



Mountain View College (MVC) students and teachers at a School of Theology-sponsored Sabbath retreat in June 2008.

# THE ROLE OF CAMPUS CHAPLAINCY IN THE MISSION OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION: A PHILIPPINE PERSPECTIVE

**BY DON LEO GARILVA**

**A**ccording to missiologist Gottfried Oosterwal: “Mission is the heartbeat of the church. If it stops, the church ceases to be. Each institution . . . has meaning—and a right to exist—only if it participates in mission.”<sup>1</sup> Having been involved in campus chaplaincy for more than half of my denominational employment, I have not only learned to love this unique ministry, but I have also come to believe that it has an important role to play in fulfilling the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s distinctive mission to proclaim the everlasting gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus to all the world (Revelation 14:6-12).<sup>2</sup>

This article will look at why the campus chaplaincy ministry can play an important role in fulfilling this mission, using the example of Mountain View College (MVC) in the province of Bukidnon in the southern Philippines.

## **A Quick Background**

Of the more than 100 colleges and universities operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world, nine are in the Philippines. All of these schools have active campus chaplaincy ministries. We will take a look at MVC.

Over the years, MVC has become known as an institution where students and teachers are involved in both inreach and outreach ministry. Every Saturday morning, 200-300 of its 3,000 students, together with faculty sponsors, fan out to more than 70 churches within 60 kilometers of the college, where they participate in these churches’ services and ministries.<sup>3</sup> Most of these churches have been built through the efforts of the off-campus ministry of the college. No wonder the majority of Filipino church-sponsored missionaries in Asia, Africa, and Oceania are MVC alumni! During MVC’s almost 60 years of existence, its campus chaplaincy programs have played a major role in providing a model for students to follow in

reaching out to others inside and outside the school in shaping MVC's identity as a mission-oriented institution.

### Rationale for Campus Chaplaincy Ministry

Campus chaplaincy ministry can play a major role in fulfilling the mission of Adventist education for at least eight reasons:



The MVC Prayer Warriors, an on-campus ministry, close their Wednesday evening meeting with prayer.

First, many non-Adventists are attracted to our educational system. There is a growing recognition today by secular governments and non-member families of the value of Adventist education.<sup>4</sup>

In an informal survey done in 2002 in the South Philippine Union Conference territory, Gladden Flores, former associate director of education of the South Philippine Union Conference, discovered three reasons why non-Adventist parents chose to send their children to our schools:<sup>5</sup>

(a) They like the way the schools handle disciplinary problems, contrasting the campus climate with the constant brawling they see on secular campuses. They believe their children are a lot safer at an Adventist school than in a public institution.

(b) They like the emphasis on values formation. They realize that secular education does not adequately prepare their children for responsible citizenship. Franklin Roosevelt said that to educate a person in mind, and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society.<sup>6</sup> In religion classes, the students learn about biblical virtues. The emphasis we place on Bible teaching is a "value-added" factor in our educational system. This

*Campus chaplaincy ministry has an important role in fulfilling our church's mission.*

may be one of the major differences between our institutions and public schools.<sup>7</sup>

(c) The excellent academic standards of Adventist schools. Our students excel scholastically because of the wholistic approach we follow in shaping their academic and personal lives. The results of the Philippine government licensure examinations indicate that our students consistently earn top scores.<sup>8</sup>

### Contributions to Church Growth

The second reason why campus chaplaincy fulfills a vital role in the mission of our educational institutions is its significant contribution to church growth. A 1996 study showed that in the former Asia-Pacific Division, schools ranked as the fifth highest factor (13.5 percent) that influenced people to join the Adventist Church. Ten years later, our schools had even higher percentages in both the North Philippine Union Mission (17.1 percent) and the South Philippine Union Conference (14.4 percent).<sup>9</sup> The South Philippine Union Conference, one of the biggest and fastest-growing unions in the Adventist Church,<sup>10</sup> owes a large part of its growth to campus ministry work at Mountain View College.<sup>11</sup> Currently at MVC, like many other Adventist colleges and universities, the challenges are even greater, since many of the students come from non-Adventist families.<sup>12</sup> Rather than seeing this increase as a cause for concern, we should view it as a reason to support and expand the work of campus chaplaincy.

