



# General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter

An informative publication for members of the General Conference Executive Committee as a service through the office of the Chair

MARCH/APRIL 2019

*I believe those who are* leaders in the church today were blessed by someone who mentored them when young. Mentorship is the way God uses to train us such as Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha. Paul trained Timothy and Titus, Aquila and Priscila trained Apollos. But the best model for mentorship is Jesus Himself. Although not old, He mentored His young disciples.

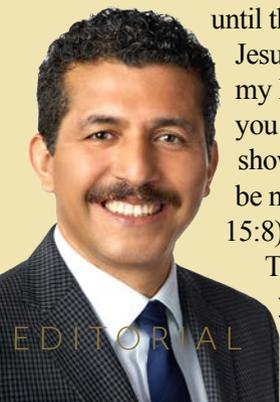
My father was my first mentor. He often took me to visit churches and give Bible studies. I learned how to give Bible studies when I was just 11.

Good leaders have had good mentors. Leaders who didn't have a good mentor run the risk of making more mistakes. Those who have had good mentors will also make mistakes, but generally it will be easier for them in correcting their missteps.

Christian maturity is essential for nurturing others. In this sense, not every young person is immature, or every old person mature. A mature Christian is someone who is ready to nurture and reproduce himself/herself in someone else. No one is mature until they produce fruit.

Jesus said, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8).

The Lord is calling you. Who can you mentor today?



EDITORIAL



## BETTER TOGETHER YOUNG AND OLD WORKING SIDE BY SIDE

BY GARY BLANCHARD, YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR, SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

*Y*outh are not *the* church of today! Of course, the operative word here is *the*, but let me explain.

If you want to hear lots of "Amen!" "Hallelujahs!" and "Praise the Lords!" the next time you are speaking to a congregation of Adventists, simply say, "The youth are *the* church of today!" I know this because I have done it many times! But when the applause dies down and you are alone with your thoughts, consider this: Did you tell the truth, or unwittingly

promote ageism—a lie that has hurt both the older and younger generations profoundly?

First, let me say that I believe with all my heart that young people are a special and vital *part* of the church of today. Their energy and amazing potential is one reason I have dedicated the majority of my life to working with them as a Bible teacher, chaplain, youth pastor, youth director, and now world youth director.

So, I hope no one will accuse me of not loving young people or

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seeing their wonderful worth to our church and the secret to our success as a movement. I have always believed our youth are the wings of the three angels' messages and God has uniquely called them to take the gospel speedily to the world.

In Psalms 127:4 they are described as “arrows in the hands of a warrior” and are therefore wired to live dangerously for God. Which is why so many of them are moved by initiatives such as One Year in Mission, Mission Caleb, Public Campus Ministries, ADRA, Youth Alive, etc. Interestingly, when Ellen White talks about “an army of workers as our youth” she uses the words “HOW SOON” three times in one paragraph to emphasize their speed and perhaps unconsciously their connection with the Three Angels' Messages! So, I know how valuable they are and my heart beats passionately for the younger generation.

Nevertheless, our young people of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are not THE church of today! They are PART of the Church, but not THE church. In fact, the Bible says that regardless of whether you are 8 or 80 when you are baptized, you are baptized into Christ and therefore a member of His church of today (Galatians 3:26-27). In Acts 2:17-18 the Bible says that the latter rain experience, like the former rain, falls on all generations. In Malachi 4:5-6 we are told that just before Jesus returns there will be an intergenerational movement.

Ageism, or the idea that one generation (usually the younger) is better than the former, has no place in Adventism. In idolatrous Hollywood yes, but not in God's Holy Word. We need each other desperately!

While it's true that “young people”

played a significant part in the forming of this Adventist movement, let's not forget that older folks also played a significant and important part. For example, Joseph Bates was in his mid-50s when he accepted the Sabbath, and Abraham LaRue started the work in China at the age of 66!

## A DANGEROUS STATEMENT

I believe to say “the youth are THE Church of today” is dangerous on at least two levels.

First, it unconsciously invalidates the older generation who are taught from this mantra that they have little value and should start making plans for a long series of Carnival Cruises. In fact, a few years back I met a retired treasurer of one of our local conferences who was spending the golden years of his life “cruising.” I asked him why and he confidently smiled and said “the youth are THE church of today. It's time for us old folks to get out of the way and let the youth lead.”

