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# Adventist Journey

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## My Journey

The restaurant has been operational for two years. It's been a journey—ups and downs, difficult days but also more positive days. One thing I've learned is that when you follow Christ's method and do as the Bible says, "Let your light . . . shine" (Matt. 5:16), people begin to notice. Visit [vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajgwchew](http://vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajgwchew) for more of Chew's story.

**GW CHEW,**  
restauranteur/entrepreneur,  
The Veg Hub, Oakland, California



Cover Photo by Dan Weber

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# APPETITE

for

# INFLUENCE

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN

Adventist entrepreneur and restaurateur serves the city of Oakland plant-based meals and Christian friendship.

**I**n The Veg Hub vegan restaurant in Oakland, California, Uno cards and Tabasco sauce bottles share equal billing in the small wire condiment caddies perched at the centers of several wooden tables. A chalkboard mural of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge festoons the far wall. Behind the front counter, across from the fresh vegetable prep station, steaming pots and pans boil and sizzle. A sandwich board bearing The Veg Hub name and logo is parked outside the restaurant's unlocked glass doors.

GW Chew, chef and entrepreneur, prepares the first lunch order, capable hands moving confidently and wide smile greeting customers. Christian music plays quietly in the background.

It's noon, and this center of influence is open for business.

## Community Impact

For the past several years the Seventh-day Adventist Church has made special effort to reach people in the world's cities. One of the church's initiatives, the Adventist Mission Centers of Influence, is based on Ellen White's counsel to "establish in all our cities small plants which shall be centers of influence."<sup>1</sup>

According to Adventist Mission the idea is simple: start holistic ministry centers in urban areas to connect the church to needs in the community. Ellen White mentioned restaurants in particular, writing that "hygienic restaurants are to be established in the cities, and by them the message of temperance is to be proclaimed. Arrangements should be made to hold meetings in connection with our restaurants."<sup>2</sup>

Chew has always had a passion for entrepreneurship, missionary work, and food. Starting The Veg Hub restaurant as a center of influence in the community was a no-brainer. "We looked at our restaurant as being that kind of solution where you really get to mingle with people and you get to show sympathy because your customers come on a daily basis. We have some customers that come every day during the week when our restaurant is open," said Chew.

The people who frequent The Veg Hub become friends. "One of my mottos in the restaurant is: 'Friends First, Customers Second,'" Chew said. "We look to establish those relationships with our customers. Then we get to meet their needs. We do cooking classes and health education for kids all the way to adults. Those become foundational experiences. Then people begin to ask questions about our faith. The last part of the process in Christ's method is that He won their confidence. Then He bade them 'Follow Me.'"

Chew explained that the staff is well aware of the restaurant's mission—and ready to engage. "We're realizing, as we make friends, that friends talk," said Chew. "Friends ask questions. 'Why are you closed on Saturday?' 'Why do you do this?' Those become the questions that people begin to ask as a result and as it relates to what we're doing here in the restaurant. So for us it's a gift. It's a way that we can love people in a very practical way. We're seeing the impact on a regular basis."

## Chew on This

For Chew, food, friends—and family—have always been important.

He grew up in rural Virginia, raised on meaty, comfort foods and family fellowship. Lots of home-cooked meals, cookouts, and

special holiday celebrations with macaroni and cheese, ribs, fried chicken, ham, even squirrel.

GW Chew has always had a passion for entrepreneurship, missionary work, and food.

special holiday celebrations with macaroni and cheese, ribs, fried chicken, ham, even squirrel.

His mother, who had been raised in an Adventist home but did not attend church when Chew was a child, sent him with relatives to church on Saturdays. Through this Chew was introduced to meatless meals and potlucks. "I had the blessing of vegetarian food since I was in the third grade—when I'd have this delicious vegetarian meal on Sabbath."

Nostalgia and a firm desire to create good-tasting, healthful foods helped propel Chew toward what some may see as an unconventional ministry. "Because of those moments of my life, when I had those great dinners and those great conversations with my family, I look at food as this wholistic experience—loving your family and having those intimate moments around the food that you're eating," Chew explained.

"I realized that vegetarian food, if it is cooked properly, cooked deliciously, can be pretty amazing. I had this dichotomy of both experiences growing up, but the constant was family."

