Praise God for the opportunity to meet with fellow believers during this special convocation in such a pleasant location! Gathering for the opening meeting on Wednesday evening, August 24, the first thing that caught our eye was the beautiful banner behind the pulpit carrying the conference theme, “Here am I; send me.” Isaiah 6:8.

After Elder Henry Dering welcomed the many attendees, the conference theme song, “Send the Light,” was sung with enthusiasm and joy. The service topic was “Share the Good News.” Elder Joel and Sister Ammie Barnedo sang a duet, “He Always Makes the Sun Shine Through the Rain,” the first of many special songs that gave joy to our hearts.

Jesus wants to meet with His people, and He not only loves for us to be in harmony with one another but actually gives us that harmony as well as peace in our hearts. The heavenly gifts are what every child of His needs so he or she can reach out to others in this dark world and lead them to the Saviour. The call is, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:1.
“Those who wait for the Bridegroom’s coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God.’ The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.


The promise is that Jesus will return to earth when His character is perfectly reflected in His people, and this is all about sharing. The power comes from God. The Christian armor of Ephesians 6:11-18 has two parts: (1) truth, righteousness, and faith, and (2) prayer and study.

Witnessing is like using dynamite; for something to happen three elements have to be present—powder, a detonator, and a fuse. If even one element is missing, nothing will happen; but when all three are put into action, there is an explosion. The three elements for reaching souls are prayer, study, and witnessing. It all begins with friendship and the joy of connecting a soul with Heaven. Everyone can pray for the opportunity to meet someone and bring him to Jesus. It is for our growth and blessing that Jesus entrusted to us the mission of leading souls to Him.

Everyone was encouraged to return to his or her church and participate in a revival. God wants to use and send you. Be of good courage!

**Thursday, August 25**

At the morning worship, Sister Delmy Pleitez spoke about “The Desire to Triumph in Jesus.” Everyone, regardless of his or her profession or role in life, seeks success. God also wants us to prosper in all things. But everyone is subject to the choices he has made. According to Moses in Deuteronomy 30:14-16, 19, we have a choice between “life and good, and death and evil.” “Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

Originating in the Alps are rivers that flow in totally different directions. If one were to throw a stick of wood into the Danube River, it would end up in the Black Sea; if he were to throw the stick into the Rhine River, it would reach the North Sea; and if he threw the stick into the Rhone River, it would find its way to the Mediterranean Sea. Thus the destination is determined by the direction in which the stick is thrown. The same is true of the choices everyone makes. God wants “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

There are ten ways in which we stay connected to Jesus:
1) Yield our hearts to Him
2) Put Him in first place
3) Abide in Him, the true vine
4) Search His Word daily and do what we find there
5) Pray without ceasing, as did Daniel
6) Have faith in Jesus and have the faith of Jesus
7) Attend church meetings, where we hear the Word
8) Forgive and love
9) Remain firm in faith
10) Witness to others

Let us share what we have learned and be open to receive His blessings.

After breakfast, several ministers presented answers to questions that had been submitted by the conference attendees.

Elder Tzvetan Petkov responded to the question, “Why are dogs outside the New Jerusalem? Is this referring to animals or corrupt people?” Revelation 22:15. The dogs in this verse, as well as in Jesus’ statement in Mark 7:27, refer to pagans, those who mix idolatry with spirituality or commit spiritual adultery. In the Old Testament, dogs refer to negative character traits of people. That is why they are grouped with liars, adulterers, and sorcerers in the verse in Revelation.

