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TOOLS OF CHAPLAINCY

PERSPECTIVE

By Mario E. Ceballos, D.Min., BCC

Director/Endorser, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference

Tools. What is a tool? Merriam-Webster gives the definition as “something (such as an instrument or apparatus) used in performing an operation or necessary in the practice of a vocation or profession, [e.g.] a scholar’s books are his tools.”¹

How do we translate this concept into the chaplaincy profession? In providing ministry to people of all walks of life, a chaplain may find her/himself in complex environments and cultures that require skills to bridge gaps between spiritual and life events of people.

Chaplains need to have tools that equip them to provide “spiritual care” to those they are caring for. Some of the skills and tools to accomplish their work are acquired during ministerial training, and additional professional training such as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

The first tool for the Christian chaplain should be the Bible. Why? As chaplains, we provide spiritual care in a variety of ways. We are asked to deliver prayers, conduct devotionals, burials on land and at sea, along with various other religious/spiritual acts and rituals. Knowing how to use the Word of God to inspire the listener and in a therapeutic manner is essential. Extracting out of the biblical narrative a story and/or lesson that can be a guide or an inspiration requires skills learned or enhanced during seminary studies by spending time in studying the Bible and other aids such as Bible concordances, commentaries, inspired books, and articles with guidance from the university Bible scholars. Chaplains need to be firmly founded in their own beliefs and relationship with God. Still, they also need to understand

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CHAPLAINS NEED TO BE FIRMLY FOUNDED IN THEIR OWN BELIEFS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. STILL, THEY ALSO NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THE BELIEFS OF THOSE THEY ARE MINISTERING TO WITH PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION FOR GOD'S WISDOM.

and know the beliefs of those they are ministering to with prayer and supplication for God's wisdom.

A second tool is the use of your ears to actively listen. *“Active listening involves empathy—the ability to set aside personal thoughts, feelings, and agendas to enter into another person’s world. Such listening enables one to see other people’s concerns from their perspectives. Pastors with strong personalities or those whose focus is on something else, find this especially difficult. Compassionate, active listening can be foreign to pastors, too, because they sometimes have not often themselves been recipients of good listening. To be a good pastor and minister to the flock, one needs to learn how to listen and listen actively.”*²

Active listening is used to provide spiritual care when the chaplain hears

and helps interpret or clarify the individual's condition. A listening chaplain will then be able to take what is being learned in the interaction and develop a plan of spiritual care that they or other chaplains can implement as a roadmap in spiritual caring for the individual.

The third tool is the “spiritual diagnosis.” There are several tools, but first let us understand why a spiritual diagnosis. In an article written in 1976, Paul W. Pruyser, author of the book, *The Minister as a Diagnostician*, wrote the following:

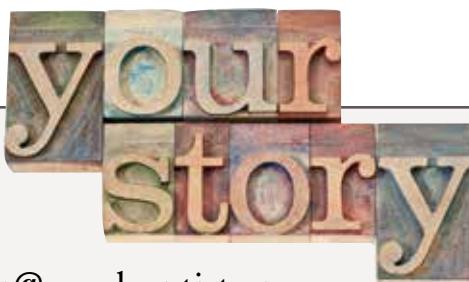
“People want to make an honest assessment of themselves and turn to the Pastor for expert help in making a diagnosis of their troubles, their foibles, their stance in life, their troublesome, or wayward selves.” The chaplain’s role

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WHAT'S

Please share what is happening with chaplaincy in your part of the world.

- Send it to ACMEEditor@gc.adventist.org
- Copy your Union and Division ACM Directors.
- Include your email and phone number.



HOLD ON A MINUTE LONGER



Over the last twenty months chaos, uncertainty, fear, grief, feelings of powerlessness, agitation, disquietude, boredom, and guilt spread around the world. As chaplains worked on the frontlines of the global pandemic, they used familiar ministry tools, but adjusted some and added others.

In a recent survey conducted by Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference, Adventist chaplains worldwide responded on how they implemented the tools of internal security, positivity, simplicity, and agility to minister to those within their sphere. In your own words, these are ways many of you have implemented each of these options.

I bought a ukulele, learned how to play it, and brought it with me to the bedside of my patients who are not responsive. I play simple, gentle little songs, and tell them “I’m just here to spend a little time in your presence.”

Trudy Dunn, Hospice, Florida

We have emphasized the slogan Serfiel, which means “Be Faithful.”

Juvenal López, Campus, Mexico

I engaged myself in offering counseling to residents of my local community regardless of their denomination, especially during this era of COVID-19. I became a COVID patient and after my recovery, I took the duty of counselling the family members of the infected patients. and utilized online check-ins with COVID patients to help them overcome depression.

Joshua Chapi, Campus, Zambia

We have created a hotline phone number as a support system to our workers.

Ronie F. Fiedacan, Health Care, Philippines

We sent instant messages from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to our students and involved them in charitable activities.

George Schiopu, Campus, Romania

Because of COVID, some facilities have limited who can see their residents—our patients. So, I taught providers how to recognize and implement spiritual needs of their residents.

David Dordevic, Hospice, California

I had an opportunity to meet with young people within the university to have Bible studies together with their non-Adventist friends. We created awareness with church members on how to minister to the sick and those in prisons.

Lupakisyo Mwakasweswe, Campus, Tanzania

I have been mainly using the strategy of lifestyle evangelism and friendship ministry in Nepal since it is a Hindu-dominant country.

Pukar Shrestha, Health Care, Nepal

WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THE SLOGAN SERFIEL, WHICH MEANS “BE FAITHFUL.”

Juvenal López, Campus, Mexico

I had discussions with staff and patients about thinking positively and how to be mentally healthy amidst all that is happening around them.

Jenny LaFleur, Health Care, Guyana

INTERNAL SECURITY

Internal security is your confidence in being who God has called you to be and what you are to do in ministry. Has your internal security in your pastoral calling grown in the past 20 months?

Before COVID, my work was with people in executive positions. During COVID, I was able to reach persons I would not normally be exposed to while working directly with the organization.

Gary Buddoo-Fletcher, Law Enforcement, Jamaica

I'll admit to hitting a wall early in the pandemic. The stress was great, the anxiety even greater. I didn't love what I was doing anymore. I couldn't handle the heartbreak I encountered at the drive-by food pantry each week. And that's when my mentor reminded me to "focus on doing what you love." I wrestled with that at the beginning. Yet, I listened to that advice and the more I leaned in, the healthier my spirit became for the "hard" tasks at hand.

Linda Biswas, Campus, California

We have been able to maintain the mission. We always say, "The Mission is not in the quarantine."

Patricia Hernandez, Campus, Chile

POSITIVITY

The future is uncertain. Using positivity sets the tone for ministry and relationships. What reactions have you recognized from using positivity in your ministry?

For me it has been not losing focus on the mission at hand. How the Lord has brought us to where

I held separate breakfast sessions for men, ladies, and also joint sessions. This allowed them to tackle specific issues for either gender or together.