### College-Age Students Are Open to the Gospel

The third reason why the campus chaplaincy ministry fills an important role in achieving our educational mission is that during this stage of life, students' minds are open to new ideas and new interpretations about God. Their minds must be placed in

an environment where faith is nourished by the Word of God. Andrews University's Website for Campus Spiritual Leadership program states:

"In the development of faith, the critical years are the college years when young adults gain their first real independence and must move through a period of searching that leads from a 'given faith' to an 'owned faith.' During these years of searching and decisions, these students need to be given 'a dream and a community.' If mature Christian adults are not available and prepared to provide these, our young adults will find their dream and community outside of the Christian faith."<sup>13</sup>

Research shows that the overwhelming majority of Christians give their hearts to Jesus in their youth. Carl Trutter observes that college students have not yet settled on personal

careers, value system, or lifestyles.<sup>14</sup> George Barna notes that “three-quarters of all people who have consciously, intentionally, and personally chosen to embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior did so before their eighteenth birthday.”<sup>15</sup>

Joe Jerus points out that statistics indicate that “nineteen out of every twenty persons who become Christians do so before they reach the age of twenty-five.”<sup>16</sup> Significantly, in the South Philippine Union Conference, where Mountain View College plays a major role in its church life, 60 percent of the church members are 35 years old or younger.<sup>17</sup>

### Higher Education as an Engine for Change

The fourth reason why campus chaplaincy is a major factor in achieving the mission of the church is the power of higher education today in promoting social, economic, political, and spiritual welfare. Charles Habib Malik in his influential and stirring book, *A Christian Critique of the University*, states that “the university determines the course of events and the destiny of man more than any other institution or agency today.” He continues: “The university is a clear-cut fulcrum with

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Members of the MVC Prayer and Friendship Circle study a Bible passage during an early morning meeting.



A weekend camping trip by the MVC LIGHT and Friends groups.

which to move the world . . . More potently than by any other means, change the university and you change the world.”<sup>18</sup> College and university students comprise only about one percent of the world’s population, yet “what a powerful 1 percent they are” because they compose the future leaders of the world and of the church.<sup>19</sup> MVC is considered an excellent reservoir of Christian music, culture, and arts in the city and province where it is located.

### Fertile Grounds for Evangelism

The fifth reason why the campus chaplaincy ministry has a vital role in accomplishing the church’s mission is that institutions of higher learning are excellent venues for evangelism. Billy Graham has said that “universities might well be among the most fruitful fields for evangelism.”<sup>20</sup> Our own church considers schools as “fertile mission fields.”<sup>21</sup>

Because of the importance of the campus chaplaincy ministry to Mountain View College, it is divided into three parts:

1. The college pastoral staff, which are also in charge of campus chaplaincy, run specific *on-campus* ministry programs: (a) The LIGHT and Friends organization specializes in evangelizing non-Adventist students; (b) the Prayer and Friendship Circle mainly encourages members in friendship evangelism and the daily study of the Bible; and (c) the Prayer Warriors specialize in prayer ministry.
2. The off-campus ministry to the neighboring churches and communities, called Ministerial Seminar, is assigned to a specific faculty member in the School of Theology to administer. The main participants, though, are students.
3. SULADS (Socio-Uplift Leading to Anthropological Development and Services), is a specialized off-campus ministry that trains students as missionaries to the indigenous moun-

tain tribes of the South Philippines.<sup>22</sup> All of these branches of campus ministry are geared toward training students and winning people to Christ.

### Training Grounds for Leadership

The sixth reason why campus chaplaincy is making a major contribution to our mission in education is that colleges and universities are essential for training the next generation of academic and professional church leaders.<sup>23</sup> They are the “required training ground[s]” for men and women who will occupy “key positions” in the world.<sup>24</sup> Mountain View College supplies almost 100 percent of the South Philippine Union’s leaders and workers, as well as many key leaders for the two other Philippine unions.

### A Ministry Whose Time Has Come

The seventh reason why campus chaplaincy is making a major contribution to the mission of the church is that it is a ministry whose time has come. Until recently, our church had no training program for those who minister to college students on Adventist campuses. In fact, very few campus chaplaincy ministry training programs exist in any Protestant seminary.

