Changes at Portland Adventist Academy

Portland Adventist Academy (PAA) announced this week that principal Gale Crosby has accepted a new position as Oregon Conference Vice President of Education. Crosby, who has served as principal for the past 10 years, will be replacing Wayne Wentland, who is retiring in July. In a statement to PAA students and faculty, Crosby said "In my new role I will count it a blessing to continue to interact with the staff and students of PAA and will look forward to working with PAA from a little different angle." The PAA board will be starting a search for a new principal to start next school year. Read more about this at GleanerOnline.org.

Friends of Children of Walla Walla

Seventy-two Walla Walla University students are currently mentoring local kids. "Friends of Children of Walla Walla" is a local program that began 13 years ago as a way for community members to help local children. Each student involved gets matched with a local child for a caring and consistent relationship. Volunteers spend at least one hour per week with the kids. "An adult who will listen to, play with, and pay special attention to a student can be an amazing gift," says Julie Nordgren, volunteer coordinator with the program. Read more about the students involvement at WallaWalla.edu.

Montana Conference Fills Vacancy; and more.
Vacancy

Montana Conference announced that they have hired Phil Hudema to fill the position of Superintendent of Education/Youth, Communication, Health Ministries and National Serviceman’s Organization (NSO). The position was left vacant earlier this year when Archie Harris left to become Associate Superintendent of Education for the Washington Conference. Hudema and his wife, Kristie, have a college age son and an academy age daughter. Currently finishing the school year as principal of the Conejo Adventist Elementary School in Newberry Park, Calif., Hudema plans to arrive in Montana in time for camp meeting.

Health Ministries Training

Are you passionate about health ministries in your church but would like more training? The North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) health ministries is sponsoring a training symposium April 12–14 to help churches create a vibrant health ministry. The training weekend is designed to lead, build, collaborate and engage local members to share a biblical health message in their communities. For more information, contact Kristina Lopez or visit the website to register.

SAGE Nicaragua Mission Trip

Members of the Washington Conference Seniors in Action for God with Excellence (SAGE) have returned from their winter mission trip to Nicaragua. The group held evangelistic meetings in the towns of Nueva Guinea and Los Angeles as well as constructed four classrooms for a school in El Almendro. You can read about their adventures in a mission journal at WashingtonConference.org.

Church Celebrates 150th Anniversary

2013 marks the sesquicentennial, or 150th anniversary, of the founding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The world church is marking the event with a theme of "United for Mission" and has launched a website with stories of earlier first's from the churches history. This anniversary, May 20–21, marks the days delegates from all Seventh-day
Adventist congregations met and organized as a church under the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Read the stories and learn more about the early church history at Adventist.org.

Looking Ahead

March
15–17: Big Lake Snow Weekend

April
4–6: SONscreen 2013
5–6: Gays in the Family
12–14: Health Ministries Training Symposium

March
Ninety-seven percent of people who’ve never heard of Jesus live in an area of the world called the 10/40 Window, so named because it lies between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude. This month, the GLEANER looks at the work of Gospel Outreach, a Northwest ministry reaching into the 10/40 window, and the missionaries they sponsor. You don't want to miss this glimpse and an exciting mission work. Download the issue today!

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Portland Adventist Academy (PAA) principal, Gale Crosby announced that he will be joining the Oregon Conference as the Vice President of Education this summer. The PAA board will immediately start a search for a new principal to start next school year. In an official announcement Crosby said:

"I have been truly struggling with an invitation to join the Oregon Conference as the Vice President of Education (Superintendent) for this coming school year. I have made this offer a serious matter of prayer and talked many hours with my wife Sharon and with my mentors and close friends. The truth is, how does one move on from their dream job with their dream team of teachers and students who are such a joy to work with each and every day. The teachers and students of PAA inspire me daily to 'bring my very best.'"

Crosby will be replacing Wayne Wentland, current Oregon Conference Vice President of Education, who is retiring in July.
Walla Walla University Students Mentor Local Children

Friends of Children of Walla Walla

By: Hilary Nieland

The Friends of Children of Walla Walla is a program that began 13 years ago as a way for community members to help local children. The program matches adult volunteers to children in order for them to form a caring and consistent friendship. The volunteers take the children into the community to do an activity together for one hour per week.

