

# The Global Adventist Dental Connection

## Christian Dental Professionals, United to Advance God's Healing



Edition #2  
Jan-April 2017



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

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### **In this Edition**

Introduction

Now I Know Why

Once Again, God Makes Something From Nothing

Caring Hands Around The World

Mission Opportunities

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# The Global Adventist Dental Connection

## Introduction from the Editors

I hope that this issue of the Global Adventist Dental Connection is helpful and interesting to you. We are so pleased that you are reading this issue!

In this second issue we are bringing to you a selection of articles about the dental ministry that illustrates the diversity of opportunities that Christian dentists have to serve God with their profession. These stories range from the discovery of the meaning of whole-person care by a dental student to a report by a capable and adventurous dentist in Africa. It includes an account about a self-supporting dental mission work and oppor-

tunities for volunteers around the world. In addition, you can read about establishing an Adventist dental school in South America which has just passed it's one year anniversary. Wherever you are and whatever your practice modality, God has a satisfying and effective work for you to do for Him.

We ask you to write to us to tell us about your experience with this kind of collaboration with God. Also, please do not hesitate to write to us by email and let us know what you think about this issue, what you would like to see in future issues, and what would be most useful to you.

In the next issue, we expect to spend some time exploring what is meant by a dental team and what a team can accomplish for dental patients. Please tell your dental professional friends about the Global Dental Connection and direct them to <http://www.dentalmissionsda.org/subscribe.html> to subscribe.

May God continue to guide and bless you as you do that wonderful thing that you do for patients!



Editor: Doyle Nick

## Now I Know Why

**This article is the testimony of a fourth year dental student at Loma Linda University who has found the satisfaction that is the potential of whole person dental care.**

When I first applied to dental school in Loma Linda, I didn't apply because I loved dentistry, or sciences, or working with my hands. I thought that I applied because it was practical and logical and because it seemed like a reasonable profession. I wasn't at all sure I'd be good at dentistry; in fact, I feared I'd be quite terrible at it. And it seemed that I wasn't too far from wrong! I did know that I craved a spiritual environment like Loma Linda, after four years of living in New York City and attending a public university that made me lose faith in other humans. In fact, I gave God an ultimatum, "Give me Loma Linda or nothing. I will apply to dental school once, and if I don't get in – well, that will be that! I will find something else to do!"

I was accepted but I had a difficult time my first year, feeling the academics were overwhelming and dental labs were just an exercise in how many times I could re-do something. Slowly, however, I gained some interest in dentistry, and I was consoled by upperclassmen reassuring me that after second year, life would be easier.

The second year wasn't easier but with work and persistence, I made it to the third year. However, I still didn't know why God had answered my prayer and brought me to dental school. And that was the year that in my prayer life, I asked God to teach me how to love. That was the year that I began to understand why God had brought me here. At first I was completely over-

whelmed with caring for patients. Somehow or another (I suspect because my name looks so close to Valencia) I was assigned a large number of Spanish speaking patients, making up to one-half to two-thirds of my patient family. I am not Hispanic but 100% Chinese and although I knew a little Spanish from language requirements in high school and college, communicating dentistry in Spanish to patients required another level of comprehension. So I had another reason to feel overwhelmed, "like a fish out of water."

God was guiding, however, and he led me to think to myself,



Treating a patient at LLUSD



With a patient at LLUSD

"I am an average dental student; yet, I can love my patients with the love of God. Lord, teach me to show them your love." And He did so, in ways that I sometimes resented! I began to have patients assigned to me that had anxiety, who had been shown to be difficult to treat, and who acted badly.

But God helped me to realize something important; throughout my dental school experience, I had been focused on me, on my insecurities and imperfections. I distinctly remember hearing an instructor telling me, "Do what's best for the patient and everything will work itself out", and when I took this to heart, my attitude began to shift and the burden of performance began to lift. I began to truly love what I did and how it allowed me to connect with my patients, however difficult. That third year, I fell in love with dentistry and I learned why it was that God had brought me this far.

