

## “MISSION TO THE CITIES”---COMPREHENSIVE URBAN EVANGELISM

Jesus was being honored on His triumphal entry to the city. He and the large crowd of people were outside of that ancient capital of Israel. As they came to the crest of the hill overlooking the city, Jesus stopped. There was Jerusalem in all its glory reflecting the light of the declining sun. The pure white marble of the temple walls and the gold-capped pillars created a dazzling sight. As Jesus looked down on the city, Luke 19:41 and 42 records His reaction and response, “Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from our eyes.’”

Jesus wept for the city.....for the people of the city. He knew what was to happen in a matter of days. He knew the rejection of His mission and the terrible results.

He did not become angry or resentful. He wept! He wept for the people of the city! He wept with unutterable sadness because of their lack of responsiveness to His love. He wept for what was to become of them because of their rejection of Him as the Messiah and the truth of His Word. How many of us are weeping with Jesus for the cities and people of this world?

How many of us are looking upon the cities of this globe with unutterable love, as Jesus did?

If ever there was a time to weep with Jesus for the cities, suburbs, and people of this world, it is now! For centuries, most societies had been agrarian and rural. Most people lived in the countryside and sought a livelihood from the soil. As of about three years ago, there are now more people living in the cities than in the rural areas of the world. One estimate indicates that by 2050, approximately 70% of the world's projected 10 billion people will be living in the cities! Are you weeping for the cities yet? What are you willing to do for the people of the cities? This burden was heavy on Christ's heart. It is a heavy burden on my heart. I want to lay it on your heart today.

Matthew 9:35-38 records Christ's ministry for those in the cities and the villages, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'"

My fellow leaders of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, God is calling us to go into the cities of the world where the laborers are few and the harvest is plentiful. God is calling us to have compassion on the multitudes.....people for whom He wept, died, rose and intercedes today in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary.....people for whom He will return in the near future at His second coming! Are you willing to weep and work for the people of the great cities? He calls for us to proclaim His love, His righteousness, His three angels' messages, His warning to a dying world, and the powerful announcement of His soon second coming!

He is waiting for us to take up the role as the uniquely-called people of God, His remnant church fulfilling the characteristics of Revelation 12:17----those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. For over a hundred years, He has been asking His people to work the cities according to His methods. The Spirit of Prophecy is replete with instruction about the work to be done for the cities.....it is a sustainable, careful, and comprehensive work.....A work that unites every aspect of church work in its approach to reaching the multitudes of the cities and it will receive God's blessing when done according to His will with a humble heart. One hundred one years ago in 1910, God spoke through Ellen White to reinvigorate the work for the cities and speaks to us

today in Medical Ministry, page 304, “There is no change in the messages that God has sent in the past. The work in the cities is the essential work for this time. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed.....As a people we are not half awake to a sense of our necessities and to the times in which we live. Wake up the watchmen. Our first work should be to search our hearts and to become reconverted. We have no time to lose upon unimportant issues.”

This is God’s message to us today in response to revival and reformation. We are to be reconverted and focus on the important issues God has for His remnant church to address. We are to be completely engaged in our overall quinquennial mission to “Tell the World.” We are to be prepared personally and corporately by the Holy Spirit in our devotion and humble submission to the will of God. The world around is crumbling and disintegrating-----politically, economically, socially, ecumenically, and in the natural world. I believe Jesus is coming soon. Let us not get caught up in the devil’s trap questioning the fact that Christ’s coming is soon and thereby participate in the age-old complaint recorded by Peter in II Peter 3:3-9, “.....knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell

asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.....do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” The fact is that Jesus is coming soon! He, Himself, said three times in Revelation 22, “I am coming quickly.” Martin Luther proclaimed profound thoughts found in The Great Controversy, page 303, “God will not, cannot, suffer this wicked world much longer.’ ‘The great day is drawing near in which the kingdom of abominations shall be overthrown.’”