Five years ago a similar program, ABC, began at Davis Elementary School in College Place. In this program, volunteers visit students once a week during their lunch and recess.

Many WWU students participate in the program. Currently there are 72 WWU students and 4 faculty and staff members regularly volunteering at Davis Elementary.

Walla Walla University 2011 graduate, Julie Nordgren, is a member of the Blue Mountain Action Council AmeriCorps team and serves in the office of the Friends program and as the volunteer coordinator and recruiter for the ABC program at Davis Elementary. "An adult who will listen to, play with, and pay special attention to a student can be an amazing gift," says Nordgren

The Friends program can make an enormous impact on children. More than 30 percent of parents of children with mentors reported that their children’s self-confidence and ability to make decisions increased, and more than 50 percent reported improvement in academic performance. Other benefits to the program include the children being more likely to attend college, less likely to be physically aggressive, and less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.

Nordgren has finished recruiting for the ABC program this year, but the community-based program, Friends of Children of Walla Walla is currently accepting applications. To get involved follow the link below and download the application.

Links:

www.wallawallafriends.org

<- Back to: News
SAGE Mission Reports from Nicaragua

SAGE Ministries sent 26 volunteers in two groups on a Maranatha mission trip to Nicaragua in late January and early February. They led out in two evangelistic meetings in Nueva Guinea and Los Angeles, and constructed four classrooms in El Almendro.

January 18, 2013 - Finding a translator
by Ruth and Ed MacKenzie

Last night was our first meeting. Almost no one speaks English here so it has been hard to find translators. Seth’s (an almost 18 year old student who is being mentored by a SAGE member) translator arrived at the hotel about 10 minutes before they had to go to their meeting. He wasn't dressed for a church meeting. Maybe he didn't know he was to translate in a church. He had on work clothes with paint on them. He said he was not even a Christian but that would not really matter if he was willing to try to do the translation. He didn't even know what the word sin meant. Poor Seth had quite a struggle trying to get through his lecture. The guy said he was busy tonight so until Carlos (a Maranatha representative) gets back tomorrow they don't have a translator for tonight.

Our translator also is not a church member, but he is really trying hard. His vocabulary is also very limited but he really wants to do it. We bought him a shirt since he only had one dress shirt. There was no microphone and his voice is soft. One of the members is going to try to get an amp and mic for tonight.

Sabbath there were only about 15 or 20 people at the church. We were told that there were 5 families in this church, only 3 men. It is a very rocky rough road out to the Los Angeles Village. We were told that 120 families live in this village. We arrived a little late since the power had been off most of the day and our translator didn't get to review the message much. But praise God, when we got there the church was full. There were nine rows of nine chairs plus several small chairs for kids and several standing at the back door and at the windows. We pray that the attendance will stay good.

January 23, 2013 - Mother duck
by Amber Jurgensen

Hello from Nueva Guinea! We are having a most interesting time here. And the main stuff hasn’t even started. We traveled on Wednesday and Thursday (with grocery shopping in Managua on Thursday morning). Fascinating trip. Saw the school site on the way to Nueva Guinea. It looks really good. The pastor happened to be there (he has 8 churches and 12 companies) and it was great to meet him.

Friday was more food shopping (veggies and fruit, etc.) and setting up the kitchen. Fascinating to see some of Nueva Guinea. Howard preached for the church service today in Nueva Guinea, and did a great job. Carlos (our Maranatha representative) interpreted for him and was equally great. Ed preached at Los Angeles and that went well, also. Seth will preach here in Nueva Guinea tomorrow night. He’s been busy working on sermons. Today, Sabbath, filled up even though no meeting tonight. The people are indeed so sweet and happy to have us here.

Carlos is most amazing for his age, I think. It cracks me up, because we all seem to need him at once, particularly the first few days, and follow him places, etc., and it reminds me of a mother duck with her ducklings. He has learned to deal with pressure from many people and be cheerful and calm about it.