Elder Larry Watts gave a brief answer to a question about the church’s position on divorce and remarriage. The issue is simple: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Exodus 20:13. Jesus made it clear that to marry one who is divorced constitutes adultery. In Mark 10, the Lord referred to the seventh commandment and stated the principle of Heaven concerning it. Tying the previous question to this one, Brother Watts said that the condition of female dogs in the undeveloped world is pitiful; they are abused by male dogs and people alike, trying to raise pups under the most difficult circumstances. This is a fitting picture of what happens to human beings who do not have the Lord as their Shepherd. All arguments for divorce and remarriage deal with wants, and Psalm 23:1 says, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” In 1 Corinthians 7:1, 2, the great theologian of the New Testament, referenced Jesus’ words and stated that remarriage is not an option; see verses 10, 11. And Paul’s counsel is clear: “Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife.” In the same chapter, the apostle states the principle: “As the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk.” Verses 17, 20, 24. We will be protected and sheltered by having Jesus as our Shepherd in this and every area of our lives.
Elder Joel Barnedo responded to the question, “Why isn’t the work progressing in the United States? Is there too much emphasis on third world countries?” There are two kinds of progress—material and spiritual. Each of us has something to do to make the gospel progress. The primary responsibility of the ministers is not to go house to house; this is important for the members and Bible workers to do. Women especially are sympathetic with people and can reach souls whom men cannot. Let everyone be encouraged to share the light of Jesus Christ within his or her circle of influence.

As the time ended for this question-and-answer meeting, Elder Henry Deri ng answered the question, “What is truth?” with Jesus words, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” “Thy word is truth.” John 14:6; 17:17.

This meeting ended with the Barnedo family singing “I Love the Feel That I Feel When I Get Together with God’s Wonderful People.”

Workshop 1—“A Matter of the Heart”
Sister Barbara Watts

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;…” Ecclesiastes 9:10. Another way of saying this is, “Do it with all your heart.” And Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Matthew 22:37.

Human beings naturally follow their hearts—their desires. Even when one knows right from wrong, the mind is not strong enough to resist the natural human wants or desires. That is why the Lord says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26. And Jesus said, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” John 14:15. It is possible to keep His commandments only when we love Him.

Workshop 2—“In Harmony”
Brother Robert Watts

The word “harmony” refers both to music and to relationships, as well as to “an arrangement of the content of the gospels.” Music is an important part of worship (see Ephesians 5:19, 20), and there are a good number of references to it in the Scriptures. Beautiful music in church services helps bring souls to Christ and is as much an act of worship as is prayer.

In the book Evangelism, there is a whole section about music in the church. Individuals may choose to acquire good habits of music and speech for the purpose of winning souls to Christ. Music is the language of emotion, and it has the capacity to soften the hardest heart. But musicianship requires aptitude, training, and skill, so appropriate effort needs to be made to acquire such skills. Johann Sebastian Bach said: “The aim and final reason … of all music … should be none else but the glory of God and the recreation of the mind. Where this is not observed, there will be no real music but only a devilish hubbub.” Singing in tune and in harmony is like having Christ direct our lives. One hundred worshipers in harmony with Jesus will be closer to each other than they could ever be if they tried by themselves to harmonize with each other.

The appropriate selection of music for a church service includes (1) connection to the theme, (2) familiarity of the song to the singers, and (3) how the music fits with the overall worship program. Most hymnals, including International Hymnal, contain indices that help with such selection. One index gives a list of Bible verses and the hymns that allude to the verses. Another index provides a list of topics and the hymns related to each subject.

The congregation was divided into four groups, each of which selected a topic, a related Scripture

Where the heart leads, the mind will follow. One may not readily recognize this, but it is so. That is why corruption is so rampant in the world. The change of heart is a supernatural work that everyone may plead with God to accomplish in him. There will be peace and harmony in the soul whose heart is bound up with God.

In the world’s final tests and in responding to God’s call to go for Him, it will not be enough to know the truth. To stand for God will take a heart that loves Him deeply, that cherishes His holy principles above everything in this world, and that chooses to have Jesus abiding in his heart and mind through the Holy Spirit.
reading, and two hymns using the indices in the International Hymnal to match the hymns with the subject. The congregation then sang one of the hymns selected by each group. This exercise would be a blessing to do in the local churches as well.