We are living at the end of time. The signs around us are ominous and God is calling for us to be revived and reformed through His Spirit so we can increase our work in the cities according to His plan. When that is done, we are promised that we will see “a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed.” Let us pray that the latter rain will fall in abundance as we carry out the work for the cities. God’s people are to accomplish this through revival, reformation and a quiet submission to the Word of God, counsel in the Spirit of Prophecy, intense prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to obey God’s commands. Let us move forward in our work using Christ’s method as indicated in The

Ministry of Healing, page 143, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour

1. mingled with men as one
2. who desired their good.
3. He showed His sympathy for them,
4. ministered to their needs,
5. and won their confidence.
6. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

Let’s follow Jesus in our personal spiritual growth and in all that we do for Him. Revival and reformation is so important and why everything we do this quinquennium and until the Lord returns is to be laid on that foundation. We need the Lord’s power, not our own. As Zechariah 4:6 says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts.” The Holy Spirit’s power is vital for direct outreach to the most challenging bastions of the devil’s power----the cities. The result of personal and corporate revival and reformation through the power of the Holy Spirit is outreach and evangelism.

Recently I read a proposed article by someone who was grateful for the call for revival and reformation but wondered about outreach. Apparently, we had not successfully communicated that “evangelism” was part of the title of the revival and reformation document voted at the 2010 Annual

Council. Revival and reformation has affected everything we are doing including our overall evangelistic “Tell the World” focus, the Great Controversy Project, the projects and work of our various dynamic departments of the church, our administrative activities, and our institutional activities. There should be no doubt that as a product of revival and reformation we are calling for the greatest evangelistic explosion and outreach for the urban and suburban centers of the world----- comprehensive urban evangelism----“Mission to the Cities.”

In addition to reaching rural areas, much valiant work has been done to reach the cities with the three angels’ messages. We have focused on “Hope for the Big Cities,” the 10/40 Window emphasis, and more. The dedicated regional conferences in the North American Division, their presidents, conference staffs, evangelists, pastors, and members have made unusual efforts to reach the urban centers in their territories and God has blessed. Seventh-day Adventist Church entities all over the world have given attention to the challenge of the large cities. However, the work in the cities is not easy and many times we have given uneven, sporadic, and inconsistent attention to the enormous task entrusted to our church to “work the cities as God would have them worked.”

That is why, as we approach Christ’s soon coming, we are to follow God’s leading in launching an all-out evangelistic

approach on the large urban and suburban centers of the world with every type of outreach possible as outlined in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

This is a comprehensive call for Mission to the Cities! The Spirit of Prophecy, God's practical counsel for His remnant people, indicates a wide variety of outreach activities under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These approaches and programs will involve the use of centers of influence, local churches, church members, teams of young people involved in a variety of outreach initiatives, literature evangelism, small group outreach, medical missionary work, health lectures, door-to-door missionary work, community services and social work that follow Christ's methods, Adventist Community Services and ADRA, integrated media evangelism, counseling centers, reading rooms or Adventist Book Centers, Bible studies by members, young people and Bible workers, child evangelism, personal evangelism and witnessing, public evangelism, and many more methods yet to be initiated by the Holy Spirit. We need pastors and lay people working together. Pastors and health professionals are to work, as indicated by the Spirit of Prophecy, in a "blended ministry." We need denominational organizations and supporting ministries working together in soul winning. We need thousands of church members distributing Christian literature like "The Great Controversy" in the project to distribute that marvelous book to neighbors and



friends during 2012 and 2013 that will alert millions of people to the times in which we live. It is the book Ellen White indicated she wished circulated more than any other she had written. It appears at this point in time that over 150 million copies of the classic, abridged, revised, or children's versions will be distributed worldwide and we praise the Lord! All of us are to be reading *The Great Controversy* this year in anticipation of sharing it next year. Nancy and I are reading it and are thrilled! I read from it this morning.

