

Health Promotion NEWSLETTER

Health Ministries Department of the Euro-Africa Division

<http://health.euroafrica.org/>

EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues and friends:

Sitting at the window in an airplane I'm looking down over some small dispersed cities. Later I can oversee a large almost endless city. I imagine how God must be looking from above, concerned about the future of all these people. I wonder if there are Adventist churches in these cities and towns? Are there Adventists at all in some of them? How can we reach all these people? Would radio broadcasting be the best method? It could reach all people at once - if they would listen to the message. Would it be sufficient to make changes in their lives and prepare them for the soon return of Jesus? Would additional personal contacts be necessary?

These and other questions wander in my mind. I review my itineraries for the year and then the plans for the entire quinquennium. It becomes evident that by continuing our work at the same pace, with the same limitations, with so few workers, we will not finish our task in 10, or 20, or even 50 years and I'm assaulted by discouraging thoughts. I find no satisfactory answer, unless... Yes, unless some radical changes occur. It seems that E. G. White foresaw this situation because she wrote *"The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."* (Gospel Workers, p. 351)

In the same paragraph she also wrote that *"The leaders in God's cause, as wise generals, are to lay plans for advance moves all along the line. In their planning they are to give special study to the work that can be done by the laity for their friends and neighbors."* To work for friends and neighbors requires personal, individual work. That means people; she mentions *laity*.

This sounds good, but how to confront the prejudice of the people, specially in non-Christian countries? Here comes to my mind another quote from E. G. White, *"As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed. We are to work as gospel medical missionaries, to heal the sin-sick souls by giving them the message of salvation. This work will break down prejudice as nothing else can."* (Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 211)

For many years we considered that medical-missionary work was the responsibility of the doctors and nurses in our hospitals and clinics - if they are Adventists. Well, this is only one part.

How can lay people do medical missionary work? Here I have one good answer - there may be some others - through the Health Expos.

I have seen children and adults, older people, doctors, nurses, Adventists and non-Adventists, pastors and lay people, rich and poor, all working together enthusiastically in the Health Expos, performing different tasks according to their talents. This binds people together, makes new friendships, brakes prejudice, and is a learning and fulfilling experience that contagiates everyone involved. Let's do all we can *"as long as it is day... Night is coming, when no-one can work."* (John 9:4)

Yours, for better health

J. Hawlitschek

EUD - Health Ministries Department

FACTS

1) The war against tobacco continues

By now, already 57 countries adopted the convention proposed by the WHO against tobacco. It is interesting that about half of the smokers die as a consequence of it but this drug continues to be produced.

Here are some **world statistics**:

- 5 million deaths per year
- 1,3 billions smokers, 80% of them in developing countries
- tobacco kills every second smoker

Statistics from **Switzerland**:

- Over 8000 people die each year as a consequence of smoking
 - 32% of inhabitants smoke, with an average of 360 packs per year
 - on fourth of the non-smokers inhale tobacco smoke involuntarily during at least 1 hour every day.
- (Source: *Tribune de Genève*, 26-27 Feb. 2005)

2) United Methodist Church promotes health

Four years ago a group of the United Methodist Church in the US joined with local health providers to organize annual health fairs offering immunizations, blood screenings and other services to poor people. Rev. Mearle Griffith, president and chief executive officer of the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries, says "The opportunity to get one's health checked is something that draws a wide spectrum of people. It's a natural way to get people through the doors."

They suggest the following **tips for organizing a health ministry**:

- Determine what parishioners need (whether it's care for the elderly or for the baby).
- Then make health changes at the church.
- Preach on health from the pulpit.
- Consider employing a health care practitioner or parish nurse.
- Organize a wellness committee.
- Work with other religions and medical groups in the community.
- Advertise, advertise, advertise.

(Source: A UMC.org Feature, by Amy Green, www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=6749)

3) Blood Sugar and Cancer Risk

"A high blood glucose level increases the risk for cancer says in a new study from Korea. In a very large study including 1.3 million men and women followed for 10 years, researchers found that as blood glucose levels went up, so did the risk for several major cancers. Cancers related to higher blood sugar levels included pancreatic (relative risk 1.9 for men and 2.05 for women), esophageal, liver, colon, rectum, and cervix.

It appears that the obesity epidemic contributes to insulin resistance, higher blood sugar levels, and higher risk of cancer. Overall, men with fasting blood glucose levels of 140 mg/dl or higher had 37% more cancer, and women 23% more cancer than persons with fasting glucose levels less than 90 mg/dl."