Workshop 3—“Advancing the Gospel"
Brother John Theodorou
To advance the gospel, a person must get people’s attention by showing that he has energy. Good health habits and a strong connection to God will give him that energy; in fact, our words and lives should be living gospel messages. Furthermore, one’s outward appearance and behavior show if he is enlivened by divinity. Everyone can do this if he comes under the influence and training of the great Master. The apostle Paul stated it well: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16.

The greatest tool for advancing the gospel is prayer. Other important advice includes: (1) be persistent and diligent (don’t give up!); (2) talk to people; (3) share your personal experience; (4) help people with their physical, psychological, and social needs; (5) be aware of current happenings in the world; (6) inspire people with the health message; (7) maintain holy conviction and courage.

Let everyone be an example. “Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10.

Workshop 4—“Ye Are My Witnesses”
Elder Larry Watts
Why is the church not growing? One reason may be that we are spending all our time on ourselves, not going out and preaching the gospel. Charles H. Spurgeon said: “Hours for the world! Moments for Christ! The world has the best, and our closet the parings of our time. We give our strength and freshness to the ways of mammon, and our fatigue and languor to the ways of God.”

Indeed, God’s cause should receive our very best efforts and energy, for our talents were given to us by Him to be used in His service. “The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ.” –The Ministry of Healing, p. 143. Jesus’ method was to come close to the people through personal contact. Persuasion, prayer, and God’s love were what He used to accomplish His mission. Remember that God calls people to be fishers of men, not hunters.

The most effective witness every person has is the testimony of his personal experience, and everyone should be willing to share that. But this means that one needs to have had a personal experience with Jesus; otherwise he will have nothing to share. Satan does everything possible to be sure that that witness is crippled. “The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God.” –The Great Controversy, p. 472.

“Caviling, ridicule, and misrepresentation can be indulged in only at the expense of the debasement of your own souls. The use of such weapons does not gain precious victories for you, but rather cheapens the mind, and separates the soul from God. Sacred things are brought down to the level of the common, and a condition of things is created that pleases the prince of darkness, and grieves away the Spirit of God.” –The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p. 954.

A worksheet was distributed for the attendees to use in preparing their personal witness statement, particularly comparing their life before they met Jesus with that after He came into their hearts. Every person is here for a purpose—by design. Let us represent Jesus Christ.

Workshop 5—“God’s Call”
Elder Ciro Arevalo
The story was told of Martin Luther King and an event in which white and black helium balloons were released into the sky. The white balloons rapidly ascended, while the black balloons rose much more slowly. A little girl asked Dr. King if only white balloons go to heaven. His reply was that balloons go to heaven not because of their color but because of what they have inside.

Only God knows what is inside each person, and He is calling everyone to serve Him. Millions of angels in heaven serve God; what moves us to do so? The apostle Paul said people preach Christ for different reasons, and each day we make choices in that regard. Of all creation, man alone lives for self. A selfish heart is like the Dead Sea, which receives water but keeps it for itself. A person who does this has cancer of the soul. Remember that Satan, the great adversary, wanted to be like God—not in love and mercy, but in power.

God calls everyone, no matter what his or her profession or occupation is, to serve Him in some way. It is extremely important to heed God’s call, to use one’s talents for Heaven’s purposes. “If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.” John 12:26.

After dinner, Elder Raul Escobar gave the evening service entitled “Go and Make Disciples.” After the Israelites entered the promised land and gained the victory over the city of Jericho, they were defeated in the battle against Ai. When Joshua “rent his clothes, and fell
to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord,” and mourning with the elders of Israel. God told them that the reason for their loss was that “Israel hath sinned” in taking “of the accursed thing.” Joshua 7:6, 11. Achan was brought to justice over this.