We have also had the pleasure of hearing about various other SAGE mission trips at meals! The stories never end! It is neat to hear how much people have enjoyed their trips, in addition to what has been accomplished and some amazing stories.

January 29, 2013 - Seeing God at work
by Howard Brenton
SAGE representatives stand outside Colegio Adventist of Nicaragua in Nueva Guinea.

It is interesting to see that weather predictions here are no better than they are at home. Instead of no rain there have been occasional showers. They haven't caught us outside yet and they are mostly short. The weather is warm and very humid.

My computer inherited a glitch that has defied the best efforts of our computer tech-in-residence, Seth. It seems to be getting better though. Earlier, I couldn't get on the internet at all due to the computer entering additional letters when I entered my user name and password. I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to edit my presentations, but now I should be able to.

I asked our translator to come early so we could go over the presentation and I could explain the meaning of the words he didn't understand. I went through my presentation with Seth's translator and we agreed on meanings. At the meeting Seth's translator did fine. Seth's translator even notified a friend to come and translate for Berta's children's program.

It is clear to all of us that our dear God is caring for our needs and we need not get upset. It is such a blessing to be in His service.

January 29, 2013 - They are happy, We are happy
by Ruth and Ed MacKenzie

SAGE is working with young translators who are eager to help and learn more about Jesus.

Last night was a BIG difference. We had a mic so that the people could hear above the hum and fuss of the children. Ed and Seth went shopping for shirts. They gave one to each of the translators. They were happy.

Our translator is so excited about getting to be our translator. He said he wants to be baptized. Last night he said his mom had wished...
that he would be a preacher. Now she is happy that he is being our translator. I want to find out a little more about her. His parents were recently divorced. He and two of his siblings live with his mom. He is 20 yrs old.

Our attendance was down a little bit but we still had a good group.

Sunday we had no power most of the day and yesterday no water until after meeting. But we are happy. The rest of our group is to arrive this afternoon so please pray for their safety.

January 29, 2013 - The troops arrived
by Amber Jurgensen

Well, the troops arrived today!! Pretty neat to see the bus pull up, around 3pm, maybe a bit earlier. It is quite a crew. Things will really be hopping! Virginia had a nice meal waiting for them.

Sunday evening was Seth’s first presentation. He did a good job. It was challenging because the translator was limited in his English and showed up just 10 minutes before we had to go to the church, so they got little practice.

The translator, Neffy, didn’t have any Christian background and didn’t even know what sin is. That was a stumper right towards the beginning of the presentation. When Seth first explained that it was doing wrong things, it still didn’t make sense to him. But we had realized pretty quickly that the interpreter didn’t really know what he was getting into, and we wanted it to be a positive experience for him. I told him it was fine to ask Seth for clarification (didn’t use that word!) even when up front, which he did. It took a long time to get through the program!

The second night, Monday night, Howard had the same interpreter (Howard and Seth are taking turns—Howard is a wonderful mentor to Seth). Howard had asked Neffy to come a couple hours early so they could go through the presentation, which helped a lot. Howard spent a lot of time patiently (as you probably can imagine Howard doing) teaching Neffy the words.

Neffy also showed up looking more dressed for the occasion. Seth said he complimented Neffy on his shirt and Neffy seemed pleased and said it was his only dress shirt. Seth had walked to town Sunday with Ed and purchased a dress shirt for himself, but discovered later it was too small. So after the meeting, Seth brought Neffy to the hotel to see if it would fit him and it did. Neffy was really happy and that made Seth happy.

Tonight Arlene from SAGE interpreted for Seth. It was really nice to have her. This was because Carlos (who returned with the troops) is not feeling well—was quite sick yesterday--and needed some rest.

The attendance at the meeting tonight here in Nueva Guinea had around the same attendance as last night, as far as I could tell. There were plenty of kids to keep Berta busy. She has a Bible story for them and a toy, and they just love that.