Sarah Mirti, Campus, Central Rift Valley Conference

It looks like a storm swept through my soul and now it's the aftermath. I have chosen to see the opportunity to honor God in the devastation. It's not going to be an easy clean-up, but I will not be alone. In God's presence loneliness disappears, and that's security to me.

Santiago Fernandez, Health Care, Florida

I had doubts about my calling. But as the months went by, God showed me through the Bible, and through my family, that I was called.

Stefania Laime, Campus, Argentina

Learning to use many different platforms has helped me grow in relationships and unity.

Johan Herrera, Campus, Dominican Republic

I see growth in my pastoral calling when I address a series of crises that I was previously afraid to attend to.

Lester Noguera, Campus, Costa Rica

we are currently serving, has been just the way He has always done it. Therefore, trusting in God's leading

PUSHING FORWARD AND RELYING ON GOD'S POWER AND GRACE HAVE BEEN THE MAJOR STRENGTH USED IN THIS PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY.

Omotunde Idowu Mary, Campus Nigeria

even in uncertainty has always been what I have witnessed God doing in my life and that of my little flock at home. Staying motivated with God truly becomes visible and contagious unto others. So, smile, because we are closer to our heavenly journey than ever before.

Joe Arellano, Military, U. S. Navy

As a Chaplain I have no control of the future, but God has, and it is the confidence in God that gives stability. I am not a fixer. I am here to serve with empathy and compassion.

Neive George, Health Care, Trinidad and Tobago

The pandemic has brought a lot of negative burdens on people. I have been trying to reaffirm optimistic perspectives for the future and this seems to give them strength to move forward.

Erick Lima, Campus Chaplain, Brazil

Positivity motivated people I lead to renew their strength and increased their faith in God amid the current challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, economic difficulties, and others.

Baraka Ngussa, Campus, Tanzania

I balance positivity with engaging with the realities of clients lives. This balance, the client being able to express an honest view of their life and situation, and looking for spiritual

connection in the midst of the storms, usually brings peace and motivation to face what is ahead.

Campbell Page, Campus, Canada

My clients expressing more freely the comfort that "God is still in charge."

Lynn Gatz, Hospice, Pennsylvania

It has created confidence among the people I am taking care of. It has also enabled more to come to me for support in the journey of Christianity. More so it has enabled people to recognize me as true servant of God who is more positive and this has created belief in my ministry.

Masereka Jeofry, Campus, Uganda

I have noticed that when I have incorporated positivity into my ministerial context, individuals open up about their personal struggles.

Maurice Mitchell, Health Care, Maryland

Positivity helps me cope with evil powers pressing in on my ministry and trusting Jesus more.

Sean Facchinello, Corrections, Texas

Pushing forward and relying on God's power and grace have been the major strength used in this period of uncertainty.

Omotunde Idowu Mary, Campus Nigeria

FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT. DON'T WASTE TIME WITH NEGATIVES. PUT ENERGY INTO SHORT-TERM PROJECTS. ORGANIZATION IN LONG-TERM PROJECTS.

Fedra Pérez, Campus, Argentina

SIMPLICITY

How has simplifying ministry increased your chaplaincy effectiveness? How has it affected your personal life?

Seeking simplicity has been a challenge with the demands on my time but I have exercised some of the following: 1. Make sure the main thing stays the main thing. I concentrate on one thing at a time making that the main thing at the time. 2. I set aside time for personal growth and study or else it gets crowded out. 3. I also have set aside some time to just rest and let my mind relax and refresh. This has done wonders for me to help keep things simple.

Buell Fogg, Campus, Nebraska

I have found that these three basic questions have become very important in my ministry How are you? How are you coping? How is your family doing?

David Ferraro, Health Care, Florida

Dealing with one issue at a time. Recognizing my own vulnerabilities and boundaries.

Élie Brown Buhire, Health Care, Guadeloupe

Focus on what's important. Don't waste time with negatives. Put energy into short-term projects. Organization in long-term projects.

Fedra Pérez, Campus, Argentina

Less words and more actions toward the objective.

Joel Pascuas Dussan, Health Care, Colombia

The world is still experiencing the pandemic through COVID-19 and lives are no longer safe due to sudden change in human culture. The tool of agility has helped me to be able to understand the new culture of care practices and to quickly catch up with the culture. I now triage between the necessary and the most important. The tool of agility has also helped me implement emotional intelligence skills to direct leadership, influence care, and foster preparedness toward optimal and expected positive outcomes.

Sunday Adelakin, Health Care, Texas

The way I simplified my ministry is to listen to God and allow Him to lead.

Carol White, Health Care, Texas

Team ministry with my wife has proved helpful.

Hakim Yakubu, Health Care, Ghana

Simple things connect with greater value of humanity.

Martin Gwsira, Corrections, California

Take one step at a time and live within its fullness and its uniqueness.
Luis García, Health Care, California

During “Blessing of the Hands” I provided it to 400+ nurses without the chaplain team, because that’s what COVID restrictions required.

Michael Tomlinson, Military, U. S. Navy

Delegating duties to others is one way that the work has been lessened. Through this many have gained confidence before their colleagues and have learned leadership skills.

Cyrus Nyakundi, Katikamu, Campus, Uganda

I started going back to the Bible, reading full chapters for moments of worship instead of just using someone else’s view or writings.

Tassio Canhadas, Campus, Brazil

Simplified ministry motivates me to minister to anyone in crisis.
Victoria Aja, Campus, Philippines

God is really smart. Knowing that has strengthened me personally.
Linda P. Walton, Campus, Utah

The ability to recognize that when people are in crisis mode often the simplest type of ministry can be the most impactful. Such as when I sit with a loved one mostly quietly in the Emergency Room after their loved one passed away tragically. Then, I see the individual weeks or months later and they tell me just how much I helped them in that moment even though my presence of concern and compassion was really all I gave them in that moment. Simplicity won the day.

Kelvin Thompson, Health Care, Ohio

AGILITY

Be agile, but not aimless in your ministry. Flexibility is important in situations that are rapidly changing. How have you implemented the tool of agility in ministry as the world continues to change?

Through technology, I’ve been able to give more attention in less time.

Yilson Romero, Campus, Venezuela

Since the situation did not change, I had to change myself. That actually led to my growth.

Nozomu Obara, Campus, Japan

Reaching out to many, not waiting for them to come to me.

Chukwuemeka Abaribe, Campus, Babcock University, Nigeria

Trying to question the old thought: ‘we always did it the same way.’ I think in South America we are trying to reach people who no longer exists.

Fabricio Kos Campus, Argentina

I believe that the pastor who stops adapting ends up, sooner or later, being routine. One must find people where they are and adapt strategies to that. The focus should not be my comfort but to carry the message, to make the Chaplaincy a true Ministry.