God abhors sin. If church leaders overlook it, the whole body will suffer. It creates a divide between God and man. If there is no strength among God’s people, they need to receive what Jesus offers in Revelation 3:18–gold tried in the fire (faith that works by love), white raiment (the robe of Jesus’ righteousness), and eye salve (the infilling of the Holy Spirit). Every person is entrusted with adequate gifts and tools to perform that unique service to which God is calling him. Through daily conversion and commitment, everyone contributes to the efficient functioning of the kingdom of God on earth—in cooperation with the heavenly agencies which provide supernatural power and assistance. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,… that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10.

People are waiting to be joined to God’s kingdom; let us ask God for guidance in finding them in every place.

After this meeting, Brother Wikler Moran led the believers in praising God through word and music.

Friday, August 26
Sister Ana Santos spoke about “The Church of God” for the morning worship. We all left our homes to come to this beautiful place and worship God. He wants His people to be prepared and give the trumpet a clear sound, but there is little time left to do this. This may be the last conference for the church or for some individuals.

Individual preparation is supremely important, for the church is made up of individuals. The church is not a club or a party; it is a body organized for service to feed those who come within its influence and to prepare people to reveal Jesus to the world. In the light of Calvary, affiliation with the church is the highest privilege. “The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revoluted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son.” —The Acts of the Apostles, p. 11.

Church members are Jesus’ hands to be a blessing to those around them—to visit the sick, prisoners, orphans, and widows. They are God’s eyes to seek souls and His mouth to teach and instruct with love, not to judge. Every day we need more of Jesus—more of His love, mercy, and empathy for others. And mothers carry special responsibilities in the church, for they guide their children and can reach people to whom men have no access. A storm is brewing, and now is the time to help families, friends, neighbors, and our fellow members be fortified to pass through every experience with Jesus. All who love Him will go with Him now and enter His holy kingdom when He comes in person.

We are here to be filled with God’s Spirit and to be used by Him. He will provide every talent, time, and money to complete His work. He just needs people who love Him. If we are faithful, our families will come to Jesus and there will be more testimonies of praise than sermons. He is calling us to uplift His holiness through our behavior and appearance—reflecting His image and blessing to every brother, sister, family, and the church. May we be able to say on the blessed day of His return, “Here am I and those You gave me.”

Workshop 6—“I will Go, Lord”
Elder Humberto Ajucum
Now is the time for us to reflect for a moment on our spiritual responsibilities. “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Isaiah 6:8. We live in a time when there are attacks against Biblical doctrine, the church, and the Holy Spirit; and there is also much theological manipulation. There are discouraging circumstances, and some people are going through the very worst time. Nevertheless, the question remains, and each of us needs to examine his own life and determine what needs to happen for him so he can answer, “I will go, Lord.”

Someone needs to go, because there are people who suffer, hunger, and thirst for the bread of life and living water. Many are crying for salvation and stand at the threshold, waiting to enter the holy kingdom. God wants to save them, for He wants no one to perish but all men...
to be saved. But how can they believe if they haven’t heard the message? Who will do the work that has not yet been done?

There are five elements that need to be in place before a person can make a decision to connect with God: (1) the message (the messenger is the instrument of persuasion), (2) the Holy Spirit (He persuades), (3) the truth (the power of persuasion), (4) the method (the means for persuasion), and (5) an interested person (the object of persuasion). We are still planting in the time of the harvest. The messenger is one who knows and loves truth and gives the sacred message under the direction of the Holy Spirit. There is little time left; are we listening for and heeding the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us today? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep:…” Romans 13:11.

Workshop 7—“The Literature Ministry”
Elders Joel Barnedo and Oscar Valles
To be active in spreading the holy Word and inviting people into the heavenly kingdom, the messengers need to be trained for service. That training includes personal prayer, study, dedication, good health practices, a presentation guided by the Holy Spirit, and materials that correctly present the sacred Word. Such training is available, and all who wish to obtain it are invited to contact the presenters. Investment in the Christian way of life requires time, energy, discipline, and financial resources and will be repaid many times over as one places himself in the channel of heavenly blessing.