We need everyone dedicated to a comprehensive and sustained evangelistic outreach that will replicate the urban evangelistic work being done in the city of San Francisco in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which Ellen White called a "beehive" of activity. In the *Review and Herald* of July 5, 1906, she wrote, "During the past few years the 'beehive' in San Francisco has been indeed a busy one. Many lines of Christian effort have been carried forward by our brethren and sisters there. These included visiting the sick and destitute, finding homes for orphans and work for the unemployed, nursing the sick, and teaching the truth from house to house, distributing literature, and conducting classes on healthful living and the care of the sick. A school for the children has been conducted in the basement of the Laguna Street meetinghouse. For a time a workingmen's home and medical mission was maintained. On Market Street, near the

city hall, there were treatment rooms, operated as a branch of the St. Helena Sanitarium. In the same locality was a health-food store. Nearer the center of the city, not far from the Call building, was conducted a vegetarian cafe, which was open six days in the week and entirely closed on the Sabbath. Along the water front, ship mission work was carried on. At various times our ministers conducted meetings in large halls in the city. Thus the warning message was given by many.”

We need strategic planning, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for every city in every country in every division around the world that will produce that “beehive.”

The General Conference has organized a Comprehensive Urban Evangelism Committee with dedicated leaders who are helping to make the committee come alive. Tomorrow, during the Council on Evangelism and Witness, you will hear much more about the beginning plans for “Mission to the Cities.”

Everyone can contribute to the development of the work-in-progress plans including our departments and institutions. We are calling for everyone to participate----young and old.....those who live in the cities and those who live in rural areas.....pastors and church members.....church organizations and church institutions.....Every member involved in every possible way for comprehensive urban evangelism---“Mission to the Cities.”

By God's grace, we need to revive, as our strategic planning vice president, Mike Ryan, likes to say, "a culture of involvement." Let's dedicate our lives, energies, talents, resources, and time to finishing God's work so we can go home! Christian Service, page 83, indicates, "I was shown God's people waiting for some change to take place, ---a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act; they must take hold of the work themselves, and earnestly cry to God for a true knowledge of the work." Let's pray for "a true knowledge of the work" and guidance in initiating the greatest approach to reaching the cities of the world with the three angels' messages of Revelation 14.

Our "Mission to the Cities" must be based on Biblical principles and Spirit of Prophecy counsel. This approach includes the profound and heavenly-inspired plan outlined by Ellen White which shows an "in-out" approach to the cities. Inside the cities we are to have "centers of influence" which can include churches, health clinics and centers, reading rooms, vegetarian restaurants, community centers, etc. Outside the cities we are to have "outpost centers" which include training centers for evangelistic workers, lifestyle health centers, and places for urban evangelistic workers to live or visit to be refreshed in a country setting close to God's second book of nature.

Are we willing to take the determined steps to put into practice God's plans for the urban centers of the world so that a "mighty movement" will result or will we turn and run like Jonah? Do you sometimes feel like that hesitant prophet who found himself in the belly of the whale after resisting God's call to preach to the city?

This was a real story, a real Jonah, a real fish and a real appeal by God to go to Ninevah. Don't discount this story and others in the Bible as just symbolic or allegorical. The miracles of the Bible are true and demonstrate God's authority. Believe in the authenticity of God's Holy Word and the Spirit of Prophecy. God's Word speaks to us in clear language that shows He is in control and that we are to follow His instructions and live life to the fullest. Let us participate in "Revived by the Word" as outlined last night.

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, page 113, indicates, "Let us give more time to the study of the Bible. We do not understand the word as we should....When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival." God's Word is foundational for all that we accept, believe and stand for as truth and for revival and reformation.

Unfortunately, Jonah didn't fully accept God's Word because of fear. However, he quickly learned to cry to the Lord "out of the

belly of Sheol” as recorded in Jonah 2:2 and God heard his voice. God will do the same for us when we cry to Him for help with “Mission to the Cities”-----our mission to the Ninevehs of our day. We, along with Jonah can say as recorded in Jonah 2:6-7, “.....You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple.” When we get afraid and hesitate in our “Mission to the Cities,” remember the Lord and plead with Him in prayer to open the way before us. God will point us in the direction of the urban centers of the world as He did when Jonah 2:10 records that, “.....the Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.” The Lord then charged Jonah the second time to go to the city and proclaim the message of salvation indicating in Jonah 3:2-3, “‘Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.’ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.” The results of Jonah’s preaching, blessed by the Holy Spirit, were extensive and heart-changing. The city repented. Of course, the preacher, Jonah, still had not learned his lesson of compassion for the people of the city and felt hurt that God did not destroy the city as he had predicted. Jonah even became despondent over a plant that withered and died showing more pity on the plant than on the people of the city. I want to challenge us today.....where is our pity? On the city or on ourselves? God

spoke directly to Jonah and speaks to us today in Jonah 4:11, “And should I not pity Ninevah, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left.....”