Chew received a full scholarship to run track for Howard University in Washington, D.C., but about a week after he signed the scholarship, he broke his leg in a race.

"It was a turning point for me and my experience," said Chew. "I wasn't actually a Seventh-day Adventist at the time. But I'd grown up around them, and I decided to give my scholarship up so I could keep the seventh-day Sabbath. That was my first

[conscious] decision to follow Christ, follow God, and follow this amazing Bible that I had learned about. I really didn't know what to do, but as a Christian, that love relationship with Christ began to develop." He took business classes in college, eager to learn how to start and operate a business. Soon he was baptized.

Chew's love of cooking and Sabbath dinners combined with his love for God and desire to serve Him. "Very early on I began to get convictions about this being my lifework," said Chew. "I began to read the writings of Ellen White about food—and the power of

Chef GW Chew shares a menu favorite: Philly cheeze steak wrap and sesame kale salad.





GW Chew prepares a sandwich with fresh greens, cashew cheeze sauce, and plant-based protein.



food—and John Harvey Kellogg and some of those things about the history of our church. I was really enthused by these discoveries. This began the early development of seeing that I could use food as a way for ministry.”

Chew left college and became a Bible worker/literature evangelist, selling literature and homemade granola and bread door to door. It seemed natural to Chew to take his passion for good food and the gospel message to the next level.

Tinkering with plant-based proteins as he experimented with different recipes, techniques, and processes to make meat substitutes, Chew opened a restaurant in Virginia that operated for several years, then moved to Arkansas. He continued to work on his meat substitute recipes and do ministry on a regular basis in churches and the community. He said, “Again, it was important having that dual ministry model, but also now connecting it with a community business.”

A conversation at the 2012 Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) convention charted a course toward what seemed inevitable: a restaurant as a center of influence for the Adventist Church.

### A Restaurant Tale

With an entrepreneur’s drive and a pastor’s heart, Chew was operating a booth at the ASI convention when Marc K. Woodson, then executive secretary for the Northern California Conference (now conference president), stopped by. Woodson was impressed with what he saw, and excited about Chew’s vegan restaurant and ministry.

“He felt that that would be a great ministry model for Oakland,” said Chew. “In Oakland, they wanted to do something called Bridges to the Bay, which was reaching the cities of Oakland and San Francisco through practical love and service and ministry. That began our conversation in 2012; I ended up moving out here in 2014 to begin the journey.”

It took a few more years to secure funding from the General Conference and the North American Division and open the location on MacArthur Boulevard in the heart of Oakland’s diamond district neighborhood.

Today The Veg Hub proudly plates completely plant-based lunches and dinners Monday through Thursday. In addition to serving Philly cheeze steaks with original bar-b-Chew sauce, hubster fries, sesame kale salad, vegan fried chicken, and other savory dishes, Chew and the staff use the restaurant as a place for cooking classes and Bible studies. The restaurant partners with the Oakland public school district on several youth development programs. They prepare Thanksgiving dinner for the elderly at a retirement home.

“We see how the power of Jesus feeding the 5,000 can be done in today’s time frame through a vegetarian/vegan restaurant model.”

### A Full Serving

The Veg Hub has become known as a place that serves the community. “We’re more than a restaurant,” Chew said. “Most of our customers say, ‘They have great food. The food is delicious.

But they also do classes. They love on you. When you come into the space, it feels like home.’ We really try to create, again, that experience where we’re a part of their family. We have food that’s going to help nourish them and is good for them.”

Said Chew, “Customers come for our mac and cheese. We’re giving them healthy comfort foods, things that they’re familiar with, but done in a way that they can enjoy without those off-textures and off-flavors—and at the same time, it’s more healthful, which is also important.”

The Veg Hub is described as a fast, casual restaurant that’s affordably priced with food that people are willing to come back for again and again. It’s also a place that influences the community through the classes, outreach, and Christian literature available to customers.

The Veg Hub is described as a fast, casual restaurant that’s affordably priced with food that people are willing to come back for again and again.

But Chew isn’t satisfied stopping there. “The reason we started a restaurant was with the end goal of creating a church plant,” he said. “Our long-term vision is to see a restaurant franchise where we have a vegan restaurant, the vegetarian restaurant model, in every urban center of the country. Within that, those urban centers become feed-

ers to a church plant *and* to churches in the local community.”