Jimena Valenzuela, Campus, Argentina

COVID made a change agent out of me. I had to move to Zoom, and phone to stay in touch with people. This helped me understand that people are the most important part of my ministry.

James Hall, Military, U.S. Army

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PEOPLE FIRST, MISSION LIMITLESS

By Chaplain, Major, Lane F. Campbell,
United States Air Force



Students were required to eat in their dorms in a solitary manner. Squadron social activities were canceled, gym use was prohibited, and travel outside of the campus was forbidden.

The military approaches a ‘mission first’ paradigm. Recently, I read an article from Lt. Col. Brandon J. Daigle, a retired military professional who had a paradigm shift towards the end of his 24-year career. This line-officer now concluded after commanding the largest joint Squadron in the Joint Special Operations Command, “People First, Mission Limitless” was a better approach for leaders to have.

The immediate stop for training at the United States Air Force (USAF) Academy in March 2020 due to COVID-19 catapulted the Superintendent’s decision to send all lower three classes home and retain only seniors or “Firsties” on the campus. There was one mission goal for all of us to achieve—graduate the class of 2020 and keep them healthy. As we all experienced in our professional and personal lives, COVID-19 caused an instant change in our lives. An immediate vector for Catholic, Protestant, LDS, Islam, and Buddhist faith-specific services was needed, as well as providing spiritual care. However, a “tactical pause” was implemented on campus to take a few days to allow for a transition from classroom instruction to online learning. The dining facility transitioned to take-out services only.

Students were required to eat in their dorms in a solitary manner. Squadron social activities were canceled, gym use was prohibited, and travel outside of the campus was forbidden. Only mission essential (ME) personnel were allowed with the students. Chaplains are considered ME. Life changed drastically and quickly as liberties were limited, all in the hopes of keeping cadets free from COVID-19 and getting them to their May 28 graduation date.

Tragically, on the morning of Thursday, March 26, one of the cadets was missing, and his former roommate checked in on him. Unfortunately, his friend found that the cadet had taken his own life. The campus family was devastated and especially his assigned squadron members. Why would someone who had put so much into their life choose to take it just two months before graduation? Although I was not the assigned chaplain to this squadron (one of the forty on campus), my wife and I sponsor a student from it. Thinking of those odds, I quickly realized that I needed to be there for our cadet and her fellow squadron members I had come to know through our sponsorship.

Dreadfully, two mornings later, on Saturday, another cadet was also tragically found deceased. Again, the

chapels, and members of the Crisis Action Team (mental health, chaplain, MFLC), met the immediate need and concern with professional chaplain care to cadets, first responders, faculty, and staff. As in so many causes of suicide, alcohol was the contributing factor in both cases.

By Monday morning, the Chief Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, and the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) were on campus visiting with students, faculty, staff, and permanent party members. During the afternoon session, twenty individuals, including members from the Crisis Action Team (CAT) commanders, a couple of professors, and about ten students, shared their perspectives with the SECAF. I participated in the meeting as a chaplain and as a CAT member. My words to the SECAF were simple. I told her she should expect to hear these words from a chaplain: "Everything we are dealing with here—stress, change, challenge, pain, hurt, and loss due to COVID-19 measures and the aftermath of these two suicides—all have deep spiritual foundations . . . The challenge we have right now is that there are not enough chaplains or mental health professionals embedded with the cadets and permanent party members here at the USAF Academy during this unprecedented time." The professors in the room suggested an earlier date for graduation. And commanders asked for more embedded mental health and chaplain support in their squadrons, especially for the first responders to both tragic events.

The next day, based on the previous day's discussion, it was decided to bring in five more Air Force chaplains from nearby bases (Wyoming,

Colorado, and Kansas). Chaplains and mental health professionals were embedded in all forty squadrons daily. Also, leadership announced an earlier graduation date of April 18.

The spiritual care to cadets was now given high priority from CSAF, and it became our primary concern. While the nation shut down, our chapel teams traveled uncongested roads daily, were on-site for our shifts, and were the only helping agencies unrestricted on campus with access to cadets to strengthen the physical, spiritual, and emotional resiliency of our future 2nd Lieutenants.

What exactly does "People First, Mission Limitless" really mean? Ultimately, these decisions from Headquarters Air Force signified a shift in thinking to where mission needs to be understood in the formation of building relationships, and that is precisely what we did.

I checked in on squadron members from my newly assigned squadrons continuously. The Crisis Action Team implemented unit visitations, and care was properly given and available 24/7. The tools utilized to accomplish the People First model were simple. We used human interaction and presence. This order was acted upon by additional hours greeting cadets at the dining facility during breakfast, lunch, and dinner as they entered and departed with 'to go' boxes. Chaplains were assigned two specific squadrons and spent hours walking halls, moving from dormitory room to dormitory room. They interacted with and visited cadets in their spaces. I doubt that at any other time in Academy history, more chaplains saw cadet dorm rooms than we did that Spring.

Certain restrictions were eventually lifted to build morale. Cadets could use the outside athletic areas, and

Ultimately, these decisions from Headquarters Air Force signified a shift in thinking to where mission needs to be understood in the formation of building relationships, and that is precisely what we did.

squadron BBQs were allowed. It was first believed that Vice President Michael Pence would address the students virtually, but he made the trip and personally arrived on campus to deliver the commencement address for the USAF Academy Class of 2020. There were no positive COVID-19 cadets. Social distancing of eight feet was in place during the graduation ceremony, and we successfully met our mission goal—graduate the class of 2020 and keep them healthy!

When you put people first, it requires leading with character, compassion, empathy, and grace. Empathy is stepping into the shoes of others, and that is where I tried to be with each cadet. I'm not sure how a specific request came about exactly, but I assume it was because I had built relationships. I was invited to be the chaplain for the commissioning service for the squadron who lost one of their own. What a blessing it was to be present with them during this important milestone in their military career. While his colleagues recognized in word the deceased cadet, this opportunity allowed me to give these fast friends parting words as their chaplain and encourage them just before graduation. Before

delivering the invocation, I spoke about three things that revealed how proud we, the Air Force, their family/friends, and God, were of them. First, they followed God and recognized their talents and gifts at such a young age. Now they were committing to use them for service to the nation. I encouraged them to strive for excellence in all they do. To always have a desire for service to others and, most importantly, to maintain integrity as newly commissioned Air Force and Space Force officers.

As a chaplain, learning about one's life journey—the multiple layers of an individual—is meaningful ministry. Sharing hope through an unexpected death, strength in place of vulnerabilities, loss, and weaknesses was one way in which God opened the door to share His love to our cadets. While Satan destroys, God builds. God calls Seventh-day Adventist workers to be available for all types of ministries. Whether it is administration, teaching, pastoring, the local church office, or chaplaincy, share the love of God and offer others hope in the soon coming of Jesus no matter what environment God has called you to live and work in.

IVAN OMANA APPOINTED ACM ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dr. Ivan Omaña has been elected as the Associate Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He will assume his duties on November 1, 2021.