Today, God is calling the Seventh-day Adventist Church to bring spiritual discernment to the millions of people in the cities of the world as represented by that great city, Nineveh.

What message and understanding of Scripture will we bring to the cities of this world? What power will drive “Mission to the Cities?” The power is not in human beings, in committees, in policies, in presidents, in officers or department directors.....the power and truth presented is in the Word of God, in the Spirit of Prophecy, in earnest prayer, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The truth presented to the cities will portray Christ and His eternal, saving love and the plan of salvation. It will show that an all-knowing God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit have existed from eternity and into all eternity. It will lift up Christ’s righteousness, His three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, and His soon second coming. It will point people to the true worship of God and the keeping of His commandments including the precious fourth commandment as an eternal sign of loyalty-----the seventh-day Sabbath, the capstone of His creative power on this earth in six, literal days.

Recently, the small 60-member, rural Andrews, North Carolina, Seventh-day Adventist church decided to organize a “Sabbath Celebration.” They invited community people and Seventh-day Adventists. About 1400 people, including some community guests, showed up for meetings all day on a Sabbath. The sacredness and rest of the Sabbath is vitally important to the people of the cities. Our Advent message will point to the mortality of our lives and warn people about mystical beliefs and spiritualism. It will bring new life through an emphasis on healthful principles and health reform. It will share the magnificent sanctuary message pointing to the Lamb of Calvary and our High Priest who is interceding for us during the investigative judgment in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary.

It will portray the unique calling of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God’s humble, remnant people who proclaim with love a prophetic warning message as we unselfishly serve others. It will shield us from ecumenism and give us the power to proclaim the distinctive, historicist prophetic messages of Daniel and Revelation.

Our Biblical message to the cities will unite us as a worldwide people and guard us from isolating ourselves from society and from each other. Our message to the cities of the world is that another city is coming.....the New Jerusalem, a city of safety,

hope and refuge with God at its center. The real answer to all the woes and difficulties of today's earthly cities is the soon second coming of Jesus Christ!

God is calling us to work the cities without delay. Listen to counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy on this great cry for comprehensive urban evangelism and the use of medical missionary work in our approach to the cities:

“It is in the cities of the nations that the gospel worker finds the greatest impenitence and the greatest need.....and what God's servants do to warn and prepare men for the day of judgment, must be done quickly. The conditions that face Christian workers in the great cities, constitute a solemn appeal for untiring effort in behalf of the millions living within the shadow of impending doom.” Evangelism, page 25.

“As a people we need to hasten the work in the cities, which has been hindered for lack of workers and means and a spirit of consecration. At this time, the people of God need.....to humble their minds, and to be attentive to the will of the Lord, working with earnest desire to do that which God has shown must be done to warn the cities.....” Evangelism, page 30.

“Again and again I am instructed to present to our churches the work that should be done in our large cities.....Often we have been told that our cities are to hear the message, but how slow we are to heed the instruction. I saw One standing on a high



platform with arms extended. He turned and pointed in every direction, saying, 'A world perishing in ignorance of God's holy law, and Seventh-day Adventists are asleep.' " Evangelism, page 32.

"I appeal to our brethren who have heard the message for many years. It is time to wake up the watchmen.....The burden of the needs of our cities has rested so heavily upon me that it has sometimes seemed that I should die. May the Lord give wisdom to our brethren, that they may know how to carry forward the work in harmony with the will of the Lord.....The cities must be worked. The millions living in these congested centers are to hear the third angel's message." Evangelism, pages 34-35.

