

The Global Adventist Dental Connection

Christian Dental Professionals, United to Advance God's Healing



Edition #5
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YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF GOD'S WORK ON THIS EARTH

YOU CAN COLLABORATE WITH HIS CHURCH TO FURTHER HIS KINGDOM

WHAT YOU DO FOR PATIENTS IS NOT ONLY HEALING AND EVANGELISM BUT THE TOUCH OF GOD'S HAND

In this Edition

Introduction from editor
The Beginning, Adventist Global Dentistry
God Does It Again!
A Life of Mission Driven Adventure
Recollections of Web Prince
Mission Opportunities
Volunteer Acknowledgements

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The Global Adventist Dental Connection

Introduction from the Editor

I sat in amazement as I heard an experienced female dentist tell, through an interpreter, about her experience, dodging the “Sabbath problem” as she struggled obtain the education needed to become a skilled dental professional. Time after time, God intervened to miraculously allow her to continue when it seemed completely impossible. Her story can be found, along with other Adventist Dental pioneers in this issue of the Global Adventist Dental Connection.

In many countries around the world, the challenges were almost insurmountable and those who obtained a dental education showed amazing resiliency and determination to become dentists is an atmosphere, often hostile to their commitment to obey God. These fractious situations were the rea-

son that the Adventist church eventually began the first Adventist school of dentistry and they continue to be the motivation behind establishing additional dental schools, Adventist dental associations, and non-Sabbath, Dental, Continuing Education Courses around the world.

We wish, in this newsletter, to salute the pioneers of the Adventist dental ministry. You will find that indeed we are effective and stand tall because we “stand on the shoulders of giants.” As I read the story of Dr. Eldon Carman, I find myself dazzled and humbled by his fortitude and commitment. I see God working in the life of Dr. Web Prince who was the first Dean of the Loma Linda School of Dentistry and a very exacting character. His story is told by Dr. “Pug” Lund who

is a pioneer Adventist Educator in his own right. We hope that you enjoy these stories and others, and that they inspire you to pioneer your own path of service!

Thank you so much for joining us! Please give us feedback about this and other issues and please send us any contribution that would benefit others in the Global Adventist Dental community. We would be especially thankful for information about the people we cite here as volunteers and others of whom you know.



Editor: Doyle Nick

The Beginning, Adventist Global Dentistry

Those of us who have served as Dentists in the Adventist international system at times have felt isolated, like we were pioneers. As we contrast our experience with people sent to international locations in the early years of the Adventist church – two-three weeks on a ship, no internet, no phone system, no dependable or timely mail system – we realize just how adventurous and committed those early pioneers were. Their first three years, before their scheduled furlough, must have been very exciting and at times, lonely and very difficult.

I very much appreciate Dr. David Trim Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S., Director of Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists who was kind enough to not only research the question about the first Adventist Missionary Dentists but sent the following message.

Dear Doyle,

The first missionary dentist we can find in the records of the GC Executive Committee is in 1915 when the

committee voted (Feb. 8, 1915) to “approve of Dr J V Scott, of St Johns, Oregon, going to India as a self-supporting dentist ... and that the transportation be paid by the Mission Board.” Two years later, though, the committee voted (Feb. 8, 1917) to “approve of Dr J Vinton Scott, of Portland, Oregon, going to Guatemala as a self-supporting dentist, and that we pay his transportation to that field, with the understanding that we assume no obligation for his support while in the field.” So, evidently, between 1915 & 1917 he’d been to India and returned.

Eighteen months later the committee voted (Sept. 10, 1918) to “pay the transportation of Dr J Vinton Scott and family to India, to engage in self-supporting work as a dentist in the city of Bombay.” By 1929, however, Scott was no longer a self-supporting missionary. On Sept. 9, 1929, the committee: VOTED, “That we invite Dr, J. Vincent Scott of Seattle to respond to the call from the Far Eastern Division for a dentist to connect with the medical work in Shanghai.”

So, this J. Vincent or Vinton Scott was a repeat offender, so to speak, in dental missions. Arguably he was the first officially called dentist, since he worked in Shanghai.