Chew said, “God wants us to be in the community and serving great food. I just feel that that’s a part of who He is. . . . He fed the children of Israel in the wilderness with manna. This is the manna of the last days. Feeding people with great food, healthful food, but also loving on them. . . . We look at our restaurants as being feeders to creating church plants. We hope to see that become a reality in the next 10 years or so. We’ll see what God will do.”

### Next Level

Chew takes Ellen White’s words to heart: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”<sup>4</sup>

Chew added, “I couldn’t do ministry effectively if the food wasn’t good. People come to a restaurant because they want to eat delicious food. So the great thing about our restaurant is that I’ve been able to, as chef, create my own plant-based proteins. My own veggie meat. We’ve created some really amazing, delicious textures.”

In fact, Chew is working with Whole Foods to sell his plant-based “meat” product, Better Chew. The product launches into the market next year in Whole Foods and other local regional markets in California.

### Food and Faith

While there are challenges in the restaurant business every day, Chew relies on God. “There’ve been times in my life when just having the resources that were needed wasn’t always in view, but there are countless ways that God

has always been on time,” he said. “God is teaching me how to trust in Him. I feel that it’s a lesson I still haven’t mastered. I don’t know if I ever will master it. But I feel that this process is helping me to see His love as I’ve never seen it before. My business, my ministry, is deeply connected with my faith.”

Chew added, “I’ve learned not to strive to be the greatest business in the world. Just strive to be who God wants me to be and be faithful to Him.” Chew keeps Matthew 6:33 in mind: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

As for the future, Chew said he continues to strive prayerfully to be a good husband, father, boss, businessman, and servant—used by Jesus. “I believe that every member should do the same. It’s a blessing when you can be used by God.”

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

*Kimberly Luste Maran, an associate director of Communication for the North American Division, is editor of Adventist Journey.*



Two customers enjoy a plant-based lunch at The Veg Hub in Oakland, California. The restaurant is a Seventh-day Adventist Church center of influence.



## COMMUNITY PULLS TOGETHER AFTER DEADLIEST WILDFIRE IN CALIFORNIA'S HISTORY

Nearly 1,300 Adventists affected by the Camp Fire.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NAD OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

**I** first saw the pictures of the church Friday afternoon as I was having my lunch," said Dan Martella, administrative pastor for the Paradise Seventh-day Adventist Church in California, during a November 12, 2018, Skype interview with the Fox 5 Washington, D.C., television station. Martella has been a pastor there—and community member—for three years. On Thursday evening, November 8, the church burned to the ground as the Camp Fire swept through Paradise.

"It was a sucker punch. Then a day later we got the pictures of our house," Martella said. His family home was completely destroyed.

The Camp Fire, now considered the deadliest fire in California's

history, has claimed the lives of 88 in the vicinities of Concow and Paradise. According to reports coming from U.S. national news outlets, more than 52,000 were evacuated from the area; about 14,000 homes and 4,800 other buildings have been destroyed. As of early December, 25 people are still missing.

Nearly 1,300 Adventist church members have been affected, with many losing everything except their lives. One elderly church member died as a result of the fire. Five pastoral families lost their homes, as did several retired pastors and 15 teachers.

In addition to the church, the Paradise Adventist School lost its K-4 building, and sustained damage to the gymnasium basement.

Adventist Health Feather River reported that some of its buildings were damaged. "Part of the upper level of the hospital is standing, as is OB, ED, outpatient surgery center, home health, cancer center, and sleep medicine," the report stated. "The lower level of the hospital, the chiller and utility area, and most of the other outbuildings did sustain damage."

On November 15 the Pacific Union Conference approved a special appropriation of \$100,000 to the Northern California Conference for use in immediate relief efforts for the church and school in the Paradise community.

Churches in the neighboring North Pacific Union Conference held special offerings on Sabbaths

through December 1 to aid the Northern California Conference in its relief efforts.

### Community Helps Community

According to a CNN report, in the days immediately following the start of the fire, 1,385 residents lived in shelters. While many are still struggling, there continues a surge of support from Paradise and the surrounding communities. Adventist church members have joined with their neighbors in the community to help.