Omaña currently serves as an Assistant Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the North American Division. He chairs the Adventist Chaplaincy Institute Board of Certification, and is endorsed as a chaplain by Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—North American Division.

Born in Venezuela, Omaña's family history is tied closely to the growth of Adventism in that country. "My great grandfather, Julio, became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1922," says Ivan. "In 1935, at the General Conference Session in San Francisco, he became the first Venezuelan Pastor ordained to the gospel ministry."

Other Omaña family members have also served the church. "My paternal grandfather and father were ministers, one of my aunts served as undertreasurer for the Inter-American Division," says Ivan. "My mother was the Children's Ministries Director and Shepherdess coordinator for the Inter-American Division while my father served as Ministerial Secretary."

At age 18, Omaña came to the United States to complete his undergraduate degree in theology at Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University).



Dr. Ivan Omaña

Following graduation, he returned to pastor in Venezuela for the next 10 years. Two years after his return to Venezuela, Ivan met and married Anabel. "One year and one week later, we welcomed our daughter, Ivonne, to our family," says Ivan.

"My move from pastoral ministry to chaplaincy was completely directed by God," says Ivan. "I was on vacation in Florida when I met with Mario Ceballos, who was a chaplain at Florida Hospital at that time. I had always been interested in chaplaincy and wanted to learn more about this form of ministry. We discussed

chaplaincy and the requirements for health care chaplains.”

Before Ivan finished his vacation, a chaplaincy position opened, and he decided to apply. “I was hired, and my family and I returned to Venezuela to pack up our home. We announced in prayer meeting on Wednesday night that we would be holding a sale on Sunday. By the end of the week, we had sold everything, including our car.”

Ivan began his chaplaincy at the Adventist Care Centers in the Greater Orlando area. “I was the chaplain for three care facilities,” says Ivan. “During this time, I quickly discovered the value of using volunteers to supplement my ministry.”

Following the events of 9/11, the care center staff turned to Ivan for reassurance and comfort as the nation mourned the loss of life and the tragedy that had occurred.

In 2002, Ivan transitioned to Florida Hospital Kissimmee as the full-time chaplain.

His first day on the job was May 10, 2002. On May 13 there was a major training accident in Orlando which killed two firefighters. “One of those firefighters also worked as a nurse at our hospital,” says Ivan. “Our staff was devastated. To this day, I can close my eyes and smell the burned flesh and hear the commotion in the room as the team struggled to save the life of one of their own.”

Crisis was once again the catalyst for Ivan to bond with those he ministered to. The hours that he spent listening to and praying with staff built solid relationships. “During those days after the accident, I was no longer the chaplain that the administration had assigned to the hospital,” says Ivan. “The staff began to call me their chaplain. They would

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tell people that I had been through the tragedy with them. Our relationships remained strong for the next 15 years while I was there.”

Omaña holds a Master of Divinity degree from Florida Center for Theological Studies and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Denver Theological Seminary and is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor. He is a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor by the American Association of Christian Counselors, a Board Certified Chaplain by the Association of Professional Chaplains, as well as the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy and an Associate Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor with College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. He is also certified in Acute Stress, Grief, and Trauma Intervention by the American Association of Christian Counselors. He is a member of the Association of Professional Chaplains, the American Association of Christian Counselors, the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, and is endorsed by Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries.

SHARING THE SOURCE OF HOPE

By Aleš Kocián, Chaplain, Světlá nad Sázavou Prison, Czech Republic, with Deena Bartel-Wagner, editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference



When you hear the words Bohemian-Moravian highlands, your mind probably pictures small farms nestled among rolling hills and low mountains in this southeastern corner of the Czech Republic. However, there are residents in the area who can't enjoy the stunning panoramic views of the countryside. They are the women who live behind the walls of Světlá nad Sázavou Prison, the largest women's prison in the nation. Known as a controlled and secure prison within the Czech penal system, this institution's population of convicted women seek hope and a way to find a better life. As their chaplain, Aleš Kocián listens to their stories, while sharing the Source of all hope.

"My exposure to chaplaincy came while I was a young pastor," says Aleš. "A senior pastor who I worked with was serving as a prison chaplain. Once a week I shadowed him at the prison. This made a deep impression on me as I watched him minister to those incarcerated individuals."

As a young man, Aleš served in his nation's military. Later he wanted to return to the military as an Army chaplain. "Because of health issues my

request was denied," says Aleš, "but my desire to minister as a chaplain never left me."

Following his experiences of observing the senior pastor, Aleš decided to volunteer as a chaplain. Then three years later, while he pastored three Adventist churches, he worked as a part time chaplain two days a week. When the opportunity arose to become the part-time chaplain at Světlá nad Sázavou Prison, he eagerly accepted the position.

In 2020, the female prison population in the Czech Republic was 8.7 percent of all inmates, and this number is growing.

"Women in our country are often suppressed by the men in their lives," says Aleš. "They become frustrated and sometimes this leads to aggression against their male partner. For some women, their actions end in prison sentences. Another major contributing factor for women in prison is drug-related charges."

These are the individuals whom Aleš ministers to daily. "I always begin my daily preparation spending time in prayer," says Aleš. "I consciously give my time for the day into the Lord's hands. I want to allow God to guide

me to the women I should speak with that day and allow the conversations go in the direction they need to go.”

Each day is filled with listening to the women’s stories, helping them learn where they can find resources, and providing spiritual study and conversations. One of the Bible courses offered in the prison covers the Gospel of Mark. “We study a large overview during eight meetings and then begin to narrow the study down to individual topics,” says Aleš. “While the women are learning these Bible stories tied to the topics, they can imagine living a different life once they are released.”

One of the greatest concerns for these women are their children. “The mothering instinct can be a driving force for women to make changes in their lives,” says Aleš. “Opportunities for contact with their children is very limited, with a maximum visitation period of three hours per month. With their desire to be reunited with their children, I focus on how they must start their lives over and ways they can do this. We spend a lot of time talking about how they must want to live a different kind of life, making that choice will help them succeed.”

Recidivism is a constant challenge for former inmates. Post-incarceration support isn’t substantial, so the chaplains do what they can to assist. “When the women are released, they receive a few Czech crowns, but no living arrangements or employment,” says Aleš. “We often discuss how important it is for them to find employment when they are released. We have 10-13 employers who provide training and work in the prison. Some women are given the chance to stay with their former jobs that they had before they were sentenced.”

Helena’s* story is one of the



Witnessing change in a life and the decision to follow Jesus in baptism always brings joy to Aleš.



A boyhood trip to the Giant Mountains with his father is a memorable trip for Aleš.



Today as a father, Aleš creates memories for his children with trips to the same Giant Mountains.



When a tornado struck in South Moravia, Aleš worked with ADRA to assist those affected by the damage inflicted.

success stories that encourages Aleš. “Both Helena and her sister were in prison for drugs and stealing. Helena received a six-year sentence for her crimes,” says Aleš. “Her two children were sent to live with her mother. When Helena received a conditional release, she went to Prague, where her mother and children were living.”