The second missionary who was a DDS, as far as we can tell, was Mrs. Doris Christensen, who took a DDS from University of California at Berkeley in 1925. She went as a missionary to Burma in 1930 but was not called as a dentist; she went with her husband, a minister. But she did work as a dentist. She later did further "postgraduate work in dentistry" which was paid for by the GC Committee (May 17, 1945); she served as a dentist in Burma and India in the late 1930s; and possibly in Northern Rhodesia in the late 1940s/1950s, and in Burma again in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Another early dentist missionary, one of whom we know very little, was Dr. Vernon Mountain. He was in Hong Kong as a self-supporting dentist from some point in the late 1940s to 1951 when the GC Committee paid for his travel and freight home and paid him three months' salary (GCC June 14, 1951)

You mentioned believing that J. R. Wahlen was the first Loma Linda dentist to serve as a foreign missionary. He went to South Korea, called to Seoul Sanitarium, in 1960, having graduated from the College of Medical Evangelists (CME) in 1957. We have a photo of him in 1958.

But Joseph Beckner was a dentist, called to Porto Rico Sanitarium in 1955; he was apparently the first CME dentist to be actually called to mission service – but he and his wife, having applied to be missionaries when he was still a student in 1949, turned down Puerto Rico! However, they later served in Saigon Hospital from 1973 till the evacuation. We have photos of him in 1949 and again in the 1970s.

I will be sending you by the end of the week a scanned copy of the photo of Ferdinand Stahl doing dental surgery in the Andes in the 1930s.

Blessings,
DAVID

It is interesting to me that although early Adventist Missionaries included few dentists, much dentistry was done by the early non-dental missionaries. Wherever those early pioneers went, one of the great needs was for dentistry and the response was to extract teeth. We find nurses (i.e. Fernando and Ana Stahl), physicians, and even high school graduates doing extractions. From Leo and Jessie Halliwell on the Amazon to the highest mountains in Asia, non-

professionals were pressed into service to take out teeth. Today, the situation is little different. As anyone who has been on even a short international mission trip knows, the line for dentistry is usually the longest and many of those waiting people have great needs. I am pleased that today we have mobile restorative dentistry as well to help satisfy those needs.

I remember being in Lesotho where we had been doing dentistry for several days. As we drove away from the compound on that final day, I saw tears in the eyes of a lady. These tears, shed because she had been too far back in too long a line, are to me representative of so much need and so much needless suffering. They inspire us to be involved with service dentistry where the need is found. Thank you for joining together in this important part of God's reaching out to His suffering children.



Ferdinand 'Fernando' Stahl is the gentleman on the left in the straw boater hat, looking at the camera. J.W. Westphal, famous missionary to South America is in the bowler hat, looking on. The gentleman in the Ranger hat, who is extracting a woman's tooth, is not identified. This photo was taken in 1911 at the Lake Titicaca Mission which ministered to the Aymara Indians and was published in the *Adventist Review*.



Ray Wahlen in Korea, 1958

God Does It Again!

Dr. Hada Mary Gregorio de Chaskelis stands about 5 ft. tall but her influence and her commitment to God has made her a giant among the early Adventist dentists.

As related to Dr. Jorge Escondriolo by Dr. Gregorio:

Many people told me I would never make it. However, I decided to study dentistry. There were big problems with some subjects because classes were on Saturdays. I remember in my 3rd year, on subject's classes took place Tuesday and Saturday. I talked to the Professor and he refused to help me, saying that I would not finish my degree with my desire for no class on Saturday. He recommended I should change my focus and study something else. Although I missed the lectures that took place on Saturdays, I continued attending the Tuesday classes. One Tuesday, the teacher noticed me and in front of all my classmates he said: "Gregorio do not waste your time, this subject is not easy to pass". I had to repeat that year to stay true to my principles but the following year I went back to register again for the class. When the same teacher recognized me among my new classmates, he congratulated me for having changed my mind and to that I answered: "I did not change my mind. I know God will help me". He became very angry and insisted I was wasting my time. In my house we all prayed for God to manifest himself miraculously. When I was about to not pass the subject again, another one of the professors in that subject asked to teach only

on Tuesdays, so I took the opportunity and changed groups to attend classes with him only those days!