"Our members are working closely with local organizations and have pulled together to face this crisis," a spokesperson for the Pacific Union Conference said in a November 10 news release. The release stated: "The Paradise church members who have lost their sanctuary will be worshipping with nearby congregations, and our pastors and members have reached out to help meet the extraordinary needs created by this disaster."

"Financial support for the fire recovery is the most important way our members can help right now," said W. Derrick Lea, North American Division (NAD) Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACSDR) director. "People need the basics—clothes, shoes, food, water—and these needs will continue in the near future."

On November 11 Lea reported, "Ed Fergusson, the assistant to the president of the Northern California Conference, continues to work with his local community onsite and the NAD has offered support as appropriate. Charlene Sargent is meeting with local leadership within the disaster response community in southern California. She is providing support to the leadership there. Both conferences have asked for financial

support for the fire recovery. The NAD has sent out this same message and standby to offer help as needed. Marshall and Julie Gonzalez, filling in for me in my time away [assessing Typhoon Yutu damage in Saipan], have been in communication with both Southern and Northern California conferences."

Local Adventists helped in some immediately tangible ways. Nancy Hamilton, a Chico resident and videographer from Golden Eagle Films, used her press credentials to video homes, going street by street, to help those who couldn't go into the area to ascertain if their property had been damaged. Hamilton also shared earlier footage for the Fox 5 news report, including video of first responders and the smoldering Adventist church properties. She has posted to both Facebook and YouTube.

On Facebook, Katlyn Dordevic from Napa, shared photos from her volunteer nursing work in Chico. She said it was "such a blessing to volunteer as an R.N. in Chico with all the other staff helping at a shelter, then going to Walmart to help at 'tent city.' Lots of dressing changes, blood pressure checks, and quick triage to [determine] medical needs."

Dordevic shared that the large group at Walmart expressed "so much gratitude that melted my heart. Everyone had nothing but good things to say about the care they were receiving." She added, "Continue to pray for them. Personal items [are] needed, such as socks, [underclothes], and warm items such as blankets, hats, and gloves."

Martella lost his home to the fire. But he is heartened by the love and support coming from the church community, friends, and family. "The smell of smoke and death fills the air. The devastation is beyond comprehension," Martella wrote in an NAD Ministerial article posted online on November 21.

But "there are some things that fire cannot destroy. Our church family is amazing. Our sister church in Chico has welcomed us with open arms. High-talent people are flying and driving into town to help us put our lives together. Friends and family from across the country and the world are showering us with resources to get us through the tough times."

### About the Camp Fire

The fire was named after Camp Creek Road, where it started in the morning on November 8. Shortly after the fire started, the Butte County sheriff's office ordered the evacuation of Paradise and surrounding locales. Within the first day the fire had destroyed up to 90 percent of the town of Paradise and the Concow community.

Strong winds approaching 50 miles per hour and dry conditions fueled the fire's quick movement through the area, trapping residents who had little to no time to flee, and making it impossible for firefighters to stop/contain the blaze.



↑ Some of the residents who evacuated and lost their homes to the Camp Fire, which destroyed most of the town of Paradise, California, find shelter in a nearby community. *Katlyn Dordevic*

## NAD YEAR-END MEETING UPDATE



← Tom Evans, outgoing NAD treasurer, delivers his address to the NAD Executive Committee on November 5, 2018, as Shirley, his wife, looks on. *Mylon Medley*

“It’s been great to serve you,” said Tom Evans, NAD treasurer, during the YEM meeting. “It’s been a joy and a delight.”

collaboration among Adventist higher education institutions, and the growing number of education courses available through the Adventist Learning Community.

“Larry has been both a mentor and a coach and a friend over the years,” said Arne Nielson, NAD Education director of secondary education, who was voted by the executive committee to replace Blackmer on January 1, 2019.

“One of the things I’ve admired most about him is that he’s exemplified a very dynamic faith both in his professional life and his personal life,” added Nielsen. “He’s a very strong Seventh-day

Adventist Christian. That’s really what stands out, followed closely by the fact that he loves Adventist education. Whatever he does from his office is filtered through the lens of what’s best for kids.”