One of my favorite things so far is hearing the people sing at church. It is a Maranatha One-Day Church. They sing their hearts out and it is so lovely! Very moving. I have had laryngitis so it is killing me not to be able to sing. They have this wonderful system that must be a blessing to many small congregations, of recorded accompaniment with pictures and words projected on a screen. Ed said their church has the same thing. Anyway, I think they have earned the right to say that Spanish is the language of heaven.

The “troops” arrived on a good day — we have both power and water. Sunday the entire town was out of power from sometime in the night till around 4 pm maybe. The speakers were getting pretty concerned because they couldn’t run their computers much to edit their presentations or go over them, as batteries couldn’t be charged. The kitchen fridge didn’t have power. It doesn’t make any difference in water temp, and the water still runs when the power is out so that is nice.

The people here are so sweet and appreciative of any attention given them, both kids and adults, it seems.

Howard and Berta’s computer has been having troubles with the letters not typing the correct thing so they could hardly use it. I think this started Sunday. He tried all kinds of things to fix it and nothing was working so we just keep praying for that computer. It has gradually started to heal! We say he needs to just keep dipping in the Jordan River. : ) Gradually fewer and fewer keys are misbehaving and he is able to use it. We are still praying for its full recovery. It is really no small thing as he needs it for the meetings.

February 4, 2013 - The days are filled with good things
by Amber Jurgensen
SAGE stayed in this hotel in Nicaragua.

It has been so busy and the nights are fairly short. The days are filled with good things!

The evangelistic meetings have been going well at both locations. I know Ed and Ruth are enjoying their meetings at Los Angeles, and their young interpreter is learning about God. Pretty neat. He comes in the afternoon each day to go over the presentations with Ed and Ruth, as he needs the practice. He also gets to hear each message two times that way!

The meetings here at Nueva Guinea are going well, also. Howard and Seth are presenting and Carlos has been able to interpret for them for a while. He is a fantastic interpreter. Berta has an interpreter for telling a Bible story to the kids, and it keeps Carlos hopping to get an interpreter to show up reliably for that. Berta has been very patient! Tonight I counted 86 bodies in the kids’ meeting, with more running around outside. She gave out bouncy balls afterwards and I wasn’t sure she was going to get out in one piece. :)

Some of the people at the church here decided to give Seth a birthday surprise today (he is now 18) before the meeting, and we were requested to arrive early. It was really special. They gathered in the building next to the church where the kids are meeting. They had a piñata for Seth, and blindfolded him. They served yummy sandwiches, and really good punch out of a bucket. (We are really hoping not to get sick, being as how we bleach everything here.) Then we went into the church and a man and lady sang a lovely duet in English for Seth. Gorgeous voices. Then they sang another song in Spanish for him.

The medical clinic is going out again tomorrow to a new location. They are expected to have a good turnout. Seth was able to join them on their last clinic. I guess the day seemed pretty normal to all of the seasoned, but the stories that Seth told me were really fascinating to me (and him). Doc Van even involved Seth in removing a cyst from a young lady’s mouth.

The building of the school is going well. Coming along very nicely. The guys are slaving away in the hot sun. (Those are my words, not theirs.) The four buildings are up, roofs on, I think. I believe they are working on windows and more. I am the wrong person to report on this, so hopefully you will get more info elsewhere. Mike stayed back today to buy paint (for the church), which was successfully delivered already. They weren’t sure if the paint would be in stock, so needed to check it out today.

**February 5, 2013 - Decisions for Jesus**

by Howard Brenton
Last night I presented the sermon about baptism. I didn't know how many non-Adventists might be coming to our meetings, but one of the elders in the church told us that about one-third of the people attending are not church members. Seth sat in the back of the church, because, "they wouldn't let me sit in front." That comment came after a birthday party the church threw for him with even a pinata. Amber said that Seth was blindfolded for the pinata slugout. The girls are very taken by Seth.

Back to the baptism presentation, Ed had decision cards that he shared with me that were passed out. From his vantage point in the back of the church, Seth counted 60 people in church. Berta is the real evangelist. She had over 80 children and moms in her room. When the decision cards came back, we had three requests for baptism and two for rebaptism. I am thrilled. Ed will be making his baptism presentation later this week.