If you are an older person reading this, let me say that as long as you are alive you have a significant and important part to play in God's work! Perhaps God is calling you to mentor a young man or woman as Elijah did and pour into them your life experiences and skills (More on that in a moment).

This ageism mentality that “the youth are THE church of today” and the older generation should get out of the way has also jaded the younger generation's view of the older generation. The older generation is often seen as inconvenient at best and enemies to “progress” at worst. This, I believe, is Satanic and has led to rebellious speaking not only in regard to older church members but toward

adult leaders at every level of the denomination. This is particularly dangerous for our youth when one considers God's no-nonsense approach to the younger generation mocking church leaders in the story of Elisha and the bears (2 Kings 2:23-24).

I can say with some confidence as a result of traveling around the world that in Divisions where there is a high respect for the older generation and church leadership the youth work is growing rapidly. I think this is a principal of youth ministry we would be wise to consider and foolish to ignore.

I don't know if you have noticed this, but in Ellen White's most famous quotation regarding youth ministry she mentions that young people who make up "such an army of workers" need to be "rightly trained" and "furnished." So, who is going to do this? Obviously, the older generation is . . . unless we drive them away with our well-meaning but ageism rhetoric about the youth being "THE church of today."

### **"PASSING THE BUCK"**

Secondly, this erroneous mantra dumps leadership on the younger generation which they may or may not have the maturity and training to take on. We have a saying for this in America—it's called "passing the buck." It means to avoid responsibility! Young people were not designed by God to lead the church—the older generation was!

This should not shock anyone. Common sense tells us that parents, not children, are to lead the home, and teachers, not students, should lead the school. So, it shouldn't be surprising that mature adults are also called to lead the church! In fact, the

prophet Isaiah warns of nations who are led by youth (Isaiah 3:4-5). This does not mean that all older people are fit to lead, but it most certainly means that young people who lack maturity and training should not! Of course, there are exceptions to this but I have found in more than 20 years of youth ministry that young people desperately need and crave mentorship from the older generation. And this is the real reason for this article!

The good news is that the Bible predicts that just before Jesus returns God will raise up an older generation of Elijahs who will mentor the young Elishas (Malachi 4:5-6)! They will refuse to duck responsibility and choose instead to pass on identity, mission, and leadership to the younger generation. These are men and women who lead by example and take the time to mentor young people into ministry and leadership. This is not easy to do! It takes lots of time, energy, and devotion but it's essential if we want to help our young people not only remain in church, but become great leaders for the generation they will most certainly lead in the near future!

When we do the hard work of mentoring the younger generation, we are following in the footsteps of some great leaders. Leaders such as Moses, Elijah, Paul, Barnabas and, of course, JESUS! None of these great leaders believed "the youth are THE church of today," but understood rightly that they, too, were part of the church with a special role to mentor the younger generation.

Ellen White writes "Those who undertake this training of young workers are doing noble service. The Lord Himself cooperates with



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their efforts. And the young men to whom the word of consecration has been spoken, whose privilege it is to be brought into close association with earnest, godly workers, should make the most of their opportunity. God has honored them by choosing them for His service and by placing them where they can gain greater fitness for it, and they should be humble, faithful, obedient, and willing to sacrifice. If they submit to God’s discipline, carrying out His directions and choosing His servants as their counselors, they will develop into righteous, high-principled, steadfast men, whom God can entrust with responsibilities.”<sup>1</sup>

## YOU ARE THE CHURCH OF TODAY

So, to summarize, the youth are not THE church of today; *every* member of the body of Christ makes up the church of today. Whether you are 8 or 80, you are the church of today. The older generation, however, has a vital and God-given responsibility to mentor the younger generation. Jesus did this through three simple steps: 1) observation; 2) participation; 3) activation. First, Jesus showed them how to do it, then He did it with them, and finally He empowered them to do it on their own, meeting with them regularly for coaching.