During my Fourth year, I learned how to witness. It was a new year, and I had a new prayer. "Lord", I said, "I don't know how to witness. Teach me how." At the time, I didn't connect my prayer to dentistry. God has brought me through many trials in life, and many years of unanswered questions were answered here in Loma Linda. I wanted to know how to share this precious relationship with God that had repaired the aching and questioning inside of me.

Now medical evangelism has taken on a whole new meaning. I've had opportunities to pray with patients, to talk to them about what the love of God has done for me. God has used what I saw as disadvantages to His glory. In spite of my broken Spanish and the fact that I look far younger than a competent dentist, the Lord led me into a conversation on health with one of my Spanish-speaking patients. We began a talk about health, how it impacts our bodies, our minds, and our spiritual growth. I shared books that are precious to me, such as Steps to Christ and others on healthy living. I've spoken to patients about anxiety, health, personal



Dental Education at a homeless shelter

problems and many other subjects important to their lives. I have begun to realize that dentistry is a wide open door to share the love of God when we just listen and ask the Lord for guidance.

I used to think that the calling of God was an obvious and distinct event, one you could pinpoint, a work that was meant for you. One that suited you, and you it.

Lately, I have been rethinking this idea. Maybe God has been speaking to my heart, because I heard a little voice saying, "Valecia, I didn't place you in a position where you could thrive and use your natural talents, I placed you here so that you would rely on Me. So that you will know that everything you accomplish is because you have leaned on Me and because you were faithful." Did Isaiah feel worthy? Did Jeremiah, David, or Gideon? Were the disciples talented orators and did the love of God naturally flow out from their hearts to those around them? Foolish are we, to think we know God's plans for our lives. Sometimes God calls us in dramatic ways, by the burning bush like Moses, to travel to a land unknown, like Abraham. And sometimes His calling is soft as a whisper to a child. "Samuel! Samuel!"

With a patient at LLUSD



*"Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel answered, 'Speak, for your servant hears.'" 1 Samuel 3:10*

And so God's calling comes in many forms, and like the patriarchs and prophets of old, we may not feel prepared or worthy. Old and young, rich and poor, He calls us. We are vessels to be filled, lamps to be lit, salt to be scattered. Human effort united with divine guidance, He asks us to be fishers of men.

I believe that if we let Him, God transforms our lives. He uses us, even though we feel incompetent. With enough practice, maybe we can become skillful. With enough studying, we can learn how to provide excellent dental treatment. But only God can show us how to love a patient. Only he can show us how to witness. He alone can show us that service is more than a calling, but a purpose for living, a yearning, and a life's work, and pure joy. **Now I know why!**

Written By:  
Valecia Liew  
LLUSD, C/O 2017



# ONCE AGAIN, GOD MAKES SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

## A New Mission Dental Clinic in Angola

One of the earmarks of God is creation. He loves to make something from nothing. Creativity is one of His attributes that He has bestowed on His children and we are privileged to work with Him in making something new. Such is the dental clinic in Huambo, Angola begun in 2012. The local Conference leaders wished to establish an Adventist dental clinic to contribute to the community, improve peoples' health, and increase God's influence. In 2013, this creative vision began to take shape, after NASDAD donated all the equipment needed to establish a dental practice,

When Dr. Rodriguez was a dental student at Montemorelos University, he worked in the maintenance department of the dental school, thus providentially equipping himself to handle this kind of task.

God's leading continued to be evident as the clinic opened on May 28, 2014 and potential patients began to make appointments for all kinds of dental treatment.

Because of the many patients with missing teeth and the high demand for partial and complete dentures, a dental laboratory was opened in 2015. Dr. Rodríguez immediately began to concentrate on becoming proficient at lab work and as he gained this knowledge he passed it on to a young, Angolan man who is now the laboratory technician. In 2015, the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) donated the funds for additional dental equipment: a dental chair, X ray unit, a water distiller, etc.

and construction of the dental clinic facility began.