Workshop 8—“Watchmen of Zion”
Elder Neptali Acevedo
During World War II, the German army encountered a terrible storm, and sentries were put in place along the lines and ordered to sound a warning in case of danger. One soldier was commissioned to go from sentry to sentry and be sure that all of the men were awake and on guard. As he approached one man, he found him asleep. Upon awaking, the sentry pulled his gun and fired; fortunately the gun misfired. A sleeping watchman is a dangerous situation. If he approaches, and when he awakes he has no time to distinguish friend from foe and so ends up firing on his own people.

Analogies can be drawn from this incident. Isaiah 56:10 describes spiritual watchmen who are blind, ignorant, dumb, unable to bark, sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber. The responsibility of a watchman is to detect danger and sound an alarm. But if a watchman is blind, it is impossible for him to do this. In John 9:41, Jesus told of people who were blind but did not consider themselves as such, so they were all the more dangerous.

Although we usually think of spiritual watchmen as being the ministers and workers in the church, everyone needs to watch and be discerning. The Bible description of “those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14) is an excellent way to think of how each of us should be. The most well-known part of the serenity prayer written by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr expresses the clarity of thought that those who love God should have: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

There are numerous spiritual dangers that require such wisdom and divine courage. Some of them come from the world around us, and others arise within the church itself. Regardless, it is only through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that one can be a faithful watchman for Jesus. “Now is the time for God’s people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 136.

After supper, Elder Henry Dering presented a service for the beginning of the Sabbath, titled “Missionaries Wanted Now.” Jesus found and trained devoted disciples to carry on what He began in coming to earth as the Messiah and Lamb of God. The divine mission does not mean proselytizing—getting people to change churches—rather, it is to turn people to Jesus, not just to present doctrines to them. When a person makes contact with Jesus, his or her life changes completely. A church or organization does not accomplish this; Jesus does.

Just as Philip told Nathanael about Jesus and other disciples shared Him with their friends and relatives, so our witness should be to those within our present circle. In fact, when one questions those in the church as to what or who was responsible for their becoming a Christian, only one percent is first reached by public outreach such as radio and television. Twenty-nine percent are born into the church, and sixty-six percent come as a result of the influence of a neighbor, friend, or relative. There is no substitute for personal contact.

Jesus did this. (1) He mingled with men as one who desired their well being. After He won their confidence,
He urged them, “Follow Me.” (2) He didn’t argue religion with people but approached them with something that was of interest to them. (3) He showed sympathy and wept with those who wept. (4) He met their needs by caring about and helping them with their problems. (5) He won their confidence through His beauty of character and great love.

And when one helps others, he helps himself. One who does not share Jesus with others is a ready target for the enemy of souls. One who is not involved in winning souls is in danger. In fact, we can say that if we are not sharing Jesus with others, we are not preparing for His coming! Our joyful looking for His coming to end the hurt, wickedness, sorrow, and sickness in this world and to bring everlasting goodness and peace will automatically spur us to be a light and blessing to those who are in physical, emotional, or spiritual pain.

Elder Pablo Hunger teamed up with a group of children and their teachers to present a service titled “What Shall I Do, Lord?” Saul the persecutor was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians when Jesus Christ met him on the road and shone a bright light not only into his eyes but also into his heart and mind with the question, “Why persecutest thou Me?” Trembling and astonished, Saul asked, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

This question is asked by all who meet Jesus and are impacted by that meeting. The short answer to the question is: “It is man’s work to cooperate with the divine.” –*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1058.

Through songs, quotations, and stories, the children told about Biblical heroes of faith, including Noah, Abraham, Moses’ mother, Moses, Gideon, David, and Daniel. Everything is possible with God. He works to empower individuals and do something that seems little but in the end will be shown to be very great.

Walking down a beach littered with hundreds of starfish that had washed up on the high tide, a man saw another man throwing the starfish back into the water one at a time. “There are too many; you’ll never be able to throw them all back,” he told the man.