The work on the school is moving right along. Al is planning on a dedication service on Sabbath. The evangelistic team will likely miss it. Berta asked Carlos about going back to Managua via the school site, so we can see the finished product.

The medical team is seeing patients in a variety of locations. Seth is with them for the second time today. He was able to assist in a minor surgery of a cyst in a woman's mouth on his first outing. He loved it. Dr. Van is a wonderfully personable man and we all love him. What a blessing it is to be on SAGE projects and work with precious people that love Jesus.

Our hotel, while not having plush accommodations, is kept very clean. Our linens are changed every day. The floors throughout the facility are swept and mopped every day. The management people are friendly and respond to our requests very well. There are still, however, some rooms without shower water warmers (I can't call them heaters).

Ed is our "hunter-gatherer" as I called him this morning. He almost daily responds to Virginia's requests for supplies. We joined him yesterday and had to get a taxi to lug everything back. Ed is very cost/quality conscious. He's a great asset, as are all of the dear folks. It's wonderful to be a SAGER!

**February 6, 2013 - Busy serving people**

by Ruth MacKenzie
We have been very busy the last few days. We have had three days of clinic. We saw over 100 people yesterday at the new Maranatha college/high school building. I think classes will start in this building near the end of this month. We ran out of the supplies we had taken over so we had to tell people to come back on Thursday.

We went over at about 8:30 to get set up. We could not get in to the building for a while. We started registering people anyway and we finally got into a classroom. We gave a lot of worm meds away.

Monday, Dr. Smith gave the health talk at our church for me on worms.

Pray especially for the children. The devil seems to make them very disruptive. There are two small boys (brothers) that are very disrespectful. They are probably about 7 & 9 yrs old. Last night they were lighting matches as the meeting was about to start. They threw one at another boy, but he jumped out of his chair in time and the lighted match landed in his plastic chair. One of the elders got after him but he just sassed the elder. We had taken the matches away from them a night or two earlier. I don't know if their parents are there or not. Please pray for them.

We (Ed, Van & I) went for a walk this morning before breakfast to do a little bird watching. It rained on us so we were pretty wet. I think it has rained some every day. When I had started the health talk last night it rained hard so I waited for a couple minutes then I needed to continue so I talked as loud as I could. It stopped shortly.

On our morning walk today we could hear a motor running so we went up a hill and there was a small rock crushing operation. Very interesting!! Van took a picture of one of the men's hands. They were working without gloves.

February 10, 2013 - Thanking God for His protection
by Ruth MacKenzie

SAGE ran a medical clinic during their mission trip to Nicaragua.

We left our hotel in Nueva Guinea at about 9 am this morning. The first two hours of driving the countryside was green. The last four hours the countryside was dry. We had a truck almost pull out in front of our bus. We thanked God that he stopped in time. The roads were pretty good. There were a few potholes and hills and curves. When we were going rather fast around a corner to the left sometimes the wheel would rub in the wheel well and we could smell burned rubber.

About an hour before we got here to Granada, we had a blowout of the right front tire. We were so very thankful that we were not speeding around a left curve. As it was, the driver had a hard time controlling the bus. There was a place to pull off the road. We prayed and thanked God for His protection. They put the spare on but it needed more air. We stopped at one service station but they had no air so we kept going not so fast. We arrived here at the Granada Hotel at about 4pm. We have internet out in the lobby. I see mosquitoes, so I am going in. More later.

February 12, 2013 - Finishing up
by Amber Jurgensen

Editorial note: By February 10, our SAGE mission group in Nicaragua completed their school building and evangelism. The following email describes their bumpy first day out on their way to some R&R.
The last week of work continued to go well. The construction team finished the school on Thursday, and was able to come back early to the hotel (a 50 min. drive from the school site). They sure looked triumphant as they marched in! Hot and tired but happy. (Frequently the water in the hotel runs out about this time and they are unable to shower. Yikes. They come back so hot.) This gave them a much needed break on Friday where they could explore the town of Nueva Guinea a bit.