(Source: *JAMA*. 2005; 293:194-202)

4) Air Pollution Damages Chromosomes in Babies of Expectant Mothers

"A new study of 60 newborns in New York City reveals that exposure of expectant mothers to exhaust pollutants may alter their baby's chromosomes. These pollutants are prevalent in all large urban areas and can cross the placenta and reach the fetus.

When researchers tested the blood from the umbilical cord, they found twice as many abnormalities in the chromosomes of white blood cells in mothers living in high pollution areas compared to those living in low pollution areas. This evidence that air pollution can alter chromosomes in utero is troubling since other studies have validated this type of genetic alteration as a biomarker of cancer risk. Clean air is essential to good health for mothers and unborn babies."

(Source: *NIH News*, Feb. 15, 2005)

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Portugal - people request Bible studies

A group of 12 students (boys and girls) are attending the six months Health Evangelism training program at the Portuguese Publishing House. As part of their practical training they organize health expos followed by health clubs in the neighboring towns. Here is a short message:

"Things are going fine and we are having a very good time with our students. Recently we started religious surveys in the surrounding communities and are having much success. Just to give you an idea, from fifty surveys, fifteen people requested Bible studies or visits. Yesterday, just in two hours, Helena, Vidro and Nick found three people who were interested in Bible studies. People are very open and they are ready. I'm sorry we didn't start the religious survey earlier. The students already have appointments to give Bible studies, but the time is short."

Sent by Daniel Seniuc, school director.

Bulgaria - personal contact is important

"Right now I'm preparing PowerPoint presentations for a 3-days cooking seminar. We will have three or four Health-Expos until April. Thanks for the stickers you sent us for fixing the Expo panels. They are working well.

By reflecting on the health activities we are doing here in Bulgaria I came to the following conclusion. It is very good that we can have Health-Expos and seminars but it is important to maintain the personal contact with the people afterwards. I visit the people in their homes, pray for them and talk about the Bible. I finished already a Bible correspondence course with 4 women and they are coming almost every Sabbath to the church. This was in the town where my parents live. After the Health-Expo I got acquainted with more people and another two ladies are attending now our Sabbath school. We distributed literature and sold religious books. I praise the Lord for opening the hearts of the people.

This month I'm studying the book Evangelism from E.G. White about the methods we should use in the proclamation of the gospel. I see how important it is to proclaim the gospel together with the health message.

I received a used Thermomix [kitchen tool] from Germany that helps me a lot in my cooking demonstrations. The people are excited about my recipes and see that vegetarian food is tasty and not expensive. Of course, it is not easy to abandon bad habits and therefore we need God's help. I see many people. Some are very lonely. Poverty is not the only problem in Bulgaria but also despair. If we would talk more about Jesus the people could have more joy in their lives."

Sent by Mariyana Russinova, Bulgarian Union Health Ministries Department

Romania - Students from Herghelia hold stop-smoking seminar and preach in Pentecostal church

Here are some experiences of the students at the Herghelia Health School.



Participants of the stop smoking seminar

"We go to three different villages on Sundays to visit people. One of them is Cuieshd. In this village students usually visit some gypsy families, with lots of children. At the beginning of February we were asked to hold a Stop Smoking Seminar at the place of one of the families. So between the 7th and 13th of February we had a five-evening seminar there.

On the first occasion there were nine adults who wanted to quit smoking, and about ten children. The topic of the first night impressed us students as well. It was about giving up bad habits (emphasizing the power of Jesus) and forming good habits. We encouraged the people either to throw the cigarettes into the fire or to give them to us. Although nobody quit smoking that day, experiences of great improvements were shared on the second occasion: the number of cigarettes/day had decreased from 20 to 4, and from 40 to 10.



Participants of the stop smoking seminar at our school

The third day was the test of the people's commitment. We offered them to come to Herghelia and to talk to Dr. Gheorghita from the sanatorium. As long as we go to their place it's convenient for them. But are they really so interested, that they are willing to walk one hour? Some minutes before the time of appointment there wasn't anybody yet, but then people arrived. And how many! The classroom was full. There were no seats for the students who were interested in the doctor's presentation. (We have at least 25-30 seats in our classroom.) And they brought along their children too! I'm sure that it's a sowing of the good seed in their hearts!