"Get the young men and women in the churches to work.....Combine medical missionary work with the proclamation of the third angel's message.....Send out into the churches workers who will live the principles of health reform." A Call to Medical Evangelism, page 17.

"During the night of February 27 (1910), a representation was given me in which the unworked cities were presented before me as a living reality, and I was plainly instructed that there should be a decided change from past methods of working.....I urged that companies be organized and diligently trained to labor in our important cities. These workers should labor two

and two, and from time to time all should meet together to related their experiences, to pray and to plan how to reach the people quickly.....” A Call to Medical Evangelism, page 13-14.

“Henceforth medical missionary work is to be carried forward with an earnestness with which it has never yet been carried. This work is the door through which the truth is to find entrance to the large cities.” A Call to Medical Evangelism, page 17.

“How shall we reveal Christ? I know of no better way.....than to take hold of the medical missionary work in connection with the ministry.....The gospel and the medical missionary work are to advance together. The gospel is to be bound up with the principles of true health reform.” A Call to Medical Evangelism, pp 41-42.

“No line is to be drawn between the genuine medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. These two must blend. They are to be joined in an inseparable union even as the hand is joined to the body.” A Call to Medical Evangelism, page 44.

As we unfold and develop together plans for working the cities through the Holy Spirit’s leading, keep in mind that there are many cities Ellen White talked about but there is one in particular with symbolic importance.....New York City. It represents the world since it has so many nationalities and

languages. It is a great center of finance, banking, trade, art, transportation, fashion, advertising, and media.

Evangelism, page 384, says, “Those who bear the burden of the work in Greater New York should have the help of the best workers that can be secured. Here let a center for God’s work be made, and let all that is done be a symbol of the work the Lord desires to see done in the world....”

Much work has been done in New York, but we have yet to see that city become “a symbol of the work the Lord desires to see done in the world.”

When I was a college student, I appealed to several conferences to sponsor me to the seminary including the Greater New York Conference. My father told me if I really wanted a challenge I should go to Greater New York. By God’s grace, it worked out and changed my life forever. I had the wonderful and challenging opportunity to pastor and serve in evangelism in the metropolitan New York area for seven years. A few months ago, I visited with Elder Lloyd Reile, now about 95 years old, who as conference president, called me to work in the Greater New York Conference. He and his wife were a strong encouragement to me in my work in that challenging city of New York. Thank the Lord for our retirees and pioneers.

Some people love New York and others hate it. Graffiti I saw in New York captures the challenge of living and working in the

large cities of the world. It said, "Concrete jungle: A hard life." There are many good and bad things about New York, like any big city, but the people are there.....people who need Christ and the hope of the Advent message. Since that time, I have always had a strong burden for the cities and New York City in particular.

Selected passages from Evangelism, pages 385-389, indicate, "Our manner of working must be after God's order. The work that is done for God in our large cities must not be according to man's devising.....Your work in New York has been started in right lines. You are to make in New York a center for missionary effort, from which work can be carried forward successfully. The Lord desires this center to be a training school for workers, and nothing is to be allowed to interrupt the work.....We need a sanitarium and a school in the vicinity of New York City, and the longer the delay in the securing of these, the more difficult it will become.....It would be well to secure a place as a home for our mission workers outside the city.....To start medical missionary work in New York will be the best thing that you can do.....In New York there are many who are ripe for the harvest.....You should feel a decided responsibility for the work of New York City.....God wants the work to go forward in New York. There ought to be thousands of Sabbathkeepers in that place, and there would be if the work were carried on as it should be."

I want every administrator here and around the world to feel a heavy burden for the cities. God will bless our evangelism plans for the cities as we allow the Holy Spirit to lead in those plans and follow Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy counsel. It is the reason for revival and reformation.....for intense prayer.....for humility before the Lord. Let us never ignore God's pleading with us about the work for the cities.

