like his father, he made clothes for himself throughout his life and was known as a dapper dresser. His wife said sewing was the only activity on which he would focus all his attention at one time.

He graduated from Oakwood University in Alabama, United States, and in 1953 earned a master’s degree in divinity from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, then located in Washington, D.C. He was known as the “love” pastor for usually preaching on the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, Ivy Nebblett said.

He pastored in the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s, at one point pastoring 12 churches simultaneously. He also served as president of the denomination’s Guyana Mission. The U.S.’s Food for Peace Program selected Nebblett to head a Guyana’s food distribution during civil unrest.
Later, while pastoring in California in the United States, the U.S. government asked him in 1969 to serve as an advisor to the South Vietnamese government during the Vietnam War. He coordinated and built refugee camps for millions of displaced persons fleeing from the bombing in their villages.

He returned to the United States in 1974, pastoring in Maryland and Pennsylvania before accepting a call in 1980 to the Adventist Church’s world headquarters to serve as a deputy director of SAWS.

He left ADRA in 1985 to pastor in Washington, D.C. He also formed an independent humanitarian organization for a few years before Alzheimer’s disease set in, which he lived with the final decade of his life.

He is survived by his wife, four children and 10 grandchildren. A funeral service is scheduled for 5:30 p.m., Saturday, September 29, at the Emmanuel-Brinklow Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ashton, Maryland, United States.

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