Friday afternoon, the evangelistic teams and some others went to see the finished school at El Almendro. (Since the final evangelistic meetings would be on Sabbath at the Los Angeles and Nueva Guinea churches, this group would not be able to attend the Sabbath service at El Almendro and see the school then.) It was most amazing to see the school!

From four concrete pads not long ago, there are now four finished classrooms with roofs, walls, windows, and desks! The buildings are strong and attractive and even built with thought to air circulation. I love the desks; 15 per classroom. They are strong metal desks with the bench attached to each desk. They are big enough for two adults to sit easily at one desk, so two or three students could sit at one desk. And since the benches are attached to the desk, there won’t be any arguing over where the bench should be, or noise scooting it around. Very helpful to the teacher! There are also positive developments regarding education permits, which you will hear about from Al. There is a lovely memorial plaque to Jan, which was moving to the group to see.

SAGE also raised money to pay for the church that sits beside the school, to have the remaining exterior walls stuccoed and painted. The construction team painted the front of the church, visible from the street (don’t picture a US street) which had already been stuccoed. This was a big and tall surface area. Mike free-handed the logo above the entry doors. The sides will now be more visible due to the school, and are bare brick. During the church service on Sabbath, Al presented the church with money for the stucco and paint, witnessed by the congregation, and videoesd by Maranatha. So the money certainly will go where intended and the people were most grateful. They are extremely grateful for the school as well.

The evangelist teams wrapped up their meetings on Sabbath. Ed and Ruth have been working with their interpreter and his family as they learn about God. Howard visited some homes on Friday of people attending the Nueva Guinea churches and there was a baptism. The people have all been so loving and friendly and excited about the meetings. It was not easy to say goodbye. I will so miss their singing. The head elder at Nueva Guinea said that around 30% of the people attending the meetings were non-members. The medical team has done health presentations at the churches as well. And the kids, well, the kids just soak up attention! One sweet 18 year old girl told me she wanted to come to the US to visit her mother-in-law. I couldn’t figure that out, and Carlos and Seth seemed uncomfortable at my confusion. Finally I realized she was referencing marrying Seth. : ) Duh!

The medical team has some very sad stories to tell, but also very moving and amazing how they are able to help people. Sometimes that is with listening, compassion, and tears, and sometimes with medical help; or both. They will have to share some of those stories with you directly. Our SAGÉ group has not experienced any major sicknesses on this trip, for which we are very grateful. And the medical team has been on top of anything that has needed attention among us.

The power went out at the hotel while we were making our last Sabbath lunch. Since the stove is propane, that was OK. However, it was still out at suppertime and we prepared and ate supper by flashlight and a couple small candles we were able to beg from the front desk. Cleanup was more challenging, as we also needed to be packing up the kitchen. However, the power came on at 8 pm (and the water in our rooms went out!)

We left Nueva Guinea yesterday. Our hotel was run by a father and mother in their 50s, and daughter and son-in-law. The father was not involved with us but the other three were, and provided everything we needed that they were able. The SAGE group must have made an impression. To my surprise, the three of them came out and watched as we prepared to leave. The mother was tearful. We thanked them again and gave hugs and they watched as we made a circle for prayer and sang before leaving.

We have a special thanks for traveling protection. We were traveling north yesterday by bus and van when the bus blew the right front tire. We were on a straight stretch going at full speed, and it immediately wanted to veer off the road, into the sloping ditch. We feared it would roll. The driver struggled to keep it on the road and slow down as it pulled right, and successfully brought it to a stop. Al immediately offered a prayer of Thanksgiving. We were grateful that it did not happen on a curve, or downhill, where the driver most likely would not have been able to control it. And that it was not the front left tire, which would have pulled us toward oncoming traffic. Carlos called the van and it returned, and while counting our blessings we enjoyed egg salad sandwiches.