“Yes, I know,” the rescuer replied. “But I’ll do one more, because I know when the sun comes out they will die. At least I can make a difference for this one.”

What shall we do? Go and teach all nations. Let us do faithfully what we can right where we are, and Heaven will guide us to new things to do.

**Sabbath, August 27**

For the worship on Sabbath morning, Brother Sabastien Guillaume spoke about the subject of “A Spring in the Desert.” Most people live in cities, which are not normally considered deserts. But very often one’s existence in a city is not at all that different from that in a desert; people are alone even in their own families. Or, one makes no contact with his neighbors and doesn’t even try to give them the hope of salvation and Jesus’ coming.

The Lord sent His servant Moses to Pharaoh to lead His people out of Egypt, through the desert, and to the promised land. For that purpose, the Lord gave Moses His Holy Spirit. Just as His Spirit moved on the face of the waters in creating the world and divided the waters above the firmament from those below it, so God gave His people springs in the desert. Everything God commanded was fulfilled; He is mighty and powerful. Still today, when God speaks, what He wants happens. He has given His people a special mission—to evangelize all who will hear and do His Word—and will be with every messenger and make things happen.

There will be tests—temptations—all along the way. Think of the lessons and tests faced not just by our first parents but also by the Israelites in their journey to Canaan. Often it appears as if we are in a desert—a dry place, a place of death—because of circumstances (illness, desperation, desolation), and we need to be careful not to die there. Why might that happen? Because we don’t respond when the Lord gives us spiritual food and water!

Meanwhile, we are to be a spring of water for others after receiving water and food from Him through the Spirit. Let us take the blessings from this conference and share them with others. It is a very good thing to give things to the Lord and be obedient to Him. But remember, we can obey Him only if we want to!

We are sleeping and in danger. Should we forget God, as the Israelites did so many times in the desert because they looked for and asked for things that He did not want them to have? Oh, no! Let us constantly receive living water from Him and be a refreshing spring to all we meet during the long journeys.
The Sabbath school was directed by Brother Christian Nelson. For the missionary period, Elder Larry Watts told about the upcoming General Conference missionary training seminar, and Sister Sharon Eaton shared her experience in learning to walk with God.

Sister Raquel Orce led the English Sabbath school class, studying the lesson titled “Walking on Water.” The emphasis was on applying the principles of the lesson to our own experience. Like the disciples, too often we think in a very narrow manner, murmuring and criticizing because things don’t turn out as we expected. And we, too, need to learn that Jesus always has a wise purpose in whatever He does.

The storm on the sea reflected the storm in disciples’ souls. If they had obeyed Jesus immediately without questioning and had not delayed, they would have been across the water before the storm struck. If we don’t go and do quickly what Jesus asks us to do, we’ll for sure get into trouble. But how marvelous that He doesn’t leave us even then! “When their hearts were subdued, their unholy ambition quelled, and in humility they prayed for help, it was given them.” – The Desire of Ages, p. 381. He came when they were lost and said, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” Matthew 14:27.

When Jesus got into the boat, the storm ended. When we are weak, we start to think negatively. How much better if we will look to Jesus and plead with Him to be with us all the time. We cannot do without His supernatural help. Let us be very careful how we think, speak, and act.

As the service began, the congregation again sang the theme song of the conference, “Send the Light.” A beautiful special song was presented by a youth choir, “Here I Am, Lord.” Before presenting the service, Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., told the children a story about how his family’s donkey saved Elder Suarez’ father from being severely hurt when the ram on the farm attacked him. God used the donkey in a very special way that day!

The service topic was the conference theme, “Here Am I, Send Me.” An emergency council was called in heaven after Adam rebelled by uniting with Lucifer in opposing God’s will and command. God the Father asked whom He could send to save the fallen race, and Jesus responded, “Here am I; send Me.” What love!

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6.

When Isaiah saw the holy Shekinah–God’s glory—his whole life changed. “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.” Isaiah 6:3.