Many Adventist leaders did see the need for campus ministry and so wrote plans and passed resolutions. However, most of the plans and ideas remained on paper until October 2002, when things began to change. Andrews University held a summit for 16 people working in Christian and public campus ministries. These practitioners reviewed the Campus Spiritual Leadership graduate certificate program planned by the Religious Education Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. The plan was implemented in the summer of 2004.<sup>25</sup>

General Conference President Jan Paulsen believes that this is a timely program: “Higher education in our schools is increasingly becoming the site of ministry.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed, revitalizing the campus chaplaincy ministry is an idea whose time has come.

### It Furthers the Mission of Adventist Education

The eighth reason why campus chaplaincy is making a major contribution in attaining the mission of the church is that our schools are tasked to be mission-driven. Being the most visible witnessing spiritual dynamo in Adventist colleges and universities, campus chaplaincy must be an indispensable element in our schools. It must reach out to the schools’ non-Adventist constituency both inside and outside the campus.<sup>27</sup>

At Mountain View College, a typical student’s life is considered incomplete if he or she has not participated, at least once, in some kind of campus ministry. Remarkably, this is true even for its many non-Adventist students. The spirit of mission seems to infuse the very atmosphere of the college. Mission has become a given in MVC’s life and culture.

### Conclusion

Campus chaplaincy ministry has an important role in fulfilling our church’s mission. Mountain View College has set an example of what every campus chaplaincy ministry in ev-



MVC students waiting for a ride to a Sabbath morning off-campus ministry activity.

ery Adventist college *must* do—reach out to the world *within* and to the world *without*! The motto of our education department in the 1960s describes this role: “Keep the saved, save the lost, and train for service.”<sup>28</sup> The 1996 Asia-Pacific Division survey sums up this motto in its report:

“Adventist education is one of the most effective forms of evangelism carried on by the Church, both in terms of number of converts and in terms of retention of converts and preparation of these converts for active service in the Church.”<sup>29</sup> The question our institutions of higher learning around the world should ask is *not* whether they should engage in active campus chaplaincy, but *how* to make their chaplaincy ministries most effective in achieving our mission of proclaiming the everlasting gospel to all the world in these last days. ☞

*Campus chaplaincy fulfills a vital role in the mission of our educational institutions because of its significant contribution to church growth.*



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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ. Assn., 1972), pp. 15, 69.
2. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2005), p. 181.
3. For a news account of MVC’s zeal for evangelism, see William G. Johnsson, “Jeepneys and Jesus,” *Adventist Review*, World Edition (October 11, 2001), p. 12.
4. This is especially true in the Philippines. Humberto M. Rasi with Enrique Becerra, C. Garland Dulan, John Fowler, and Beverly Rumble, “Report to the Executive Committee” (report presented at the annual General Conference Spring Meeting by the Department of Education on April 2002).
5. Gladden Flores, until recently the associate director of education of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, is now president of Adventist University of the Philippines. Tape-recorded interview by Don Leo Garilva, October 30, 2002, Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental, Philippines.
6. Quoted in James B. Mbyirikura, “Fostering the Adventist Ethos in a University Campus: An African Perspective,” available from [http://www.aiias.edu/ict/vol\\_27/27cc\\_059-078.pdf](http://www.aiias.edu/ict/vol_27/27cc_059-078.pdf); accessed April 10, 2006.
7. Taashi Rowe, “World Church: Report Finds Adventist Schools Doing Well, But Lists Areas of Concern,” available from <http://news.adventist.org/data/2005/09/1129152264/index.html.en>; accessed April 28, 2006.
8. For example, since 1997, MVC’s School of Nursing has been among the top nursing schools out of more than a hundred such programs in the Philippines, as shown in its Nursing Licensure Examination results: 1997: 10th place, 1999: 4th place, 2003: 8th place, 2007: 17th place.