During my Second year a very good oral surgeon-educator taught our surgery course which had the clinical portion offered only on Sabbath. I was very afraid I would waste the year so, in fear, I decided to talk with the president of our class. Before I could speak with him, however, he told me I was required to join him and the rest of my class in a certain room. This made me even more afraid because I did not expect him to be sympathetic to my plight. Imagine my joy, however, when I heard him say to the class that going to oral surgery clinic on Saturday was too onerous for us and that we needed little weekend time to rest. He said we, as a class, should insist the lab be changed to a week day. God had worked for me once again!

These are just 2 examples but there are many others in which

God intervened so I could pursue my dream of practicing dentistry. I had promised the Lord to dedicate my life to his service if I could finish my degree. Thanks to Him, I graduated with a degree in Dentistry on May 2, 1966, becoming the first Adventist Dentist to graduate from Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Argentina.

Meanwhile, God continued to lead, and on February 24, 1966, I was voted into the medical staff of the River Plate Sanitarium (SAP) in what is today known as Liberator San Martín, Argentina.

Wonderful! God had already prepared a place for me to serve my neighbor, even before I finished my studies! During the final few days June 1966, I traveled to visit my new home. It was a small town with dirt roads and no street or traffic lights. The Sanitarium was large and busy but there was no dental department. At that time, a dentist visited every 3 months to extract teeth and do a few other procedures. Dental care was a rare and precious commodity. When there were emergencies, the patients had to be taken by a "Russian car" over dirt roads to Crespo, the nearest town, which is located about 15 km away. My work was first to establish a dental clinic to serve the patients of the Sanatorium, the students in primary, high school, and college, and the general popu-



River Plate Sanitarium (SAP) when Gregorio enrolled

lation in the town and surrounding countryside. I started working at the end of July and in August, I received my first paycheck. Pr. Bitz, administrator of the SAP, asked me for a list of the necessary things that would improve the existing dental office. A few days later, dental materials, instruments for surgery, endodontic and restorative supplies and equipment, and a new dental chair were purchased. Two years later, an X-ray machine and a turbine handpiece were purchased, which allowed us to treat patients with different capacities under general anesthesia in the operating room. Items were also purchased to organize the prosthetic laboratory since the prostheses took a

long time when they were sent to the cities of Paraná, Santa Fe or Rosario. After 34 years of uninterrupted service I retired from the dental practice. From the year 2000 until today, God continues to be merciful to me. "I only have words of thanks to Him for allowing me to work to alleviate pain and improve the oral health of my neighbors in need."



Dr. Hada Mary Gregorio de Chaskelis and Dr. Jorge Escondriolo

Currently, 52 years later, a new 10-chair dental clinic is being constructed with with the hospital, Sanatorio Adventista del Plata and in 2016 Universidad Adventista del Plata started a Dental Degree Program! The Sanatorio Adventista del Plata (River Plate Sanitarium & Hospital) has ten dentists (Rubén Ponce, Silvina Giannini, Carla Nasser, Jael Cairo, Natalia Gregorio, Laura Morero, Agostina Díaz, Nicolás Retamar, Gustavo Garrigós, Jorge Escandriolo Nackauzi), two Dental assistants (Jesica Korsich and Jimena Antunez), two Secretaries (Carina Gironde and Mariana Dalinger), five dental chairs, five radiovisiographs and all the dental specialties are attended.

A Life of Mission Driven Adventure



Mother, Eva Gibson Carman, Eldon, and his nanny in Swatow, China, circa 1926

Eldon E Carman was not yet two years old when he first went as a missionary with his parents to Swatow, China. After a few years in China, he and his mother became very ill and had to return to the states. Due to his illness the doctors gave him very little chance of survival, but he was to prove them wrong. Thus began a life of travel and adventure for our dad.

After completing his dental degree in 1947 at Emory University (Loma Linda's dental program had not begun at that time), he and his new bride, Phyllis Ruth Preston, settled in Marietta, GA and he began his general dentistry practice. Before long he decided that orthodontics was the specialty he'd like to pursue, so off to Montreal, Canada the family went!! Interest-

ing to note is that the ortho program was the only program in the university taught in English!! A fact he didn't know until we arrived!! We all returned to Marietta after 2 years and he thus became the first orthodontist in Cobb County, where he practiced for more than 30 years.