The older generation is to lead by example and create opportunities for the young Elishas to thrive and grow in the church! Elijah started Elisha with little responsibilities but quickly graduated him to bigger responsibilities that he could manage. Ellen White writes, “Ministry comprehends far more than preaching the word. It means training young men as Elijah trained Elisha, taking them from their ordinary duties, and giving them



responsibilities to bear in God’s work—small responsibilities at first, and larger ones as they gain strength and experience.”<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, Ellen White seems to imply that Elisha became an even greater prophet than his mentor because he learned from his strengths and weaknesses! Again, she writes, “When the Lord in His providence sees fit to remove from His work those to whom He has given wisdom, He helps and strengthens their successors, if they will look to Him for aid and will walk in His ways. They may be even wiser than their predecessors; for they may profit by their experience and learn wisdom from their mistakes. Henceforth Elisha stood in Elijah’s place. He who had been faithful in that which was least was to prove himself faithful also in much.”<sup>3</sup>

What a compliment to the older generation and what a great example of what it really means to pass on leadership to the next generation. Now is the time for the older generation to “turn their hearts” to

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the younger generation, helping them to become an even better generation than their own!

So, who are you mentoring? If there is “no success without a successor” and youth are an important part of the church, then who are you investing in? When you drop dead . . . and we all eventually do, who will take your place and raise the banner of Jesus Christ and courageously lead the next generation?

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

# CHECKUP



## LIVING ON CREDIT

Exploring the physical, mental, social, and spiritual effects of **caffeine consumption**

*Highlights from a presentation given by Dr. Peter N. Landless, director of the GC Health Ministries department, to the General Conference Leadership Council, March 21, 2019*

**M**any people live under large amounts of debt. While financial debt is common, it is not the only kind. Energy debt and fatigue affect many hard-working people. Lack of sleep contributes to this energy debt and fatigue. A common way to cope with lack of energy and fatigue is by drinking caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea, or caffeinated soft drinks.



### ADVERSE EFFECTS

- Restlessness, excitability, and dizziness
- Anxiety and irritability
- Dehydration and frequent urination
- Digestive issues
- Heart problems
- Insomnia
- Chronic fatigue from overstimulation
- Dependence

### HOW CAFFEINE WORKS

Adenosine is a chemical present in all human cells. It causes drowsiness and induces sleep. Caffeine blocks adenosine receptors, tricking the body into believing it's not tired. Caffeine activates the stress hormones adrenalin and cortisol, causing heart rate and blood pressure to increase, pupils to dilate, muscles tighten, and energy increases for about 3 hours. Caffeine also activates the release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, the "feel good" chemical. By drinking caffeine, our bodies incur another kind of debt, providing short-term energy but with numerous side effects.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Caffeine is the world's most widely-used psychoactive mood-changing drug. Up to

# 30%

of caffeine users are estimated to be dependent.

Common withdrawal symptoms include:

- headaches
- extreme fatigue and lethargy
- anxiety and irritability
- dizziness and jitters
- lack of concentration
- constipation
- flu-like symptoms
- nausea



Caffeine may reduce overall blood flow in the micro-circulation of the brain.



Caffeine affects mental health. It increases stress hormones, alters neurotransmitters, and can induce panic attacks.

Insomnia can cause or exacerbate anxiety and depression. Caffeine can induce anxiety.



Steven E. Meredith et al., "Caffeine Use Disorder: A Comprehensive Review and Research Agenda" *Journal of Caffeine Research* 3, no. 3 (Sept. 2013): 114-130, doi.org/10.1089/jcr.2013.0016.

# CONFESSIONS OF A LEADER: ADDICTED TO CAFFEINE

BY WILLIAM HAYDEN

I started drinking caffeine about 20 years ago. It began “innocently” enough. Sure, I knew what Ellen White had written about it, but still . . . I did it rarely: for a long drive, after a hard night, or to compensate for jet lag. I did it once every two months, or maybe it was once a month . . . ? I don’t remember—only that it wasn’t much.

At least at first. Then it was once a week. A treat. To get a burst of energy. “Gourmet” coffee shops were taking off; they were part of the culture. *Who didn’t go to them?*

A number of us, Adventists all, would trudge off together. We could talk, chill out, and get caffeinated, which definitely gave us a boost to get back to work.

I’m a pastor, ordained even. Many who drank with me were too. At times I would think, *I shouldn’t be doing this*, but I didn’t really want to stop. I didn’t see a real need to. After all, it was just a latte, a soy latte even.

Before I knew it, I was drinking coffee every day. A cup in the morning. Maybe something in the afternoon, just to keep me buzzed during the day. It would help me a lot in the pulpit as well. This went on for years. I didn’t really think much about it anymore; drinking coffee was just what a lot of people did. After all, how bad could it be when so many Adventists were doing it?