9. H. LeVerne Bissell, Gina Siapco, and Eli Cam, “APD Survey: State of the Church, North Philippine Union Mission,” prepared for the Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 1996, p. 33.
10. Remelito Tabingo, until his retirement in December 2007, was president of South Philippine Union Conference (SPUC). Telephone interview by Don Leo Garilva, June 28, 2006, MVC.
11. Ibid.
12. Jonathan Gallagher, “Adventist Education—A Sobering Report,” available from <http://www.adventistreview.org/2003-1541/council7.html>; accessed May 7, 2006. Gallagher states, “The percentage of non-Adventist students rose from 18 percent in 1990 to 32 percent in 2000, and was projected to be 45 percent by 2010.”
13. “Campus Spiritual Leadership,” available from [http://www.andrews.edu/sem/reled/programs/cmp\\_sprt\\_ldrshp.html](http://www.andrews.edu/sem/reled/programs/cmp_sprt_ldrshp.html); accessed August 8, 2008.
14. Carl B. Trutter, “The Evangelization Dimension of Campus Ministry,” in *The Gospel on Campus: A Handbook of Campus Ministry Programs and Resources*, Michael Galligan-Stierle, gen. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference, 1991), p. 105.
15. George Barna, *Generation Next* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1995), p. 77. Barna says that this is one of their most significant discoveries.
16. Joe Jerus, “The Role of Chaplains in Global Missions,” *The Adventist Chaplain: A Journal of Ministry in Specialized Settings* (Fall 1992), p. 5.
17. Remelito A. Tabingo, telephone interview by Don Leo Garilva, February 23, 2004, MVC.
18. Charles Habib Malik, “A Christian Critique of the University,” available from <http://www.leaderu.com/real/ri9902/malik.html>; accessed August 8, 2008.
19. Steve Shadrach, “Five Students Who Changed the World,” available from [http://www.boundless.org/2002\\_2003/regulars/list\\_guy/a0000739.html](http://www.boundless.org/2002_2003/regulars/list_guy/a0000739.html); accessed August 8, 2008. See also Patricia Burgin, “The Powerful Percent: Students at the Heart of the Great Commission,” Worldwide Student NetWork Press, 1999, available from <http://www.amazon.com/powerful-percent-Students-heart-Commission/dp/0962924504/>; accessed August 8, 2008.
20. “Campus Spiritual Leadership,” op cit.
21. Bernie Molnar, “Developing an Effective Campus Ministry,” *College and University Dialogue* 1:2 (1989), p. 25.
22. Because of the magnitude of its program, SULADS, though still based at MVC, has recently been voted to become an independent entity directly under the South Philippine Union Conference. For recent information and stories about SULADS, see *Adventist World’s* cover story, “The Kerosene Lamp and Other Stories” (April 2006), pp. 16-19. For more information, visit their Website at <http://suladsonline.org/>.
23. “Campus Spiritual Leadership,” op cit.
24. Humberto M. Rasi, “Ministering to Seventh-day Adventist College and University Students in Secular Campuses: A Rationale,” *Adventist Ministry to College and University Students*, 2002), p. 3.
25. “Campus Spiritual Leadership,” op cit. Their Website further states: “The Religious Education programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary would like to make Andrews University a world center for training leaders in campus ministry.” For more information, visit their Website at [http://www.andrews.edu/sem/reled/programs/cmp\\_sprt\\_ldrshp.html](http://www.andrews.edu/sem/reled/programs/cmp_sprt_ldrshp.html); accessed August 8, 2008.
26. Quoted in Rowe, “Report Finds Adventist Schools Doing Well,” op cit.
27. I admire what the late Malcolm Maxwell, president of Pacific Union College for 18 years, told his teachers: “In accepting a position on the faculty of Pacific Union College, you are accepting pastoral and evangelistic obligations; part of your job at PUC means you will reach out and touch our students for Christ. This is the one thing that sets our school apart. . . . That’s what we’re all about” (Greg A. King, “Should Adventist Colleges Require Religion Classes?” *The Journal of Adventist Education* [February/March 2006], pp. 24, 25). This quote is taken from an interview with D. Malcolm Maxwell entitled, “Our Distinctive Difference—Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education,” *Pacific Union Recorder* (April 15, 1996), p. 5.
28. Herman L. Reyes, *Breakingthrough: Why the Seventh-day Adventist Church Has Grown to Be the Largest Protestant Church in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Kaunlaran Trading I Printing, 1981), p. 197.
29. Bissell, et al., “APD Survey: State of the Church, North Philippine Union Mission,” op cit., p. 220.