No matter how small a place we fill in the Lord’s service, it is noble, and we should regard it as such. We are part of a glorious, eternal enterprise!

Only when we have a vision of God’s glory can we preach as He intends. Jesus came to heal the broken hearted—to end family tragedies. He said in essence, Send Me to comfort and bind up the broken hearted and the poor in spirit, to set the captives free, to give sight to the watchmen who are blind, to give liberty to those who are bound.

God’s Spirit was with Jesus, for the Lord anointed Him “to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for mourning, the robe of righteousness for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3. The robe of Jesus’ righteousness covers all who believe that they are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christ in each of us, the hope of glory, constitutes His righteousness.

Today God is shaking the world so all may know that Jesus is coming; He is just waiting to hear from the sealing angel that His people are sealed. As the Father sent Jesus into the world, now Jesus sends you and me. He calls us many times in life. He says, “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 10:32.

After lunch Elder Larry Watts presented to the congregation the officers of the American Union to serve for the next two years, as follows:

President: Tzvetan Petkov
Vice President/Missionary Leader/Literature Committee Chairman: Henry Dering
Secretary: Neptali Acevedo
Treasurer: Evelyn Arevalo
Canvassing Leader: Joel Barnedo
Youth Leader: George Williams
Education Leader: Margie Seely
Publishing Leader: Barbara Watts
Health Leader: Humberto Ajucum
American Union Committee: Tzvetan Petkov
Henry Dering
Neptali Acevedo
Evelyn Arevalo
Puerto Rican Field President (currently Humberto Ajucum)
Western Field President (currently Joel Barnedo)
Southeastern Field President (currently Ciro Arevalo)
Northeastern Field President (currently Neptali Acevedo, above)
Elder Petkov then spoke a few words, reading Isaiah 54:2, 3: “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”

Appreciation was expressed for the work of the previous administration, and all the conference attendees were urged to cooperate with the leaders in quickly expanding the sharing of the gospel in the Union.

Brother David Moreno and Sister Margie Seely organized the children’s and youth program. In addition, there was adult participation in giving testimonies and special music. Inspirational sayings by famous people were projected onto a screen. The first was from David Livingstone: “If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered sacrifice?”

Brother Christian Nelson told about the camping trip in North Carolina that preceded the conference, with thirteen participants, and the themes that were presented, including (1) the mindset of the fear of God, (2) the gospel of Jesus, (3) the Adventist foundation ordained by God to do a special work, and (4) overcoming through the grace of Jesus and writing a personal testimony.

Some of the other sayings that appeared as the program progressed were:
- Oswald Chambers: “We talk of the Second Coming; half of the world has never heard of the First.”
- John Falconer: “I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light.”
- Hudson Taylor: “The great commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”
- Robert C. Shannon: “Never pity missionaries; envy them. They are where the real action is—where life and death, sin and grace, heaven and hell converge.”
- Jordan Grooms: “If God calls you to be a missionary, don’t stoop to be a king.”
- Dave Davidson: “If you found a cure for cancer, wouldn’t it be inconceivable to hide it from the rest of mankind? How much more inconceivable to keep silent the cure from the eternal wages of death.”

After the gathering of the conference offering, Elder Humberto Ajucum told about the radio program project that has been conducted in Puerto Rico over the past two years. There has been very good response to the messages, and the believers are active in the follow-up. In addition, Elder Ajucum showed slides about current developments in the religious and political world. For example, the Sunday law will be established very soon. The new world order, which government and religious leaders are pushing, is nothing new but was founded when there was one language and one common idea on the plain of Shinar; that was an attempt to wrest control of the world from God.

The G8 nations want to establish globalization; they call it a great idea, a new world order, peace and security, liberty and government by law. When this is put in place, persecution will be worse than that during the Middle Ages because of the systems and technology available for its enforcement. The pope envisions a new world order under the United Nations with true political world authority and a world economy.