I read medical reports about coffee,

and though some did warn against excessive use, most made coffee sound pretty benign; some even touted the apparent health benefits: less chance of Alzheimer’s, that kind of thing. Just what I loved to hear. In cases in which laboratory rats given caffeine would get some horrific disease, I assuaged myself by thinking I’d have to imbibe three gallons intravenously per day to equal, proportionally, what they gave to those wired-out rodents.

## ICAN QUIT WHEN I WANT

More years went by. I would tell myself, *You can quit whenever you want*. I just didn’t want to. I was told of the massive headaches you’d get, and how for a few days you’d feel terrible. I didn’t want to put myself through it. Why bother? It was, after all, just coffee.

After about 20 years, though, I realized I was drinking it much more than before.

I needed a cup just to feel normal. I think that’s called “tolerance,” the idea that your body, getting so used to the drug, needs more and more each time to give you the effect it had before. I remember drinking a cup of coffee in the early days and getting utterly euphoric. I can’t remember the last time it did that to me. All coffee did now was help keep me awake, give me some energy, at least for a while.

One effect I did notice fairly early on was how it impacted my sleep. I used to be able to put my head down, hit the pillow, and in 10 minutes I would be

out and not move until seven hours later. I hadn’t had a night’s sleep like that in 18 years.

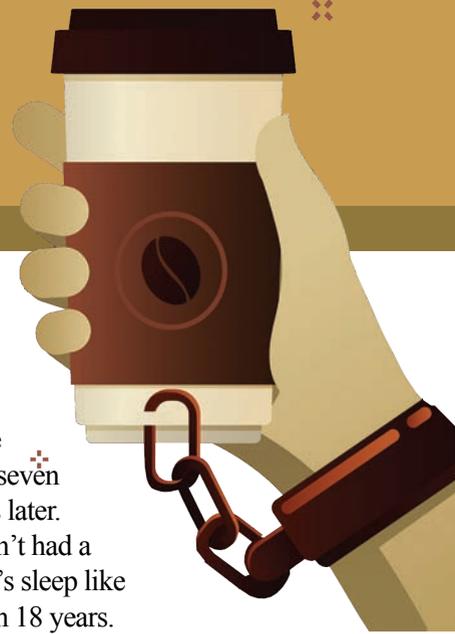
## THE NIGHTMARE BEGINS

Then I decided to quit. *Twenty years is enough*, I thought. I wasn’t getting any younger. I was having some health issues; whether they were linked to the coffee or not, I didn’t know. I just could tell that I had been drinking too much coffee for too long. It was time. More than once I had wished I hadn’t started, but the recriminations weren’t enough to get me to seriously think about stopping. Again, I would ask, *What’s the big deal? It’s only coffee!*

Then, on a whim, on the spur of a moment, I said, “That’s it.” I was going to have some time off, wasn’t going to have my usual heavy load for about two weeks and thought this would be the perfect time. I braced myself for the upcoming headaches and a few days of feeling a bit groggy, that’s all.

## LITTLE DID I KNOW . . .

Not long after I stopped I started to feel a bit sick to my stomach. Because I was having a stomach issue already, I just assumed that’s what it was. Eventually the stomach issue just got worse. I was nauseated, achy, exhausted; all things that I attributed to my ailment.



After about two days a headache came. *Ah*, I thought, *here it is. Just what I need while dealing with my stomach.* But I was determined to quit. Fortunately, the headache soon went away. Though my stomach was hurting me, I didn't feel any of the expected withdrawal symptoms. *Man, this is easy. I don't even miss it.* By that time I was feeling so ill that nothing, not even coffee, appealed to me.

After about four days I was miserable. I had no appetite and was very nauseated. Plus, I couldn't sleep. I must have had two nights in a row when I didn't sleep a wink.

Then the real nightmare began. I was overwhelmed with anxiety. I had never had panic attacks before; now one after another would roll over me. I would think about a problem, any problem, and my chest would tighten, and I'd let out a deep sigh. Again and again waves of panic swept into me, where they firmly lodged in my head and chest. I had no idea what was happening. For almost 36 hours I'd have moments when I feared I was losing my mind. *What is going on?* I knew that unless something gave quickly, I was either going to kill myself or get myself committed.

The biggest stressor was not knowing what was happening. Why was I so sick? Why was I feeling this incredible anxiety? This couldn't be the caffeine withdrawal, could it? That had turned out to be a three-hour headache, no more.