The longtime family issues in Helena’s family had not been resolved, but Helena was determined to start her life over. “The conditional release indicated that Helena was required to live with her mother, but her mother didn’t allow that,” says Aleš. “She received government funds to care for Helena’s children and she didn’t want to lose that income. Helena depended on her alcoholic father for a meager income, but it wasn’t enough. Two months after her release, Helena lived in squalor, and she didn’t know what to do. If she contacted the authorities, she’d be sent back to prison because she wasn’t living by the terms of her release.”

Helena chose to call Aleš and tell him of her predicament rather than return to a life of stealing and drugs. “I worked

with the social workers I knew were assigned to Helena’s case. They were aware of the situation but didn’t report Helena because they saw how hard she was trying and that the children were happier with their mother.”

Three months after Helena’s release, her children were returned to her. At the same time a trial was held that would determine who would have custody of Helena’s sister’s child, who has serious health issues.

Although Helena won back her children, her predicament wasn’t resolved. She only had part-time work, was undernourished, and struggled to live a drug- and crime-free life. Again, the ministry of chaplains intervened with a request for a rent-controlled apartment be provided for Helena. This allowed her to have sufficient funds to provide for her other living expenses. Currently, Helena continues to re-establish her life and her future looks promising.

As Aleš works with the inmates, another ministry lies heavy on his heart. The prison guards and staff who interact with the prisoners are



As a chaplain in the Světlá nad Sázavou Prison, Aleš ministers to the inmates and prison staff.

equally in need of the same Source of hope, but they are resistant. Many of the guards and staff served in the prison system during the communistic regime. The influences from those years, coupled with a general lack of interest in spiritual matters throughout the country, creates unique barriers to open. “The younger generations seem to be more open to spiritual discussions,” says Aleš. “I reach out to all staff and some have responded with interest. That started because of COVID restrictions. There was no possibility to organize a divine service. That’s why I’ve started to write a weekly Chaplaincy Reading. In 2020, it was for prison inmates only, but since 2021, I’ve shared it with all the employees, also. Also, I’ve had conversations with the director of the prison, and she is more open to speak with me. I might even be able to say I am her chaplain.”

Aleš doesn’t limit his ministry to within the prison walls. Recently, he worked with ADRA in South Moravia following a devastating tornado. “This was part of my volunteer ministry,”

says Aleš. “Although the affected region was small, the damage was extremely heavy, and many people suffered property loss.”

He also teaches at Teologický Seminář Casd Sazava, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in the Czech-Slovakian Union Conference. “I encourage many of my students to consider chaplaincy as a way to minister,” says Aleš. “Chaplaincy in the Czech Republic is growing and gaining recognition. Currently, Adventist pastors are working as chaplains in the prison and health care systems. Our nation’s president is interested in seeing chaplains also working with the police and fire departments.”

As with many other chaplains, Aleš may never know the full impact of his ministry here on earth. “To help others is my greatest joy,” says Aleš, “but often I don’t know what happens when an inmate is released. Many times, they don’t contact me ever again, and the lack of their needs is a big hope they didn’t strike out. I pray daily that they will depend on the Source of hope I share with them and follow Him.”

ADVENTIST CHAPLAINCY MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION

A SEMI-FUNERAL ON MT. CARMEL

By Narlapati Subhakar Prasad Chief Chaplain and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, METAS Adventist College, Surat, India.

GRAVE SITUATION

The atmosphere in the Medicare centers was suffocating with a shortage of medical oxygen. Seven texts out of ten reported about the excruciating pain caused by COVID-19. Because of having to use industrial oxygen when medical supplies were exhausted, it became an even more dreadful disease. Subsequent infection by Mucormycosis or the “black fungus,” threatened the life of humanity even more. Those who died before the pandemic were considered more fortunate.

Governments have raised their hands in desperation, helplessness, and failure. Riches failed; wealth was thrown in the streets. Doctors cried over their failure to save the infected. Agony was multiplied across Planet Earth as the bereaved could not pay homage to their loved ones. Millions

of corpses were gathered like waste and burnt in the streets. It was like the night when “the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses” (2 Kings 19:35, KJV). Fortunate were the ones who could have a funeral, as getting the body of the dead was next to impossible and permission for conducting a funeral was a dream come true.

THE REQUEST FOR A CHRISTIAN FUNERAL

Lalritikimi, a 24-year Mizo woman with a 3-year-old baby, had contracted the dreadful COVID-19 virus. To complicate the situation, she was in Surat, the extreme western zone of India, miles away from her home in the northeast. When she succumbed to death on April 30, 2021, her parents broke in tears, their hearts torn on discovering the tragic news.

Worst of all, she was all alone in a rented room except for another young girl who was sharing her room. Her parents requested her



Chaplain Narlapati Subhakar Prasad (second from right) led out in a Christian funeral in Surat, India.

roommate to try and hold a Christian funeral for her. The magnitude of the disease was so alarming, like the wrath of God poured without mixture (Revelation 14:10), as the second wave of COVID-19 washed hard over mankind. There was also a dearth in getting religious personnel to give final rites for those who died.

The roommate then contacted Dr. Eliah Srikakolli, the President and CEO of METAS Group. METAS is a group of Seventh-day Adventist institutions in Southern Asia who operate schools, colleges, hospitals, and churches in various parts of India. The city of Surat is in a flourishing business center in the state of Gujarat, known for cloth manufacturing and diamond shaping.

Dr. Srikakolli arranged for Chaplain Prasad to provide spiritual care, as the institution's Chief Chaplain among six chaplains of METAS Surat.

THE FEEL OF MT. CARMEL

In Chaplain Prasad's words, here is story of the funeral service.

“On the instruction of the president and CEO, I took the necessary precautions and made myself available to perform the semi-funeral, as a complete funeral wasn't permitted. The deceased's roommate requested all her friends in Surat to assist her. Eleven young women and one young man formed themselves into a group. Interestingly, none of them were in anyway related to the dead. They first gathered at the government hospital to receive the body.

“The protocols were that the body was to be completely covered in Personal Protection Equipment and transferred from the mortuary into the mortuary van by the hospital workers, on payment of a special fee and secured permission. The group was allowed to follow the van up to the public crematorium where the same procedure was repeated.

“Before the body was sent into the cremator for burning, we took special permission for a few minutes to keep the body on the elevated stretcher and perform the semi-funeral ceremony, What a place of grief, this place. Here there were multiple cremators continuously at work due to the uncontrolled number of deaths. Intermittently, the melted cremator grills had to be replaced with new ones, a condition caused by the sustained burning that had not been previously encountered. There were a number of crematorium workers and a few bereaved at the site, none of whom were Christian. As the chaplain, I led the small group of Mizos, and we sang “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder” from the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal.