In September of that year a young volunteer dentist from Mexico, Miguel O. Rodríguez Vela with his new wife, Maydi Díaz, arrived in the province of Huambo to begin this challenge. Their idealism and dedication were temporarily tested by the difficulties of setting up a brand new clinic and installing dental equip-

This clinic currently treats 240 patients each month and this number increases each month. Patients receive not only modern, quality, dental treatment but they also have the opportunity to receive a spiritual interaction since Dr. Rodriguez prays with each of them and provides them with Christian Reading material. Over the years patients have come from all over Angola. Some patients even traveled for 10 – 12 hours to attend the clinic!

The clinic has a very positive impact on the inhabitants of Huambo but also on those living in poor villages, up to 60 kilometers away. Each month Dr. Rodriguez takes mobile dental equipment and provides free services to very underprivileged patients. These patients are often so poor that they cannot even

travel to town let alone afford dental treatment. He treats vulnerable patients,

Basic prevention scheme in a village



some suffering miserably with pain, severe abscesses that require drainage, and extensive infection. Dr. Rodriguez says "because we come, their health is improved, they face fewer risks, the quality of their life is elevated, and lives are actually saved. In addition they are introduced to the goodness of God".

"Today we firmly believe that we have a mission to reach all Angolan families, and introduce them to God's goodness. We are often witness to God's working hand reaching down to save the lives, both physical and spiritual, of these patients. We have the conviction that God is leading this Dental Clinic and that He is guiding us to testify of His great love."

***"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these,***

Written By:  
Dr. Miguel Rodriguez

Director: Dr. Miguel Obed Rodríguez  
Wife: Maydi Díaz Pérez  
Son: Obed David Rodríguez



Dental Clinic Under Construction in 2013



Adventist Dental Clinic of Huambo, 2017



# FOUNDATION TRAINING FOR THIS LIFE TO AFFECT THE NEXT ONE

## The New Brazilian, Adventist Dental School

The Adventist Faculty of Bahia (FADBA) is the **first ever** Portuguese language Seventh-day Adventist Dental School. In 2017 this university joined two English and two Spanish speaking Adventist Dental Schools in the dental ministry and the Adventist educational system.

The area around FADBA is characterized by social inequalities, largely due to cultural perspectives, lack of education and lack of skilled labor. The population's access to general and oral healthcare is limited and government facilities are precarious. These reasons alone would be enough to justify the establishment of a dental school in this area but there are spiritual factors, too. The opportunity for the Love of God to be shown, through tender compassionate care from FADBA faculty and students is expected to make a difference for good throughout the world.

### The process

The idea of expanding the campus at FADBA into a University Center was born in the heart of Dr. Juan Choque, the President of the University, supported by the BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the Institution, the regional church leadership, and the employees of the university. The dental program's purpose was to generate not only technically competent Dental Surgeons, but also to instill a quality in their training that will make them unique, graduates who will also bring love and the knowledge of God to others while practicing dentistry,

Before the program was approved to begin, there were many visits from the Triple A<sup>1</sup> Commission and other governing bodies. A team of dentists responsible for program imple-

mentation visited the LLUSD campus in the United States. During their visit to Loma Linda University School of Dentistry, they had an opportunity to learn ways to integrate faith and education. Collaboration with and support from the most experienced and oldest Adventist School of Dentistry was an amazing opportunity for the team. Many other trips to surrounding communities, government offices, other educational institutions, and dental facilities were also required.



The expected approval of the dental program came at the end of 2015, only 3 years after its inception! There were many struggles along the way but many people worked to make this new dental school become a reality! The first class, of 60 students, started in February 2016!

### The Adventist Dental School of Bahia

The Dental School at FADBA contains a modern facility for dental practice. In 2017 the first of the dental clinics will be inaugurated, a modern surgery center and pediatric clinic, containing a total of 60 consulting rooms. A full service Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology department is also planned for 2018. All of these are available to patients from the community around FADBA and neighboring cities.