I got out of bed, got online, and much to my amazement, after looking up "caffeine withdrawal symptoms," saw that this was exactly what I was going through. A headache is the most common symptom, but it's not the only one, and not everyone gets it. I read about severe withdrawals and realized that was what was happening to me. What did I think—putting a drug for the past 18 years almost daily into my body, and I would quit cold turkey and get

nothing but a little headache?

I am ashamed to say it, but I was going through an intense drug withdrawal. That was the horrid anguish my body and mind were experiencing.

I was relieved. At least now I knew what was happening. Looking back, I can thank the Lord that I didn't link my symptoms to caffeine withdrawal until I was through the worst, because had I known what was causing those symptoms, I would have gone back to drinking it, and with a vengeance. Once I realized what was happening, I was over the worst. And it was bad! Real bad.

## WICKED STUFF

As of now, I've been off caffeine several months. I'm still not 100 percent myself, but every day gets better (thank the Lord!). I never knew what wicked stuff caffeine really was, not until this experience.

Learn from my mistake. If you haven't started drinking it—don't! Forget the fact that so many people are doing it. Many people drink alcohol; that doesn't make it right, or healthful for you. If you are doing it only a little—stop! The longer you drink it, the more likely you will drink more, and the harder it will be to quit. It's a drug, and like most drugs, it's addicting. Only coffee executives will deny the addictiveness of caffeine; everyone else knows better. If you are a heavy drinker—ease out of it. Wean yourself off (you can do cold turkey, but be prepared). Though everyone is different, and you might not have the symptoms I did, you might have worse. You might even want to get professional help.

It's not *just* coffee. It's caffeine, a powerfully addictive drug. God wants better for you.

*This article first appeared in Adventist World, January, 2015. Used with permission. William Hayden is a pseudonym.*

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*So whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble.*  
1 Corinthians 10:31

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*Whatever Christ asks us to renounce, He offers in its stead something better.*  
Ellen G. White, Education, p. 296

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*Rather than drinking caffeine for an energy boost, we can make better choices, including the eight natural remedies: drinking plenty of water; eating healthfully including lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, participating in regular exercise, enjoying fresh air and sunlight, living temperately without alcohol or tobacco, getting at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night, and trusting in divine power.*

*More importantly, we can celebrate our social times and fellowship opportunities, which are often the place where hot drinks are served, and use healthful, tasty, non-caffeinated beverages—there are wide choices available. We can explore how to enjoy “coziness without caffeine”—our young people would love us to intentionally work on this aspect.*

—Dr. Peter Landless

TED WILSON

# ANSWERS QUESTIONS

ABOUT MISSION AND MORE

BY GINA WAHLEN

Leading up to the Andrews University board meetings in Berrien Springs, Michigan, in early March, university president Andrea Luxton and Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, engaged in an hour-long conversation featuring questions covering a wide array of topics of interest in the church today. The conversation was part of an afternoon program held March 2, 2019, in Pioneer Memorial Church.

Many questions were submitted to Andrews University for the afternoon event including questions on women in ministry, church structure, racial and societal issues, the trinity, and more.

Opening the two-hour program, Luxton explained the first hour would focus on mission, followed by questions and answers. In his opening remarks, Wilson said the meeting

“was a good opportunity to share from our hearts,” and encouraged all to “focus on the mission of the church,” with “everybody doing something for Jesus.”

A short video from the Novosibirsk Seventh-day Adventist Church in Siberia, Russia, was shown, featuring several young adults involved in community outreach and mission. Artur Stele, a GC general vice president and board chairman of Andrews University, explained the International Bible and Mission Conferences—a program that encourages pastors worldwide. Wilson then spoke about recent meetings held in Jamaica, emphasizing Mission to the Cities, Comprehensive Health Ministry, and the effectiveness of healthy lifestyle programs.

Tara Vang, a young adult working at a Life Hope Center in Fresno,

California, shared her powerful story of growing up as a refugee from Laos, and how God led her from social activism into becoming an “advocate for the Lord.”

Following Tara’s testimony, Jim Howard, associate director of the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department, encouraged everyone to develop a personal relationship with God, to become involved with a local church through the “ministry of attendance,” and to study the Bible “for ourselves and with others. It’s not enough to have mission without the message!” he said.