The entire crowd encircled and watched us in surprise. Such a thing was new to them. Here we were, Seventh-day Adventists, singing in the burning place for Hindu dead bodies that was filled with Hindu gods, priests, and incense. After the song, Sister Mercy led in prayer and as chaplain, I preached a message of hope and assurance from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The sight of us there was like that of the Prophet Elijah on Mt. Carmel as described in 1 Kings 18. Upon the completion of the sermon, a prayer seeking strength for the family of the bereaved was offered and then as per the protocols, the body was handed over to the crematorium personnel, who placed it into the fire. This sight left the group in pain. The whole process right from the beginning until the end was shown to the family through a video call. They cried like desperate babies and were very grateful for us carrying it out in a Christian manner, as far as possible. They weren’t Seventh-day Adventists,

but in Christian fellowship, METAS extended its services to the Christians of another denomination in harmony with the counsel of Philippians 2:4, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Amen.

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

For twenty years Manolo Yanong served as mayor of Maragusan Compostela Valley, now Maragusan Davao de Oro. In 2016, when he was admitted to the Adventist Hospital—Davao, Chaplain Jimmy Sabandal visited him and they discussed spiritual matters.

“Because of his health condition, Manolo experienced frequent admissions to the hospital,” says Chaplain Sabandal. “We continued our spiritual conversations during each of these visits.”

For Manolo and his wife Erlinda, this wasn’t their first exposure to being around Seventh-day Adventists. “Their yaya (the woman employed to look after their daughter, Anthea)



Chaplain Jimmy Sabandal baptizes Erlinda Yanong.



Manolo Yanong is baptized with his wife, Erlinda and daughter Anthea, watching.



Chaplain Sabandal prays a blessing over the Yanong family.

was a Seventh-day Adventist,” says Sabandal. “Like Captain Naaman’s little maid, she showed goodness to her boss. And she planted seeds of truth as she cared for Anthea.”

Although the Yanongs were interested, Erlinda struggled with leaving a religion she had known all of her life. “She worried that her close friends and even her family would disown her because of her new beliefs in Christ,” says Sabandal.

As the Yanong family continued their studies, Erlinda began listening to Hope Radio Davao. “Erlinda particularly enjoyed the programs of Pastor Jasper Love Panuncio, Pastor Dave Bornales, and Pastor Rudy Esteban,” says Sabandal. “One of the most impacting programs for Erlinda was the My 40 Day’s Journey with God program. Her mind was opened and her heart was touched.”

On March 8th, Chaplain Sabandal had the privilege of baptizing Manolo, Erlinda, and Anthea in an outdoor service at the Waterfront Insular Hotel. “The Yanong family’s conversion story is very inspiring to us

who are residents of Maragusan Davao de Oro,” says Sabandal.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

DR. CLAUDIO CONSUEGRA APPOINTED LEAD CHAPLAIN FOR THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dr. Claudio Consuegra, NAD Family Ministries Director, has been appointed to lead the chaplains’ corps for the Prince George’s County Police Department in Maryland. The Prince George’s County Police Department is the second largest law enforcement agency in the State of Maryland and 25th largest in the United States (there are 17,985 U.S. police agencies in the United States which include City Police Departments, County Sheriff’s Offices, State Police/Highway Patrol and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies). More than 1,500 police officers and 300 civilians provide a full range of law enforcement services to nearly 900,000 residents and business owners in Prince George’s County.

Dr. Consuegra has been a volunteer law enforcement chaplain for more than 36 years in a dozen departments and federal agencies around the country. He is a Board-Certified Chaplain by the Association of Certified Christian Chaplains and the Spiritual Care Association, and a Master Certified Police Chaplain through the International Conference of Police Chaplains.

Besides his regular duties as a chaplain for the department, as the lead chaplain Dr. Consuegra will

Pictured are new Chief of Police Malik Aziz and Chaplain Consuegra at a recent Citizen's Police Academy graduation where Chaplain Consuegra offered the invocation and benediction.

Photo courtesy of Claudio Consuegra

help train new chaplains, organize and strengthen the chaplains' corps, and officiate at graduations and other ceremonies as needed.

There are several Seventh-day Adventist pastors in the North American Division who serve as law enforcement chaplains in local, county, and state departments as well as federal agencies like the U.S. Secret Service and the FBI. If a pastor is interested in becoming involved in his/her community as a law enforcement chaplain they may contact Dr. Consuegra at claudioconsuegra@nadadventist.org or Dr. Paul Anderson, Director of Chaplaincy Ministries for the North American Division, at paulanderson@nadadventist.org.





From L-R: Chaplain (Captain) Jose Peña, Chaplain (Brigadier General) Andrew R. Harewood, Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Wanda Acevedo, Chaplain (Captain) Jorge Baez, Chaplain (Captain) Freddy Sánchez, and Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Edgardo Ortiz, pose for a group photo after Lieutenant Colonel Wanda Acevedo's promotion ceremony at Fort Buchanan in Puerto Rico, April 28, 2021.

Photo courtesy of Wanda Acevedo

ACEVEDO IS FIRST FEMALE ADVENTIST CHAPLAIN PROMOTED TO U. S. ARMY RESERVE LIEUTENANT COLONEL

On April 28, 2021, Wanda Acevedo became the first Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist woman to be promoted to lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve during a special ceremony at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.

Acevedo accepted the position by taking the Oath of Office administered by Chaplain (Brigadier General) Andrew R. Harewood of the U.S. Army Reserve. Harewood, who is the third Seventh-day Adventist to reach the rank of general in the U.S. Army Reserve, offered a prayer of dedication as he hosted the promotion ceremony during a unit ministry team annual training assignment on the base.

Trailblazing isn't new to Acevedo.



Chaplain (Brigadier General) Andrew R. Harewood administers the Oath of Office to Chaplain (Lt. Colonel) Wanda Acevedo.

Photo courtesy of Wanda Acevedo

In 2001, she became the first Seventh-day Adventist woman to enter any military chaplaincy program in the United States Army. She also served in Iraq and is the only female Seventh-day Adventist endorsed chaplain to have served in a combat war zone.

With her promotion, Acevedo becomes the deputy command chaplain overseeing all religious support and chaplaincy teams that serve more than 5,000 soldiers at the base. She will lead 27 chaplain unit ministry teams in Fort Buchanan. Among them, there are six Seventh-day Adventists, including her immediate supervisor and four others in the team.

Prior to serving in the U. S. Army, Acevedo was an adjunct theology professor at Antillean Adventist University in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and served as a chaplain at the Adventist-run Bella Vista Hospital in Mayaguez. Additionally, she taught classes at the Inter-American Adventist Theological Seminary.

CHAPLAINS ARE THE AMBASSADORS OF GOD TO A WORLD IN TURMOIL WITH PANDEMICS, WARS, AND STRIFE. WE ARE HEADING TOWARD THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT, AND PRAYERS ARE OUR TOOLS TO SURVIVE.