The Dental School at FADBA has already planned several projects. Of particular importance is one called "Zero Caries." It is designed for community children, with special attention to pregnant mothers and newborns. It includes a working team of volunteer students promoting oral healthcare

education, providing to people, the information necessary for them to be responsible for their own oral health. Another planned program is to set up a scholarship fund into which donations can be



# CARING HANDS AROUND THE WORLD



made so that individuals who meet a certain set of criteria, from Portuguese-speaking countries, such as, Angola and Mozambique, can study at FADBA. Upon graduation, these students would then return to their home countries to practice dentistry, show love to others, removing barriers, and accessing hearts of people.

Throughout the whole process of implementation of the Dental Program, God's direction was perceptible in all actions, conversations and negotiations. We believe that the greater the challenge presented, the greater the blessings received from doing God's work. Since the first meetings and team conversations, we have perceived the hand of God leading every detail. How fortunate we are to serve a God who is so strong, so able, and so involved with our lives and work here in Brazil!

<sup>1</sup> Association Adventist of Accreditation (AAA) is the body established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to coordinate, oversee, and control the quality of the educational system. It is in the service of all the divisions of the world church, and it is advised by educational directors of the divisions, educational commissions, and committees of each division.



Written By:  
MSc. Paulo Henrique Pola.  
Professor of Oral Radiology at the Adventist Dental School of Bahia.

Cedric L. Hayden demonstrated a commitment to dental missions at the fledgling St. Kitts SDA Dental Clinic in the 1970's. Since then his interest in dental mission has not waned and as he gathered experience, resources, and associates. Members of his family have joined together to play a significant role in volunteer Adventist dentistry.

In 2007 three Hayden doctors began work to expand the availability of quality mobile dental clinics for medical evangelism. The result is a foundation, Caring Hands Worldwide (CHW) and a public nonprofit organization, International Caring Hands (ICH). These two entities have as a Mission; "Dental Treatment for the World and to arrest dental disease while connecting people to Jesus Christ". The vision is to unite the "Hand" (medical missionary work) to the "Arm" (gospel ministry) as indicated by Ellen G. White. These organizations collaborate with the National Association of Seventh-day Adventist Dentists (NASDAD), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Maranatha Volunteers International, and Riverside Farm Institute in Zambia. In addition they work closely with the SDA Church in Africa, Micronesia, Madagascar, Zambia, and the United States to provide free dental care as part of medical evangelism at Seventh-day Adventist Churches.

A fascination with creating new and unique clinical settings, powerful engines, and go-anywhere vehicles came together in the construction of mobile dental clinics on 4 wheel drive super-trucks, one of which is based at Riverside Farms in Zambia. There a young dentist Joyjoy Falia, who trained in the College of Dentistry at Adventist University of the Philippines, is supported to pro-

vide free care to unserved people in the rural villages of Southern Zambia. She works together with Adventist mission dentists, of Lusaka Adventist Dental Services, both in the clinic in



Dr Falia working in the Zambia mobile clinic, November 2015

Lusaka and in the clinic-truck. Volunteer dentists pay their own airfare to visit Riverside Farms in Zambia and are assisted with room and board so that they can serve the people of Zambia and work together with these dedicated dentists.

In Madagascar, ICH works with ADRA in a second 4x4 dental clinic and collaborates with the Adventist dental clinic in Antananarivo to serve people in rural Madagascar where



Madagascar, January 2017  
Dr. Hayden and the three local Adventist Dentists who volunteered. The team treated over 800 people during the week long clinic.



Waiting area and an inside picture of mobile clinic in rural Madagascar

there is one dentist for every 50,000 people. Volunteer dentists are welcome and ICH assists ADRA in coordinating mission trips. Volunteers are responsible for their own airfare, lodging, and food.

In Chuuk, Micronesia CHW works with the local Adventist Church and has established a clinic and housing for volunteers. Volunteers, responsible for their own airfare and food, are welcome to stay for free while they serve the people of Micronesia or they can stay in local hotels at their own expense. Volunteers can also enjoy world-class diving in Chuuk, to see many of the Japanese Ships sunk during World War II, as well as revel in the relaxed lifestyle and the beauty of the island.