Along with his orthodontic practice my father's inbred love for missions never left him. In 1970 dad was asked by the General Conference of SDA's to be the Dental Secretary in the Department of Health Ministries to oversee the denomination's dental mission program. This led to a 23-year adventure of establishing dental mission clinics around the globe. Starting with just a handful of overseas clinics, there were over 100 clinics in service when he retired. He always said that dentistry was an opening wedge for

the church in these underdeveloped countries. Daddy felt it best if he got to know the minister of health for the country. He and the church were coming into an area that they wanted to help, but he felt it vital that he have the support of the country as well. This proved over and over to be a wise practice

During those early years, mother was able to travel with him some of the time, but often as not, she would have his suitcase packed and off he'd go. I still have his last passport that has so many pages added to it, it is rather bulky. This is at least his third one!

While I was an academy student, it was amazing to me how daddy had the time to leave his practice for weeks at a time to trek across unknown lands in an effort to see a new dental clinic established. The Lord truly was involved in our lives, for daddy was able to see that all three of us children went to Adventist schools for our education. How he did that on so much time away from his practice is a testament to God's leading and providing.

Dad would be gone for a month at a time and have all sorts of stories and pictures to show. Probably a family favorite was from one of his trips to India. He was riding on one of the local trains going to a new destination. It had turned to evening and was dark outside. Not knowing when to get off he asked one of the attendants to let him know when he should get off for the town he wanted to visit. In a little while the attendant came by and said, "Now is the time to get off". However, the train was still moving. Dad asked, "now?" and the attendant said, "Yes, just jump out the door." Dad grabbed his huge suitcase and jumped! Unbeknown to him it was a seven or eight foot drop to the ground. So here was this big American man jumping from the train, hitting the ground and rolling to a stop. Surprisingly, he didn't break a bone,

but got up and walked to the city and continued on his with his quest to set up a new dental clinic in India.

Another favorite story happened on a trip to the South Pacific. He was on a small plane with several

other missionaries when a flying fox, with a wing span of more than 6 feet, hit the wing of their plane making a foot-deep indentation into the wing. Everyone in the plane was quiet and then dad whispered to the pilot, "Are we in any danger?" The pilot looked at him and said, "no, not as long as we don't stall." "The problem will be when we try to land." Dad figured the pilot wanted to live as much as he did so he did not ask any more questions! They were able to land safely, praise the Lord. Then the pilot, a very enterprising bush pilot, took newspapers and wadded them up, stuck them into the gaping hole and covered the wing with duct tape to make the semblance of a wing! They took off later that day and made it to their base camp, rather frazzled, but safe none the less! He never knew just what he was going to encounter.

His mission trips were always filled with excitement, whether it was being held at gun point, finding a little birds rib cage in the middle of his enchilada, or running out of fuel while flying in the jungles of Africa. All the dangerous and unusual adventures just added to his passion for dental missions!

Besides doing dentistry, he was also interested to see what he could bring from the states to the local villages that would be of help. I'll never forget he and mother washing and drying hundreds of disposable plastic communion cups so he could pack them in his suitcase to give to the needy mission churches. We learned there was always a need for whatever he could provide!

I mentioned earlier that the various ministers of health in these countries often became friends with dad. In fact, it was while on one of his last trips to Moscow to open the dental clinic that our mother, who had been able to make the trip with him, became very ill. They were on the way to the French hospital when she passed away. It was the minister of health that had an ambulance delivered to the Moscow Dental Clinic to get my mother. She died on dad's 70th birthday, Nov 17, 1992. Dad lived nearly 20 more years, pressing forward and trying to live life to the fullest even though there was now a huge hole in his heart. He passed away quietly at 89 on Aug 2, 2012.

Our dad was a great man who loved life, his God, his family and his mission.



Recollections of Web Prince,

by Melvin "Pug" Lund

Of the many people with whom I have had the opportunity to interact, Web Prince is one of the most unforgettable characters I've ever encountered.