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as a pastor is to make use of a post-modern approach of thinking to help the patient make a self-diagnosis. If the ill and dying want to place themselves in a pastoral-theological stance rather than a medical, psychiatric, legal, or social perspective, a Chaplain can serve as “The Diagnostician.”³

The fourth tool is “prayer and supplication” for God’s wisdom. Books have been written, and more can be said about the importance of prayers. “*The greatest blessing that God can give to man is the spirit of earnest prayer: All heaven is open before the man of prayer... The ambassadors of Christ will have power with the people after they have, with earnest supplication, come before God.*”⁴ Chaplains are the ambassadors of God to a world in turmoil with pandemics, wars, and strife. We are heading toward the end of the world as we know it, and prayers are our tools to survive.

Many spiritual diagnostic tools can be utilized in diagnosing the spiritual condition of a person. Some of these already developed include The Spiritual History Gene, spiritual genograms, CSI-MEMO (Koenig)⁵, FICA (Puchalski and Romer)⁶, HOPE (Anandarajah and Hight)⁷, FAITH (King)⁸, SPIRIT (Abridged: Maugans; Ambuel and Weissman)⁹, and FACT (LaRocca-Pitts).¹⁰ Even though many of the mentioned tools are used in

hospital settings, they can still be used to help anyone and to assist the chaplain in non-hospital settings.

The primary role of a Chaplain as a pastor is that of caring for the flock, watching¹¹ for them, not “lording”¹² them. May the pages of this magazine prepare you with the tools needed for your role of chaplain.

¹<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tool>

²<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2009/08/the-art-of-listening>

³<http://thechaplainschallenge.blogspot.com/2015/04/the-diagnostician.html>

⁴The Review and Herald, October 20, 1896

⁵ Handzo, George and Harold G. Koenig. “Spiritual Care: Whose job is it anyway?” Southern Medical Association 97 (2004): 1242-44.

⁶ C. M. Puchalski and A. L. Romer, “Taking a spiritual history allows clinicians to understand patients more fully,” Journal of Palliative Medicine 3 (2000): 129-37.

⁷ G. Anandarajah and E. Hight, “Spirituality and medical practice: Using the HOPE questions as a practical tool for spiritual assessment,” American Family Practice 63 (2001): 81-88

⁸ D. E. King, “Spirituality and Medicine,” in eds. M. B. Mengel, W. L. Hollerman and S. A. Fields, *Fundamentals of Clinical Practice: A Textbook on the Patient, Doctor, and Society* (New York, NY: Plenum, 2002): 651-69.

⁹ T. A. Maugans, “The SPIRiTual history,” Archives of Family Medicine 5 (1997): 11-16; B. Ambuel and D. E. Weissman, “Discussing spiritual issues and maintaining hope,” in eds., D. E. Weissman and B. Ambuel, *Improving End-of-life Care: A Resource Guide for Physician Education*, 2nd ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Medical College of Wisconsin, 1999).

¹⁰ LaRocca-Pitts, FACT spiritual history tool; LaRocca-Pitts, “FACT: Taking a spiritual history.”

¹¹<https://bible.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%205.1%2E2%80%934>

¹² Ibid.

SELF-CARE BECAME A DAILY RITUAL. I NO LONGER FEEL GUILTY FOR PUTTING MYSELF FIRST.

Carol White, Health Care, Texas

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RITUALS IMPLEMENTED AND CONTINUED

Describe any rituals you may have implemented during the past 18 months that energized you either personally or professionally.

I get out of bed and after a short time I go out and look at the sky. I see the greatness of the Lord.

José Luis Torres Gonzalez, Health Care, Dominican Republic

Daily dawn devotions (personal Bible study and prayer time) of up to 60 minutes. A strict visitation order for general visits (pray, sit, catch up, song, biblical promise, pray, goodbye.)

Ernest Njeru, Campus, Kenya

I read several different devotional writings, from different faith backgrounds, to see what others think

or say about the biblical text, life in general, and ministry in particular.

Claudio Consuegra, Law Enforcement, Maryland

Self-care became a daily ritual. I no longer feel guilty for putting myself first.

Carol White, Health Care, Texas

I performed twelve weddings despite COVID to make sure couples had God in their wedding and lives to reassure them God was in the midst of the storm. By providing this service I was reminded how we are God's Love with skin on it.

Michael Tomlinson, Military, U. S. Navy

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Many chaplains took the opportunity to take classes, complete Masters and Doctoral degrees, complete more Clinical Pastoral Education units, attend the 3rd Adventist Chaplains World Congress, read books, and attended specialized training.

HOLD ON A MINUTE LONGER

During the turbulent days, weeks and months, chaplains have demonstrated empathy, commitment, compassion, and courage, Famed World War II tank commander General George Patton said, "Courage is fear holding on a minute longer." If you give in to your fears, you are on the path to defeat. If instead you stand strong despite your fears, you are on the path to victory. And we must never forget that we are not in the battle alone. With the power of God on our side, we cannot be defeated.



Eternal MEDICINE

Recently, a song from my childhood resonated persistently in my mind. I thought about other things and even interjected other music into my psyche. Then I realized that maybe God was trying to tell me something. I relented and immersed myself in the lyrics.

*“Be like Jesus, this my song.
In the home and in the throng;
Be like Jesus, all day long!
I would be like Jesus.”*

I thought about the chaplains in the North American Division. All over North America, even and especially during the pandemic, chaplains have been serving. You have been immersed in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. He mingled with people at the point of their greatest needs. He healed people and provisioned their futures. When they believed in Him, He gave them purposes and secured their destinies. Through His life, we see that the ministry of healing extends beyond the miracles of medicine and surgery. As Jesus was, Chaplains are practitioners of *Eternal Medicine*.

Eternal Medicine is the art of addressing theodicy amid the here and now experiences of illnesses, maladies, accidents, injuries, and recovery. It also embraces the hereafter concerns of those patients who are terminally ill and the family members of the dying, and those who have died.

Chaplains who have worked admirably throughout this pandemic have often been confronted with questions. Some have plunged into their own confrontations of theodicy. Why, God? How long, God? What now, God? Through it all, they have done the work of God, *Eternal Medicine*.

The key and essence of *Eternal Medicine* can be found in the brief story told in Mark 1:30 -31. Jesus was visiting the home of Simon. Simon's mother-in-law was bedridden and had an infection, which had caused a fever. Jesus went to her and personally restored her health. In doing so, he restored her humanity and her sense of purpose. Moreover, He did so with an exemplary personal touch.

Often in the health care arena, many patients feel unseen or equated with their issue. Chaplains, by their personal contact with patients, engage their humanity and their spirituality. Done well, Chaplains become a part of the person's story. Simon's mother-in-law could not separate her health from the presence of Christ.

A chaplain recently shared a story with me. She was in a place where she needed to show an ID card. When the merchant saw her ID card, he recognized it as the place where his son had died, stolen by COVID-19. The man recalled the horror of not being able to be with his son. He wept about the idea that his son died alone.