At the end of the Seminar our brother from Zimbabwe was asked to preach in the Pentecostal church of the village. It means that we are invited to their church every Sunday. So far he has spoken about the greatness and reliability of the Bible as a

whole (neither taking anything away from it, nor adding to it), and about the importance of keeping each commandment.

We pray for these people that may God lead them in their Bible study and give them more light.”
Sent by Rachel and Marti, students at Herghelia. See also www.immtc.rdslink.ro

LITERATURE & MATERIALS

Useful websites on tobacco and addictions:

<http://tobaccoresearch.net> Global Tobacco Research Network (GTRN)

www.jhsph.edu/IGTC/ Institute for Global Tobacco Control

www.globalink.org/ GLOBALink Tobacco

www.stop-tabac.ch/ You can chose the language at the bottom of the welcome page.

www.ensp.org/ European Network for Smoking Prevention

www.dhs.de/ Deutsche Hauptstelle für Suchtfragen

CONVENTIONS AND SEMINARS

Medical Congress, Germany:

Date: 4-8 May 2005

Place: Horn-Bad Meinberg, Germany

Important topics: Spirituality in Medical Practice, the CELEBRATIONS concept, and Health-EXPO.

Information: +49-711-4481950

zentrale@divg-online.de

School of Health Evangelism - Switzerland

The intensive health evangelism training course during 2004 in the beautiful mountains of Switzerland was very appreciated by all students.

This encouraged the organizers to repeat it in 2005 from 15 May - 21 August.

You will find all details at www.stanet.ch/school-of-evangelism/

Health Seminar with Dr. Neil Nedley

Date: 20-23 October 2005

Place: Darmstadt

- Topics:
- Sick and no chance?
 - How to achieve optimal physical and mental fitness.
 - Depression - the way out!

AMALF

Date: 11-13 November 2005

Place: Alsace, France

Topic: Le soignant face à l'Adolescence

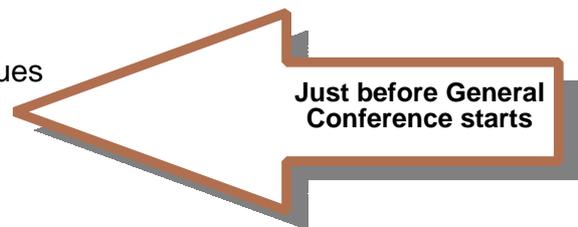
Info: www.amalf.org/

SEEDS Plus – 3 in 1 International Conference

- Biblical & theological topics addressing current issues
- HIV/AIDS' call to compassion (see below)
- SEEDS, international church planting conference

June 22-27, 2005

Campus of Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA



It's still possible to apply and experience this unforgettable event that will help you to discover or rediscover the freshness of your ministry. Don't miss this meeting which will be a spiritual highlight.

The **Call to Compassion** brings together health professionals, church leaders, members and specialists to look in detail at a situation that epitomizes a need the church is best designed to satisfy. It will outline the roles of pastors, doctors, nurses, chaplains, educators, and will invite members as well to take up the challenge of a compassionate response to this modern day leprosy.

- ♥ Examine the nature of effective ministry with those who suffer; their families and communities.
- ♥ Consider how the church can counteract the apathy of this self-centered and inwardly focused generation of individuals, communities, and even whole nations.
- ♥ Explore burning issues related to marriage, sex, and AIDS. Celebrate the wisdom of God's design for human sexuality.
- ♥ Learn to walk with those who are in the shadow of the valley of death.
- ♥ Meet people living with HIV/AIDS. Allow your heart to be softened as they share their expectations and disappointments.

Continuing Education for Professionals. Specifically for nurses and physicians seeking continuing/medical education credits. The Loma Linda University Department of Continuing Education, under the guidance of Dr. Thomas Zirkle, will provide seminars on diagnosis and management of those with HIV/AIDS. These three seminars (see above), in conjunction with the rest of the program's plenary sessions, will be worth up to 10 Category I, AMA Physicians credits. A nominal fee of \$20 will be required with your application for credit.

Information: www.plusline.org/events.php

Application: Tel. 800 732-7587.

Fax 805 497-7099.

Email: events@plusline.org

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

"If we all did the things we are capable of doing we would literally astound ourselves".

Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931)

The *Health Promotion* NEWSLETTER is a quarterly report about new health promotion materials, conventions, important addresses, working strategies, etc. For best effectiveness we kindly ask you to share such information with your co-workers and also to supply to our department pertinent information to be published. Let us unite in the proclamation of God's health message!

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