The initial step toward Seventh-day Adventist medical education was the establishment, in Loma Linda, California, of a nursing school in 1905, soon followed by the establishment of a medical school in 1909.

After World War II, one major obstacle for SDA students attending secular universities were the required classes and tests scheduled on the Sabbath. Clustered at slightly more lenient dental schools were a few Adventist dental students, these schools were in Georgia, California, Oregon, and Nebraska. However, it increasingly became apparent that the SDA health education system would have to be expanded to also include dentistry.

Dr. J. Russell Mitchell, a well-known dental educator at the University of Georgia, Atlanta was a major influence and advocate of Adventist dental education. In 1943, the National Association of Seventh-day Adventist Dentists (NASDAD) was formed with the express intent to facilitate the formation of an Adventist dental school. Dr. Mitchell as the first

President of NASDAD and served for four years as the founding president. It only seemed logical that, someday, he would be the initial dean, of the new SDA school at the College of Medical Evangelists (CME, now Loma Linda University) which was established in 1953. Dr. Mitchell was invited to give the commencement address at the College of Medical Evangelists on June 11, 1950. Tragically, this was his last major speaking engagement because he suddenly passed away a few weeks later from complications with an unexpected intestinal blood clot.

A very capable and imposing personality was ready and able to take up the torch of establishing a dental school. At 6 feet tall, with a resonant, booming voice, Dr. M. Webster Prince was not hesitant to speak and was totally aware of everything that was taking in the process of getting a new school off the ground. He was not a person who was easily ignored.

Dr. Prince graduated from the University of Michigan in 1909 and settled & practiced in the state. He served as a member and as well as the chair of the Council on Dental Education, and was a founding member of NASDAD and its president in 1947 and 1949. He was then asked to be the first Dean of

the new SDA Dental school. The CME board voted to begin a dental program and Dr. Prince was officially asked to be the first Dean.

As Dr. Prince began to assemble a faculty for the new school he incorporated the newly current concept of a scientific education and just one of technique and procedure. All new faculty were required to have graduate training.

My first encounter with Web Prince took place late in the summer of 1952. My wife Marg, drove with close friends to San Francisco and met him at the Mark Hopkins Hotel, at the top of Nob Hill. This made us realize that he expected things to be first class and first rate.

I was asked to join the faculty at the CME Dental School but they required all faculty to have a Master's degree so, after selling our practice and home, I found myself in Graduate school in Michigan. Among other classmates of mine were Ralph Steinman, Jess Hayden, Jr., Glenn H. Curtis, Lloyd Baum, and William Buchanan, all founding faculty of LLUSD. On a monthly basis, during my graduate training, Dr. Prince kept in touch. When my wife and I moved to Loma Linda, our soon-to-be new col-



Original faculty and SDA dentists at NASDAD chapter meeting June 25, 1951, in Seattle, Washington.



LLU School of Dentistry in the 1950's

who let us know that being punctual had significance. He REALLY roasted the three of us, so much so that it reminded me of a logging incident where I got dressed down with not so civilized language, but this time the language was very civilized. Dr. Prince's gravitas was such that this incident was never ever the topic of discussion by anyone, including my family.

istrative activity. We never brought this activity to the attention of Dean Prince, and the dean never said anything to us. It may be that there are times when not saying anything is the best strategy.

Web Prince and his wife were highly regarded in our family. Our preschool children would roam the halls and clinics of the dental building as if they owned it. From a gift of crayons at Christmas to a proffered dime on every meeting, this imposing but kind-hearted gentleman earned my children's good will and I am sure it was the same among all of the dental faculty and families.

leagues, including Dr. Prince, banded together to paint the house that was planned for us. I was later told that Dr. Prince lost his watch in the bottom of a paint can.

Dean Prince had a keen interest in the game of croquet, so we set up a court using the entire green space between the dental school and the church. The players, which included part of dental school faculty, did not show their opponents any mercy. My memory is a bit flawed, but I trust the Dean often won, as he supplied the required equipment for the game.

The dental school building at Loma Linda is called Prince Hall. This for the pioneer that used his great talent, charm, and, at times, the bully pulpit to foster a culture of excellence and quality that has continued to benefit thousands of students and hundreds of thousands of their patients throughout the following years.