Blackmer was instrumental in the creation of the Adventist Learning Community, Data Rollup (an Adventist education toolkit), T-Deck (the technology committee for the division that is used for education), and the Guam-Micronesia Mission education partnerships with NAD union conferences. He’s been a strong advocate for accreditation for distant learning courses,



↑ During the 2019 NAD YEM, Larry Blackmer, who recently retired from his role as NAD vice president for Education, thanks the division for its commitment to Adventist Education. *Pieter Damsteegt*

## FINAL REPORTS SPUR WELL-WISHES TO THREE NAD LEADERS PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT

BY MYLON MEDLEY, NAD OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

**A**n officer of the North American Division (NAD), a vice president, and a ministry director gave their final respective reports during the division’s 2018 year-end meeting as they prepared for their retirements at the end of 2018 (Evans, Blackmer) or the beginning of 2019 (Mathews). Executive committee members seized the opportunity to thank the leaders for their service

and lasting impact on the division and the church’s mission of spreading the gospel.

### Tom Evans

G. Thomas Evans, treasurer of the NAD, who has served the church for more than a half century, delivered his final financial report to the NAD executive committee on November 5, 2018. The routine report outlined the

division’s consolidated financial statement, including net assets, tithe dollars received in 2017—more than \$1.02 billion—tithe dollars sent to the General Conference, mission offerings received, and investment portfolios.

Evans concluded his report with a quote from Ellen G. White: “Heaven is watching to see how those occupying positions of influence fulfil their stewardship. The demands upon them as stewards are measured by the extent of their influence. In their treatment of their fellow-men, they should be as fathers—just, tender, true. They should be Christlike in character, uniting with their brethren in the closest bonds of unity and fellowship.”\*

“It’s been great to serve you,” said Evans during the meetings. “It’s been a joy and a delight.”

Evans became the chief financial officer of the NAD in June 2007 and was re-elected in June 2010. He was previously vice president for finance for the Southern Union Conference. Before being employed at the Southern Union, he held the same position in the Mid-America Union Conference for 12 years. Prior to that, he served as treasurer for local conferences and secondary academies.

“[With] five decades to schools, conferences, unions, divisions, he’s extended himself. He’s given of himself. He’s done all he could to advance [God’s] work,” said G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary, during a special prayer over the officer and his wife, Shirley. “We will miss him, but we know that he will continue to work for You.”

Before the prayer, Daniel R. Jackson, president of the NAD, presented Evans with a plaque as an expression of gratitude. “We give this to you with our cherished memories, and with our love,” said Jackson.

### Larry Blackmer

Larry Blackmer, NAD vice president for education, delivered his final educational report to the executive committee on November 6. He highlighted the division’s enrollment turnaround, increased

“Thank you so much for letting me work here at the North American Division,” said John Mathews, retiring Stewardship director. “It’s the best place on earth.”

seminary integration, and faith and science curriculum for higher education and K-12 education.

Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Education Department director for the General Conference, thanked Blackmer for strengthening the partnership between Adventist educators and pastors.

“I’d like to add my thanks on behalf of the world church for what you’ve done,” said Beardsley-Hardy. “You’ve not only helped develop K-12, despite a lot of pressures and the trends that are going the other way, but you’ve helped update what we’re doing for the education of pastors. As a result, the new international handbook for ministerial and theological education has a component that one of the competencies of pastors’ need is to understand how the ministry of education is very much a part of pastoral work.”

Blackmer has served at Grand Ledge Academy in Grand Ledge, Michigan, as both teacher and principal; at Adelpian Academy in Holly, Michigan, as vice principal and boys’ dean; and as principal at Mount Pisgah Academy in



↑ NAD officers, G. Alexander Bryant, G. Thomas Evans, and Daniel R. Jackson, present John Mathews with an award for his service to the division’s Stewardship Ministries. *Mylon Medley*

North Carolina and Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Maryland. Blackmer also served as associate superintendent in the Michigan Conference and as superintendent of schools in the Idaho Conference. Prior to serving as the vice president of education for the NAD, Blackmer served as an associate director.

### John Mathews

John Mathews’ final stewardship reports featured a glimpse of the creative footprint he’s leaving on the ministry—two video series, and expanded features on the stewardship app.

“John has as many creative ideas as birds have feathers,” said Jackson.