## MANY PASSIONATE QUESTIONS

Introducing the second part of the program Luxton explained how she and her colleague, Stephen Payne, special assistant to the president for university and public affairs, selected questions from the many submissions.

“It was very clear there were a lot of passionate questions,” Luxton said. “We’ve tried to go through those and group them according to the topics that people are interested in. . . . We hope that we have been true to the questions and concerns that you have. . . . We will be dealing with questions such as mission, young people in the church, women in the church, unity in the



church, trinity, and all kinds of other interesting topics.”

Luxton began by asking Wilson about his time as a graduate student at Andrews. “If you were to choose one thing that Andrews University gave you that has helped you since then in your leadership and in your ministry, what would that one thing be? And . . . what would one thing be that you would hope students would take away from here?”

“Andrews University has played a very critical role in my life,” responded Wilson. “I suppose one of the biggest areas of impact was the opportunity to be a student under extremely fine teachers. People who were not only experts in their field of specialty, but took time to talk to me, to encourage me, to correct me. . . . If we look to the future and what a student can take away from Andrews University, I would say that those of you who touch the lives of students . . . if you take a very special interest in people it will be a marvelous opportunity. Something that will truly be a blessing.”

### UPHOLDING BIBLE TRUTH

In response to a question regarding the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14, Wilson affirmed that “the Three Angels’ Messages are the basis of what the Seventh-day Adventist Church is all about. . .

the very core of the Three Angels’ Messages is the righteousness of Jesus Christ.” Wilson further explained what those messages mean and why they are so important to share. “God is calling for us to truly represent what those messages are saying. It is one of the most relevant messages today.”

On the topic of discrimination and societal issues, Wilson stated, “Everyone should be treated with great respect, and fairly. That’s what Jesus did. That’s what He wants us to do. . . . Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in trying to help people who are in need. . . . but all of that needs to be done in the context of the gospel. And the ultimate goal is not simply to right wrongs from a societal setting, because . . . the world is not getting better. . . . It’s not getting better until people meet Jesus. Then Jesus can change you . . . and you can reach out and you can help people.” Citing Matthew 25 as an example, Wilson added, “That, to me, is truly an understanding of how we ought to relate to the needs of the world, but with a view of leading people to the foot of the cross.”

In addressing the LGBTQIA movement, Wilson stated, “When we look at the situations people find themselves in, we need to respect them. We need to understand where they’ve come from. We need to

ask God to help us know how best to be of service to people. But, that [LGBTQIA] is a particular societal trend that is completely in opposition to this Book [the Bible]. And it doesn’t mean that this book doesn’t also talk about aberrant, errant, heterosexual activity—it does. Whatever leads you away from what God’s Word says is something you want to avoid, but you want to help those who need to find restoration in Christ. So, I want to urge everyone to go back to The Word. And the Word will truly help us find ways in which to relate to people who might feel discriminated against. . . .”

As the discussion continued through other topics—abortion, women in ministry, unity, diversity, relevancy and more—upholding the truths taught in the Bible was a central theme to which Wilson repeatedly returned.

Responding to a question on the Trinity, Wilson referred to the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White as he affirmed, “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have been together from eternity and will be together through eternity. . . . they work in complete harmony . . . they are the Godhead. They cannot work in opposition to each other. Yes, they have specific roles, but they work in perfect unity and harmony.”

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## HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

In response to Luxton’s final question, “How do we move forward as a church?” Wilson answered, “That’s a great question, and I don’t have the complete answer, except to say that I personally lean on the Lord all the time, as much as I can, and that’s what gets me through a lot of things. I don’t worry about a lot of criticism anymore. It’s not about me. It’s about how we can prosper God’s precious last-day message, which is entrusted into our hands. . . . I think we need to lift the vision of why we are here. And I would say one of the greatest challenges we have is, first of all, a lack of confidence in God’s Word [the Bible], as opposed to what somebody told you on the internet, [and] a lack of understanding of the urgency of the hour . . .

“I believe we are very close to when those things can happen rapidly at the end to bring us to a very final approach to this world. And I think the sense of urgency has to be placed in the hearts of people. And the only way you can do that—you can’t force it, you can’t legislate it. —is for each of us to point people to God’s complete truth [the Bible] and just say, ‘Make it your studied effort to understand why we’re here and what your role is in all of this.’ In the concept of that, if people truly are wanting to do that, I believe, as the Bible says, that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. . . .