We are in Grenada now, and this afternoon the plan was to visit a pottery shop. Ken knew of a man who makes pottery and helps support the ICC orphanage up north by selling pottery at a discount to the director. She, then, sells it at profit to gain money for the orphanage. Ken had a photo of the man working, but we didn’t know just where he was located. Our driver drove us some distance out of town to an area with many small shops. The driver stopped and asked Ken for the picture. Ken gave it to him on his ipad and the driver hopped out and went over to some people standing at a corner. He came back with a young boy, who recognized the man in the picture as his uncle! The boy got in the bus with us and directed the driver down winding and narrow streets that I had no idea how he would get out of. We finally arrived at a humble dwelling, and outside was the man in the picture, with a relative working on pottery! We got to watch the one man make pieces with the most humble of tools while the man in the picture told all about it, and then support him with purchases.
It has been a wonderful trip. What an amazing group of people SAGE is! We will soon be home.

Oh, that reminds me. Ed’s translator, a young man, told Seth that watching the church members and the SAGE people has made Christianity attractive to him, because they are happy! He told Seth that people over 60 aren’t happy there. (A generalization, of course.) Now he sees through the local church members and SAGE team the happiness that God brings, and the difference the health message makes in people’s health, and how much people of SAGE age can accomplish!

We said goodbye to Carlos today, our Maranatha guide to everything, and translator for the Nueva Guinea meetings. Keep him in your prayers. He would love to be an evangelist and sure has the ability. We all think he is an amazing young man and want God to lead in his life.
UNITED FOR MISSION: ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS

From Great Disappointment to General Conference

The Millerites firmly believed that Jesus Christ's "second advent" (His second coming to earth) would occur on October 22, 1844. When His second coming did not take place, many Millerites were disillusioned and gave up belief in a literal second advent; but others went back to studying the scriptures.

Over the next 15 years, former Millerites, meeting in a sequence of "Bible conferences", identified a series of Bible truths forgotten since the days of the early Church. The key beliefs they adopted were:

1. That Christ's second coming is imminent and will be literal, not metaphorical, seen by all the world
2. That the seventh day, Saturday, not Sunday, is God's Sabbath and the obligation to keep it is perpetual
3. That God does not eternally torment sinners, but rather that the dead "sleep" until the second coming and last judgment
4. That Christ ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, thereby mediating to us the benefits of His death on the cross, saving us by His righteousness, not our own deeds
5. That in the last days Christians will be tempted by apostasy, but will be called back to divine truth — the "third angel's message" of Revelation 14 — by a small "remnant" of faithful believers
6. That the remnant would be marked by a recurrence of the prophetic ministry

In all this, they were guided by a young woman, Ellen G. White, who, further to their sixth belief, they recognized as a prophet, inspired by God.
These beliefs emerged gradually. In the 1850s there was no Seventh-day Adventist Church — only small groups scattered across the northern United States, who had these beliefs in common but who did not even have a name for themselves, though some, like James White, identified themselves as belonging to "the Great Second Advent Movement", while others used the term "sabbatarian adventist."

Eventually, however, inspired by Christ’s great commission to "Go and make disciples", the seventh-day sabbatarian adventists recognized that they needed to organize, so they could more effectively and more widely proclaim the third angel's message. A vital step was taken by a gathering of delegates from across the northern United States on October 1, 1860, who agreed to "take the name Seventh-day Adventist." Then, on May 20 and 21, 1863, at a further meeting, delegates from all those American states with Seventh-day Adventist congregations formed the "General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists" — an organized church, focused on mission and on proclaiming the good news of a God who created us, lived among us, died for us, and redeems us.

**Drawing inspiration from our pioneers**

Because our image of the founders of our church is largely shaped by photographs of middle-aged men, we often do not realize how diverse they were — in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

During the formative years of the movement, its leaders were mostly young, in their late teens, 20s and 30s. At the time of the Great Disappointment of 1844, James White was 23; Ellen White and Annie Smith were 16; John N. Andrews was 15, and Minerva Loughborough not quite 15. Uriah Smith and John N. Loughborough (brothers of Annie and Minerva) were only 13, and George I. Butler was just 10.