“The only thing about his creativity is that since I’ve been in stewardship, I don’t think he’s slept. [I think it’s] because he’s lying awake at night just thinking of new things to do,” said Bonita Joyner Shields, associate director of Stewardship Ministries, who was elected to serve as director beginning in January 2019.

Mathews is the principal author of the first quarter 2018 *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, “Live Stewardship . . . Live Happy,” and coauthored with his wife, Janice, *Smoky Mountain Rescue*. He is also a musician, having recorded the gospel CD *Keeper of My Heart*. He produced the film *The Mysterious Note* for the ministry, and has worked for years alongside his labradoodle “Stewardship Jack,” his canine companion who helps teach honesty and generosity to kids ages 3-7.

“One of his greatest impacts in stewardship was the writing of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. Following the release of this quarterly, tithe increased around the globe. In the North American Division alone we went from a little more than 2 percent tithe increase trend to more than 8 percent through September 2018. Well done, John!” added Shields.

Mathew’s ministry has included serving in Florida, Alabama, Iowa, Missouri, Tennessee, and Nebraska. He has conducted stewardship and family finance seminars throughout the NAD since 2010.

“Thank you so much for letting me work here at the North American Division,” said Mathews. “It’s the best place on earth.”

\*Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 495.

BY CARLTON P. BYRD

## A Legacy of Empowerment

Celebrating Adventism’s History of Social Engagement

It was one of the most iconic moments in biblical antiquity. God spoke to Moses and enlisted him in the divine work of deliverance. Moses would not deliver Israel from sin; that work was reserved for the Messiah. Moses would, however, prefigure the work of the Messiah by delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt. This single event of deliverance in the Exodus would forever change the course of human history.

The initial call of Moses often arrests my attention. This call was unique. Unlike the disciples (who were approached by Jesus), or the prophets (who simply heard the voice of God), in the call of Moses God chose a multimedia presentation complete with pyrotechnics and miraculous displays using nature and animals as props.

I love the way the apostle Stephen tells the story of Moses’ call in the book of Acts just before he was stoned to death. The King James Version translates this calling with a repeated phrase. God says to Moses, “I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt” (Acts 7:34, KJV).

The phrase “I have seen” is repeated twice, accentuating the emphasis God places on this call. Even in the New International Version God is translated as saying, “I have indeed seen,” which also highlights the importance of this calling.

Yet the King James Version translation gives me overwhelming pause whenever I read it. God is pronouncing with definitive clarity that His patience has run out on oppression; thus He has chosen to enlist Moses to execute His judgment. The rest is history.

### Legacy of Empowerment

When I survey the history of the Bible, it’s obvious that God has always been active in the work of deliverance, liberation, and empowerment to those who are oppressed. The prophets all spoke of God’s judgment against those who sought to abuse His children. What gives me courage is that God has never ceased this work.

In 1865 Sojourner Truth spoke with power saying, “It is hard for the old slaveholding spirit to die, but die it must.”<sup>1</sup> In 1868

Ellen G. White wrote that slavery is “a sin of the darkest dye.”<sup>2</sup> Then in 1894 James Edson White boarded a steamboat and traveled throughout the South to establish schools and share the Advent message among African Americans. As a result of that movement, Oakwood University was established in 1896; and a steady stream of leaders have also emerged to add to the legacy of empowerment.

### Adventist Activism

These leaders include James K. Humphrey, who founded the First Harlem Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1929, and later started Utopia Park, a self-sufficient community designed to combat poverty and poor health. By the mid-1940s another leader, E. E. Cleveland, was already a seasoned evangelist conducting revivals all around the world. In 1957 an Adventist teenager by the name of Terrence Roberts helped desegregate Little Rock’s school system.

The list of Adventist activism and accomplishment is too long to list here. Yet the mission is incomplete.

As long as there is poverty, injustice, and oppression, the Lord still has a work for us to do. He challenges us still today, saying that whatever we do for “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40, KJV) it’s as though we did it to Him directly.

I want to be on the right side of history. How about you?

God has always been active in the work of deliverance, liberation, and empowerment.

<sup>1</sup>Sojourner Truth, “Personal Letter to Amy Post,” Oct. 1, 1865.  
<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 359.

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