Picture of the dental clinic in Zambia



Picture of the clinic in Chuuk after it suffered a direct hit by Typhoon Maysak in April 2015. Two volunteers were safely inside the clinic during the storm.

Caring Hands Worldwide also coordinates U.S.-based clinics with portable dental clinics at Adventist Churches in Oregon, Washington, and California. In addition, each year CHW coordinates with Adventist Medical Evangelism Network (AMEN) to serve up to 3,000 people with free medical and dental care in a spiritual environment.

In each of these venues dental volunteers are encouraged to pray with their patients and to collaborate with others who participate in literature evangelism or have evangelistic meetings.

### Caring Hands Worldwide

has had 500 volunteers, including dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and general volunteers and they have provided over \$4 million in free dental care and served over 10,000 people.



If you would like to volunteer in any of these locations or for further information, please contact Randy Meyer, Executive Director, at 01-541-937-2786 or email him at:

[randy@caringhandsworldwide.org](mailto:randy@caringhandsworldwide.org)



Mobile clinic serving SDA churches in Oregon

Written by: Dr. Cedric Hayden

# Worldwide Dental Mission Opportunities In SDA Mission Dental Clinics

There are just over 100 Seventh-day Adventist-owned dental practices all around the world, some of which could benefit from your expertise.

Here are some of the current opportunities

## Short Term Volunteer Service

**Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan** – Any length of volunteer service without financial support in this conference-owned dental clinic. A young, newly trained dentist will be there shortly. The opportunity to get the equipment in top working order, begin the practice, and mentor the new dentist would be great fun for a capable, experienced dentist.

**Grenada** - Entrepreneurial Dentists in 2017- Later this year a newly rebuilt, renewed and equipped Adventist dental practice on the Island of Grenada.

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

**Yaoundé, Cameroon** – A volunteer without budgetary support is requested for the Adventist dental practice.

**Blantyre, Malawi** - A Construction supervisor is needed for a dental clinic remodel.

**Helping Hands, AMEN, Maranatha** and other similar organizations are often in need of able and willing volunteers to make important programs successful.

**Djibouti** – Djibouti Adventist Health Center needs less expensive electricity for Air Conditioning and emergency electrical service in this extremely sunny, extremely hot country. An expert on solar-electric panel use and installation who would self-fund a visit and produce a proposal could begin a process that would make the eye and dental clinics much more functional and professional.

## Long-term Service

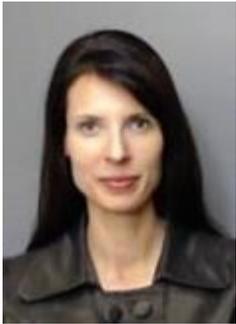
**Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo** - SDA Dental Clinic needs a regular Adventist dental missionary in the Adventist Dental Clinic. This clinic in the capitol city of Democratic Republic of Congo and has the potential to attract the most influential and discerning people in the country. A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

**Antananarivo, Madagascar** – The well-established, and very active, Clinique Dentaire Adventiste needs an expatriate dentist to treat a broad range of foreign and local patients as well as to provide care to unserved, rural populations from a mobile clinic. This is a great opportunity to work along with local dental professionals, to function in another culture, to contribute to God's work, and to improve the health of many people!

For More Information about any of these opportunities, please contact Doyle Nick at 909-558-4607 or [NickD@gc.adventist.org](mailto:NickD@gc.adventist.org).

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

Translation to, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish are provided by Dr. Priscilla Taylor, Dr. Ruslan Zmievski, and Dr. Luis Mendez, respectively. 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.



Dr. Priscilla Costa Taylor, originally from Brazil, graduated from Dentistry and Orthodontics in Brazil, and from LLU International Dental Program in March 2017. She is now in a resident of Dental Anesthesia at LLUSD.



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



Ruslan Zmievski, DDS, a graduate of the IDP program at LLU School of Dentistry, is originally from Moldova, works in Waynesboro, TN.



Katie Layon, MBA  
Sr. Administrative Assistant to  
Dr. Doyle Nick

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