According to the biography of Ellen White by her grandson, Arthur White, as recorded in Volume 6 of that series, Ellen White placed the burden of New York and the cities before church leaders on June 11, 1909. She earnestly appealed for unprecedented activity to evangelize the cities. Later she wrote that, "Some of you did not understand the message that I bore, and may never understand it."--Letter 32, 1910. In September, 1909, Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, contained a section entitled "The Work in the Cities" which we will read next week in Annual Council. She said, "Behold the cities and their need of the gospel." 9T 97. Ellen White's strong burden would not go away. She sent messages to Elder A G Daniells, the General Conference president, asking for more action. The General Conference allocated some funds to city evangelism and New York City. However, Elder Daniells wrote about the difficulty getting qualified workers for the cities and didn't engage in the work with full focus.

Ellen White was frustrated with the lack of enthusiasm and indicated that something had to be done. She complained that the leaders were not caring for the unworked cities as they should.

Shortly after laying some modest plans for the cities, Elder Daniells was in California and went to Elmshaven to report about a reasonable effort for the cities that would encourage Ellen White. However, she refused to see him! The messenger of the Lord refused to see the president of the General Conference, sending word to him that when the president of the General Conference was ready to carry out the work that needed to be done, then she would talk with him. Elder Daniells realized the church had not measured up to what God wanted to see done in the cities. He then wrote a humble and contrite letter to Ellen White. He finally received a message from her indicating that, "When the president of the General Conference is converted, he will know what to do with the messages God has sent him." Biography, Vol 6, p 224.

The message Ellen White had given on June 15, 1910, declared, "I am charged with a message to you both that you need to humble your hearts before God. Neither Elder Prescott nor Elder Daniells is prepared to direct the work of the General Conference, for in some things they have dishonored the Lord God of Israel. High, pure devotion to God is required of men

placed in your position. I am to tell you that neither of you is prepared to discern with clear eyesight that which is needed now.....The work in the cities has not yet been carried forward as it should be. Had the president of the General Conference been thoroughly aroused, he might have seen the situation. But he has not understood the message that God has given.”

Biography, Vol 6, p 225.

Elder Daniells thought he was doing something for the work in the cities but it was not what God wanted. He was shaken with the messages from the Lord. The General Conference finally established a special committee of seventeen people to work on plans for the cities. They released Elder Daniells for one year from his normal duties as the president of the General Conference to give evangelism leadership for the cities as GC president. He went to New York City for evangelism and finally fulfilled what God had intended for him to do in evangelistic work for the cities which helped launch a new day in Seventh-day Adventist city evangelism.

As president of the General Conference today, I do not want to be accused by the Lord of dishonoring Him by ignoring the cities. I humble myself before Him and ask that I might be completely converted to God’s plans for the people of the cities. Today, along with me, I want you to share that great burden of Jesus for the people of the cities. I have had in my

office ever since I worked in New York City, the powerful picture of “Christ of the City.” Since New York, it has hung in my offices in Abidjan, Silver Spring, Moscow, Hagerstown, in Silver Spring again, and now in my current office. I also have the same picture facing me every day as I sit at my home desk. Let our hearts cry out to God on behalf of the millions in the cities of the world----in your division, in your union, in your conference, your mission or field. As leaders, never ignore our great task using every means possible for our “Mission to the Cities.”

Tomorrow morning during the Council of Evangelism and Witness, we will present the unprecedented “Mission to the Cities.” Of course, our church is currently doing many good things in the cities of the world but in 2013 we will launch a very specific, comprehensive, and sustained evangelistic approach for the world beginning in New York City. We are calling, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, for a comprehensive approach that will continue until Jesus comes.....not a hit and run approach to evangelism, but a long-term, sustained, Spirit-filled approach. We want to start with New York City since Ellen White indicated that it should be a symbol as to how the rest of the world should be worked. Since large cities are made up of many smaller communities and neighborhoods, we expect to have approximately 150-200 evangelistic meetings in the metropolitan New York area from



June 7-29, 2013. Many preparatory outreach activities by church members will take place in a comprehensive manner that will lead to the June 2013 evangelistic meetings. We are working closely with the North American Division, Atlantic Union, Columbia Union, Greater New York Conference, Northeastern Conference, New Jersey Conference and the Alleghany East Conference in the detailed planning for the evangelistic meetings in New York.