“It’s going to be allowing the Holy Spirit to take control of this church worldwide with over 21 million members, including many young people, and many diverse ethnic groups—everybody understanding we’re part of a last-day mission. And if we do that, I believe we can find our way through some of these differences, because the real mission will loom large. . .

“Differences will be lost sight of as we come closer to Christ and His true mission for us. Now that may sound like, ‘Yeah, that’s a nice way to just say it, and a pat answer,’ but I truly believe it.”

TO WATCH THE ENTIRE PROGRAM, GO TO  
[HTTPS://BEINFORMED.ADVENTIST.ORG.](https://beinformed.adventist.org)



## Forgiving His Would-be Killer: Village in Shock

BY ANDREW MCCHESENEY, ADVENTIST MISSION

The would-be killer of a Seventh-day Adventist store clerk won’t face punishment after East Timor authorities accepted a decision by the clerk to forgive rather than seek justice in the attack.

The case has shocked the East Timor town of Lospalos, where retribution is common, and even the police have expressed disbelief that store clerk Edu Wachumura chose to forgive.



Edu Wachumura

The attacker, Juvinil Ananias, thrust a spear through a store door in a drunken attempt to kill Edu in 2017. The spear miraculously only nipped the tip of Edu’s nose.

Edu met Juvinil at a Lospalos police station on March 20, 2019, and signed a declaration to forgive him. Juvinil quietly expressed his remorse for his actions and offered to slaughter a pig and throw a

feast in Edu’s honor, but Edu declined, explaining that he doesn’t eat pork.

Police officers watched incredulously as Edu signed the paper in their presence.

“You should at least give a gift or a cow to Edu,” an officer told Juvinil.

But Edu dismissed any need for compensation.

The two men delivered the document to court on March 21, formally ending any possibility that Juvinil would face punishment.

Edu joined the Adventist Church after taking Bible studies from Zelindo João Lay, the store owner.

### THE ATTACK

The attack, which was featured as a Sabbath School mission story in fourth quarter 2018, started when Juvinil drunkenly stumbled into the store and swore at 28-year-old Edu, who was working behind the counter. Juvinil also mocked the Seventh-day

Adventist Church. Later, he angrily threatened to kill Edu but backed off when he saw the other customers in the store.

“I’m going to kill you tonight,” he snarled as he headed out the door.

That night, Edu heard a knock on the double metal doors at the back of the shop.

He went to the doors, which were locked and chained together, and looked between them to see who was outside.

At that moment, a spear plunged through the doors.

In a split second, Edu raised an arm, diverting the course of the spear. The tip of the spear sliced the end of his nose.

The store owner, Zelindo, found Edu in the hospital a short time later. Edu’s family was standing around the hospital bed, heatedly discussing plans to kill Juvinil.

Zelindo, an Adventist leader in the community, turned to Edu, who was lying in the bed.

“I want to ask you something,” he said. “How many times does Jesus say we must forgive our brother?”

Edu knew the answer. As part of his job, he was required to attend weekly Bible studies with Zelindo. He remembered hearing about Matthew 18:21-22.

“Seventy times seven,” Edu said.

“What about you?”

“I’m going to forgive him.”

## THE AFTERMATH

Edu’s family was shocked.

“What?” Edu’s brother said. “He nearly killed you.”

Two days later, Edu showed up at the shop to work. Zelindo urged him to go home and rest, but Edu insisted that he felt well. After a short time, the police came to the shop to ask Edu whether he wanted the attacker to go to jail. Edu shook his head.

“I’ve forgiven the man,” he said.