Even though the dental school was housed in temporary quarters, because the permanent building for the dental school was still under construction, Dr. Prince demanded professionalism. One day, Dr. Lloyd Baum, Dr. Harold Schnepfer and I were walking a bit too casually so we arrived late. As we entered, we became the immediate target of Dean Prince,

Loma Linda rarely experiences real, cold, snowy winter but frequently there was snow in the local mountains. On many of these occasions, usually a Thursday afternoon, fellow faculty member Lloyd Baum and I would slip away to the snowy slopes

to enjoy a few hours of fun. It was not surprise but it was not uncommon to ourselves in the company of several dental students who also slipped away from campus to enjoy a few hours on the slopes. There were some great skiers among them and they felt confident they were safe from any admin-



Dr. Melvin (Pug) Lund, at 96, is the surviving founding faculty member of Loma Linda's School of Dentistry. We appreciate so much putting his recollections on paper for us to share.



Loma Linda the 1950's

Worldwide Dental Mission Opportunities In SDA Mission Dental Clinics

Globally, there are about 120 Seventh-day Adventist-owned dental practices around the world. Some of them could benefit from your expertise and collaboration and you will benefit from the experience.

Here are some current opportunities. Please write to us if there is any opportunity that you would like to discuss.

Long-term Service

Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo - SDA Dental Clinic needs a regular Adventist dental missionary in the Adventist Dental Clinic. This clinic in the capitol city of Democratic Republic of Congo and has the potential to attract the most influential and discerning people in the country. A dentist with skill, vision, and a sense of adventure can make a tremendous difference in God's work in this area.

Glite, Togo - Needs a volunteer dentist who could serve for several months, preferably a year with room, board, and stipend provided.

Saipan SDA Dental Clinic –A capable dentist is needed to commit to a five-year posting on the beautiful, island paradise of Saipan. The position of Dental Director would be a good fit for an experienced, dental leader. The Saipan practice is one of the most vibrant and consistently effective clinics in the Adventist dental system and a number of skilled professionals work together there.

Guam Adventist Clinic – The very active dental clinic in the Guam Polyclinic would be a very enjoyable and rewarding place to spend some years providing needed dental care and working with like-minded professionals. Guam is a beautiful Pacific Island in the Northern Marianna Islands.

Grenada – An entrepreneurial dentist will soon be needed in this newly rebuilt, renewed and equipped Adventist dental practice on the Island of Grenada.

Short-term Service

Yaoundé, Cameroon – This dental clinic has been in the healing business for forty years. All of the dentists are from Cameroon and they would enjoy having a self-supporting volunteer to volunteer and work with them for one or a few months.

AMEN, Maranatha, Hands, and many other similar organizations are often in need of able and willing volunteers to make important, one-time and short-term programs successful. These organizations have websites that inform volunteers of needs, schedules, and other details.

Maasai Dental Clinic, Kenya – Would you appreciate a spectacular cultural and natural experience in addition to the satisfaction of volunteer service to wonderfully interesting, appreciative, and open people? It would be hard to imagine a more exciting short term opportunity for a dentist than this dental clinic near the Maasai Mara Game Reserve in Kenya Africa.

For More Information about any of these opportunities & others, please contact Doyle Nick at 909-558-4607 or NickD@gc.adventist.org.

The editors would like to recognize the contributions of several skilled individuals

We would like to thank the following generous and capable individuals for their contributions to this newsletter. Volunteers responsible for translations include:

Russian - Nadezda Ivanova

Portuguese - Priscilla Costa

Spanish – Luis Mendez

Katie Layon, MBA contributes proof reading and editing as well as layout skills. We appreciate the contributions of the whole General Conference Health Ministries Team as well as those of Loma Linda University School of Dentistry.



Priscilla Costa, DDS, graduated from LLU IDP, originally from Brazil, works in Ukiah, CA.



Dr. Luis Méndez, Veracruz, Mexico is full-time faculty member of the School of Dentistry at University of Montemorelos, MEXICO.



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Dental Affairs, General Conference Health Ministries Department

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