I want to invite the presidents and spouses of those four conferences in the New York area and the two union presidents and their spouses to come to the platform. I want you to pray for:

Pastor and Mrs Earl Knight of the Greater New York Conference

Pastor and Mrs Trevor Baker of the Northeastern Conference

Pastor and Mrs Jose Cortes of the New Jersey Conference

Pastor and Mrs Charles Cheatham of the Alleghany East Conference

Pastor and Mrs Don King of the Atlantic Union

Pastor and Mrs Dave Weigley of the Columbia Union

I'm going to ask Pastor and Mrs Dan Jackson to come forward as Pastor Jackson prays for these leaders and their territories in the task ahead in New York City. Then I want to make an

appeal for you to help these leaders and those they represent in that great territory of metropolitan New York.

Please stay on the platform as we now make an appeal for the world field to help New York City be the symbol as to how God wants the rest of the world to be worked.

Let us pledge ourselves to pray for these leaders, their pastors, church workers, and church members. By God's grace, I pledge myself and Nancy to hold one of those 200 evangelistic meetings in New York City in June 2013.

We have worked with the thirteen division presidents to send expert evangelists from their divisions to New York City to join us in holding meetings. Many of my fellow GC officers and colleagues will be holding some of these evangelistic meetings. Many from the Atlantic and Columbia unions including local pastors in the New York area will be actively involved. Undoubtedly, many church members will hold evangelistic meetings. Pastor Mark Finley will lead an evangelistic field school of evangelism during those meetings. By God's grace, there will be a marvelous harvest of souls in metropolitan New York and a continued, sustained evangelistic work.

This is only the beginning. Evangelists from the various divisions will return to their home divisions to hold evangelistic series and field schools of evangelism for union and conference workers in a division-selected major city. Unions will then

select a city to hold a major evangelistic series and field school. Then each conference or local field will select and hold an evangelistic series and field school in a major city. Our humble goal will be to reach approximately 650 major cities of the world before the next General Conference Session in 2015 all based on the power of the Holy Spirit through revival and reformation. The 777 prayer initiate should focus our attention on the incredible Mission to the Cities. Please pray like never before for God's work in the great cities of the world. We are powerless except as we rely on our Chief Urban Evangelist who, as He looked over Jerusalem, wept!

How many of you as God's leaders in this wonderful Advent movement assembled at this 2011 Annual Council are willing to accept the challenge of a sustained, comprehensive urban evangelism-----"Mission to the Cities?"

Prayerfully decide as you listen to the appeal of the people of the cities that Karla Bucklew will share in this special song entitled "Lonely Voices." After she sings one stanza, I'm going to ask you to take a stand for "Mission to the Cities."

Division presidents, are you willing to stand with your spouses in support of this huge burden the Lord has placed on the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Division officers and spouses, will you stand for Mission to the Cities?

My fellow GC officers and spouses are you willing to stand?

Our GC departmental directors, staffs and spouses are you willing to stand?

Union presidents, officers and spouses, are you willing to stand and take this challenge to your great territories?

Institutional leaders, pastors, teachers, young people, lay members, spouses, everyone.....are you willing to stand and participate in Mission to the Cities?

Remember that “When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed.” I have full confidence that God will fulfill His promise as we humbly submit our plans to Him and follow His instruction in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Let us plead with the Holy Spirit for the power to accomplish the task entrusted to us. What a day it will be when Jesus returns and we join with those who have been saved from the large cities and the rural areas to ascend with the Lord to our eventual homes for eternity-----homes in the New Jerusalem and homes in the country in the new earth. Let us dedicate ourselves to God’s comprehensive plans for “Mission to the Cities.”

Karla, sing the last stanza as we consecrate ourselves to the Lord.

Now, I want you to turn to the one next to you and in prayer seal your commitment to Christ and His plea to us for the “Mission to the Cities.” When you are finished, please remain standing for our closing prayer.