The Sabbath closing service was conducted by Elder Tzvetan Petkov. In reference to the theme text (Isaiah 6:8), the “Us”—in “… Who will go for Us”—includes God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The call is for people who will perform service on behalf of God. “If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:31, 32.

As related in 1 Samuel 13:5-7, 21, there was a time in Israel’s history when the Philistines invaded the land with 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and people as the sand of the sea. The Israelites had virtually no weapons because they had been previously conquered by the Philistines, who made sure that there were no smiths to produce swords. The only people who had swords were King Saul, his son Jonathan, and Jonathan’s armor bearer. The Israelites hid in caves, between rocks, and in mud pits. Some of them even went over to the Philistine side to save themselves.

A similar situation exists today. The world has so many things (especially media, such as hundreds of TV channels, books, magazines, movies, and the Internet) that Christians feel like hiding. No one can see them, because they are well camouflaged, hiding from or among the enemy.

But in Israel one person with a sword had an idea. Jonathan told his armor bearer, “Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.” 1 Samuel 14:6. The Philistines were above them. Jonathan said, If the Philistines come down, good; if they say, “Come up,” even better. He asked for a sign, for he wanted to fight
for the Lord. So, when the Philistines said, “Come up,” Jonathan knew what he was supposed to do.

Similarly, what would happen if we would show ourselves to the world and everyone would hand out just one pamphlet every day? That would be 108,000 pamphlets in one year and 216,000 pamphlets in two years—given directly to the people. That is a small sacrifice—like just putting one’s hand out of the cave. And if, instead of just one, we would each give out three pamphlets every day, that would be 324,000 in one year and 648,000 in two years. Extending those calculations to magazines and books produces even more wonderful results.

Often we say such things are impossible, because the message is too difficult. But that is a lie. Thousands of people believe what the Bible teaches; we just need to find them. It is obvious that people cannot be forced to be members or to stay within the church, but we need to help people to believe. Everyone is free to make his own choices; remember the prodigal son who left home but was then converted and returned.

So, let’s come out of the caves and concentrate on missionary effort. “Well,” some people say, “we have no money.” But that is also a lie. If every member would spend $1.00 per day to purchase books and pamphlets, there would be $108,000 spent in one year and $216,000 in two years—by the time of the next American Union Conference. If God is for us, who can be against us?

If we come out of the caves, we can achieve a great deal, just as happened with the Israelites after Jonathan and his armor bearer began to go forward in the name of the Lord. “Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. So the Lord saved Israel that day.” 1 Samuel 14:21-23.

A questionnaire was handed out so each person could give his suggestions to the new administration and provide information concerning his willingness to participate in missionary effort. The challenge is real; we can confront the Philistines.

Elder Henry Dering took the pulpit for the Conference closing to express his gratitude for the wonderful spirit which had prevailed during the conference. Now is the time for everyone to be motivated and use his or her talents for God. Then, when we meet again, we can share what happened after this conference. We hope to see you all at the next spiritual convocation.

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:57, 58.

The encouragement is for everyone: Look to Jesus; share the good news. Under the latter rain, many will be converted in a day. Let us pray, work, and be prepared for that day.

To all the delegates, presenters (including the many children), technicians, teachers, organizers, cooks, servers, ushers, drivers, musicians, conference attendees, and especially the heavenly visitors we extend our gratitude for the blessings received at this Conference. Thank you! May you be truly blessed wherever the great God of the universe sends you. All glory and honor be to Him now and in all eternity—where we all hope to meet very soon!—Barbara Watts, Denver, Colorado

2011 - 2012 Calendar

- September 27, 2011: First Quarter of the General Conference Missionary Training Seminar begins
- January 17, 2012: Second Quarter of the Missionary Training Seminar begins
- April 13, 2012: Missionary Seminar Field Training begins
- July 26-28, 2012: Missionary Training Seminar Graduation and Evangelistic Event (subject to change)