Yet it was these young men and women, aided by elder statesmen like Joseph Bates (who in 1844 was aged 52), who took the lead in the Bible conferences of the late 1840s and the 1850s, during which the beliefs of what became the Seventh-day Adventist Church were discussed, debated and agreed. It was they who published a series of pamphlets, persuasively setting out the new beliefs, as well as a magazine, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (today's *Adventist Review*), which connected all the widely scattered believers together, and without which the church would never have been founded. It was they who led the efforts to transform a network of small groups of believers into an organization that would unite all Seventh-day Adventists and provide a basis for mission. Most of the youngsters of the 1850s provided leadership to the church into the 1880s and some into the twentieth century.
Although only men attended the original General Conference Session in 1863, among the first members of the newly created church, women were prominent. In addition to Ellen White, there were Minerva Chapman (née Loughborough), a key figure in the early publishing work who later became Treasurer of the General Conference; Maud Sisley Boyd, who became a pioneer missionary to Europe, South Africa and Australia; and Nellie Druillard (née Rankin), who became a pioneer missionary to Africa and an influential educator and health reformer. Also among those first members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863 were the Hardys, a prominent African-American family.

Today we see pictures of our pioneers in later life, their faces creased by the strain of lives struggling against overwhelming odds. It is easy to forget that they created our church when they were still in their 20s and 30s — easy, too, to forget that, although Adventists did not ordain women to gospel ministry, they accorded women important roles in leadership. And it is too little known that not only were most of the believers in the 1850s fervent abolitionists, but also that, in the late nineteenth century, when blacks and Chinese were being relegated to second-class citizens across the United States, Seventh-day Adventists ordained them to the ministry and entrusted important mission work to them.
American society of the time did not place much value on youth and marginalized women and ethnic minorities. Further, Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were unpopular among religious scholars. Whence came the boldness to defy both social conventions and the general consensus of leading theologians? Seventh-day Adventists were inspired by love for Jesus and conviction that He was coming soon, by confidence in divine prophecies, and by belief that the Spirit of Prophecy was manifested in Ellen White. They were, in consequence, willing to dare anything. While it took them until 1874 to realize that fulfilling the Great Commission meant they had to send missionaries overseas, they swiftly thereafter became committed to worldwide mission. They sought to reform not only theology, but also lifestyle, promoting radical health reforms and prioritizing education. They preached prophetic truths, but also wanted to make men and women whole in the here and now. To this end, during the denomination’s first half century Adventists worked in big cities and among people of all languages and social classes, inspired by the example of Jesus, Who, as Ellen White stressed, "mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ’Follow Me.’" (Ministry of Healing, p. 143).

As we mark 150 years of Seventh-day Adventists being united for mission, there is more need than ever for Adventist men and women of all ages, and all ethnic and social backgrounds, to follow the example of our founders. Founded in love for our Savior and His love for sinners, we need to proclaim Christ and Him crucified, His longing that men and women be whole, and His desire that we "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).
After 150 years

Our 150th anniversary is not a time for parties or celebration — those who founded the General Conference in May 1863 would have undoubtedly been deeply disappointed to know that their descendants would still be on earth in 2013. This important anniversary is rather a time for reflection; for repentance; for thanksgiving; and for renewed commitment to the purpose for which God called this movement into being.

The worldwide church has designated Sabbath May 18, 2013, as a day of prayer, remembrance, and recommitment to mission. Each local congregation is encouraged to find appropriate ways to mark the "sesquicentennial" of Seventh-day Adventists being united for mission, including a focus on their local church history. Throughout our 150th year, individual Seventh-day Adventists can also be inspired by our history.

This important anniversary should prompt us to reflect on how God has led His remnant church "and His teaching in our past history" (Life Sketches, 196). We should both thank Him for miraculous leading — and reflect on what we have done, and not done, that grieves our God, and repent. It is a good time to commit ourselves, both individually and corporately, not just to "a revival but [to] a reformation", as Ellen White urged (R&H, July 15, 1902, p. 7). It is time to pledge ourselves anew to preaching "the everlasting gospel ... to every nation, tribe, tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6).

As we reflect on 150 years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is time to recommit ourselves to the prophetic destiny of the Great Second Advent Movement.