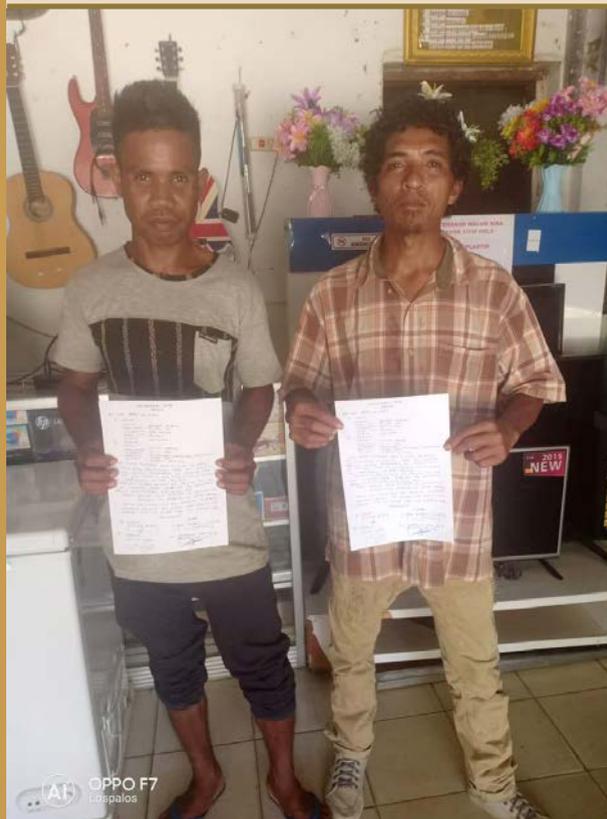
The police detained the attacker anyway and put him in jail for a week. But then let him go. The lengthy legal process played out for two years, when finally Juvinil was officially declared forgiven by the authorities.

Zelindo has encouraged Edu to invite Juvinil to church on Sabbath.

Zelindo hopes the stunned local community will understand God also wants to forgive them — just as Edu forgave Juvinil after the 2017 attack. Following the attack, Edu’s brother and sister were baptized, and Zelindo hopes many more people will follow their example.

“Everyone is talking about Edu’s decision to forgive, and no one understands it,” he said in an earlier interview. “It is the power of God.”

**Above:** Seventh-day Adventist store clerk Edu Wachumura, left, with his would-be killer, Juvinil Ananias, hold their letters of forgiveness, in Lospalos, East Timor, on March 20, 2019. **Below:** Edu and Juvinil embrace. (Zelindo João Lay / For Adventist Mission)



# THE BACK PAGE



**Directions:** For more information on an item, click on the corresponding number on the map.

**1** A new documentary highlighting the early beginnings of Adventism in the **British Isles** was recently released by the British Union Conference media department. The 30-minute film, “A Story of Perseverance,” may be viewed by [clicking on this link](#).

**2** The Taksim Seventh-day Adventist Church in **Istanbul, Turkey**, was re-opened and re-dedicated February 16, 2019, following 50 years of attempts by the Church to regain the title to this historic property. At last, the title was returned to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Leaders and members are delighted. [Read more here](#).

**3** Flash flooding and mudslides resulting from torrential rains in **East Indonesia** destroyed millions of buildings and left more than 50 people dead, 70 people injured, and thousands displaced in the Northeastern town of Sentani, near the provincial capital of Jayapura. [Click here to learn more](#).

**4** Deadly Cyclone Idai swept through **Mozambique and Malwai**, killing at least 122 people. The cyclone severely damaged Mozambique Adventist University. Several church leaders were on campus for an International Bible and Mission Conference. More on [this story here](#).

**5** Life Health Foods (LHF) in **Berkeley Vale, NSW, Australia** has teamed up with former Olympian Stephanie Rice to increase awareness of the benefits of following a plant-based diet and to encourage Australians to eat more plant-based foods. Since partnering with Rice in 2018, LHF brand Vegie Delights has promoted a plant-based diet as being not only good for health, but also for animal welfare and the environment. [Read more here](#).

**The State of Military Service in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Conference: Combatants, Non-Combatants, Conscientious Objectors**  
April 10-11, 2019 • World Headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church • Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

## Welcome to the Spring Meeting 2019 By Hensley Mooroooven, GC Undersecretary

The main purpose of the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, according to GC *Working Policy*, is to receive “the audited financial reports of the General Conference and for transacting regular Executive Committee

business” (GCWP B 10 05). In addition, other items during this meeting include:

- GC departmental reports;
- the presentation and dedication of the 2020 missionary book, *Hope Beyond Tomorrow*, by Pastor Mark Finley,

presented by GC Publishing Ministries

- For mission advancement, we are reconfiguring the territory of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.
- An Open House and Dedication of the newly refurbished Office of Adventist Archives, Statistics, and Research, on Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.

- An Open House and Dedication of the newly relocated and remodeled area for Adventist World Radio, Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. You are welcome to join us via livestream at [executivecommittee.adventist.org](http://executivecommittee.adventist.org). Livestreaming will begin at 8:00 a.m. (EDT) Tuesday, April 9, and will continue through Wednesday, April 10.