The chaplain shared her story of caring for people at that hospital. She assured the father that God knew where his son was. She shared that the treatment teams did their best to care for and about each patient. She mentioned that a chaplain was an embedded member of each treatment team and that a chaplain probably had seen him at least once. The morosity of the father abated. His affect became calm. His visage was relieved. At that moment, a wounded soul was healed.

Eternal Medicine is a personal and spiritual touch that excises fear and sutures the gaping holes in wounded souls with threads of love. Employing the personal healing touch, as Jesus did, is restorative. Hope, wholeness, compassion, and a sense of mission were the immediate results of Jesus' interaction with Simon's mother-in-law.

The faith of those who witnessed Jesus' miracle of healing was also turbocharged. That moment became legend and lore among the followers of Christ. Oh, that our ministries of *Eternal Medicine* will lead to legends of faith and restoration. But, if not, always remember that doing good is its own reward.

Thanks to all of you for working through this storm. Thank you for bringing the love of Christ to those injured or killed by this pandemic. Thank you for being ambassadors for Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, at times and in places where the church might otherwise be underrepresented.

May God continue to bless you and keep you safe. May He guide us away from or through temptations and deliver us from evil into His perfect will. And may His peace be with you through the vagaries and memories of the traumas and stresses that you have and will carry as God's light-bearers in this dark time in Earth's history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul S. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "A" at the beginning.



Train me in your ways
of wise living. I'll
transfer to my lips all
the counsel that comes
from your mouth.

Psalm 119:15, *The Message*

Executive Editor:

Mario E. Ceballos

D.Min., BCC

Editor:

Deena Bartel-Wagner

acmeditor@gc.adventist.org

Layout and Design:

Emily Harding

HardingDesign

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Mario Ceballos, Director/Endorser

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CONTACT US: Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, Adventist World Headquarters, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Phone: 301-680-6780; fax: 301-680-6783; e-mail acm@gc.adventist.org; Website: AdventistChaplains.org.

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CORRESPONDENTS

East-Central Africa Division (ECD)

Magulilo Mwakalonge, *ACM Director*
mwakalongem@ecd.adventist.org

Euro-Asia Division (ESD)

Oleg Goncharov, *ACM Director*
ogoncharov@esd.adventist.org

Inter-European Division (EUD)

Ventsislav Panayotov, *ACM Director*
ventsislav.panayotov@eud.adventist.org

Inter-American Division (IAD)

Hiram Ruiz, *ACM Director*
ruizh@interamerica.org

North American Division (NAD)

Paul S. Anderson, *ACM Director*
paulanderson@nadadventist.org

Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)

To be announced, *ACM Director*

South American Division (SAD)

Lucas Alves *ACM Director*
lucas.alves@adventistas.org

Jose Espinoza

josue.espinoza@adventistas.org

South Pacific Division (SPD)

Darius Jankiewicz *ACM Liason*
dariusjankiewicz@adventist.org.au

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)

Busi Khumalo, *ACM Director*
khumalob@sid.adventist.org | Skype: handybusi

Southern Asia Division (SUD)

Ramesh Jadhav, *ACM Director*
rameshjadhav3383@gmail.com

Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)

Wendall Mandolang, *ACM Director*
wmandolang@ssd.org

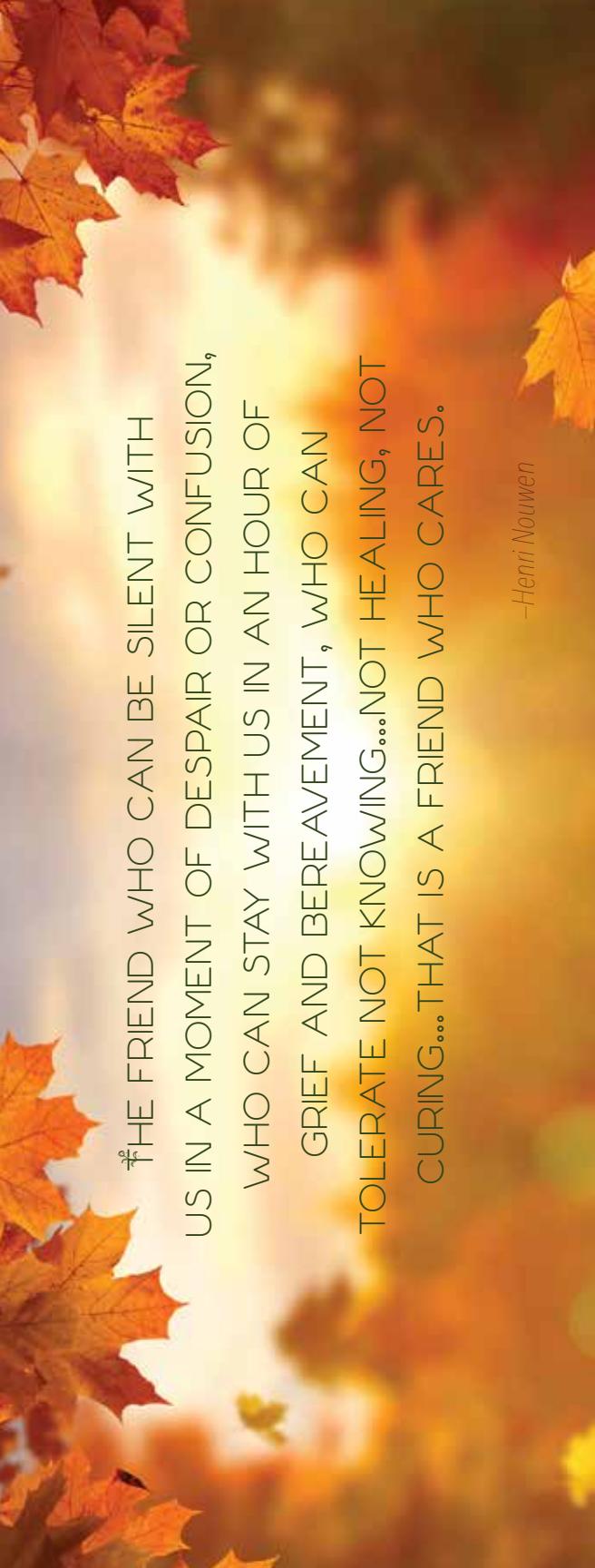
Trans-European Division (TED)

Patrick Johnson, *ACM Director*
pjohnson@ted-adventist.org

West-Central Africa Division (WAD)

N. John Enang, *ACM Director*
njenang@wad-adventist.org or
njenang2000@yahoo.co.uk





THE FRIEND WHO CAN BE SILENT WITH
US IN A MOMENT OF DESPAIR OR CONFUSION,
WHO CAN STAY WITH US IN AN HOUR OF
GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT, WHO CAN
TOLERATE NOT KNOWING...NOT HEALING, NOT
CURING...THAT IS A FRIEND WHO CARES.

—Henri Nouwen



General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®

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