

# MISSION UPDATE

JANUARY 2016

## THE LATTER RAIN IN PRACTICAL TERMS

BY TY GIBSON

**THE BIBLE IS FILLED** with agricultural symbolism as a means of depicting God's grand and glorious purpose for humanity (Matthew 13). God is in the business of growing things—a new crop of humans, to be exact (1 Corinthians 3:6-8).

Human beings, like a farmer's crop, move through a growth process that culminates in a harvest of ripe produce. In agriculture there are a few specific stages involved in producing a good final harvest: the planting, the germination of the seed by the early rains, the maturation period, and finally the ripening period brought on by the last rains of the season, called "the latter rain."

The "latter rain" is a biblical symbol for the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit, by which the corporate spiritual experience of God's church will be brought to ripeness for the harvest (Joel 2:23-29). Rain is the stimulus and medium by which the nutrients in the soil are drawn up through the root system. In the realm of spiritual growth, the Holy Spirit is the rain agency.

OK, that's a cool concept, but what is the latter rain in practical terms? A comparison of three biblical passages will give us clarity:

"Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass" (Deuteronomy 32:2).

"When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26).

... but what is the latter rain in practical terms?

"The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. . . . God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:5, 8).

The end-time outpouring of the Holy Spirit will not come to us as a nebulous or mysterious power, but rather in the form of unprecedented clarity regarding God's love, which was put on display in Jesus. In other words, the Holy Spirit operates with one very specific goal, and that goal is to direct mental and emotional attention to the good news of God's saving grace as manifested in the sacrifice of Christ. Once we understand this, we can know with certainty when we are encountering the activity of the Holy Spirit in God's church (and when we're not). 🍃



## CAN GOD BLESS A RELUCTANT WITNESS?

BY JEFFREY ROSARIO

**A FEW WEEKS AGO**, we at Light Bearers had the privilege of graduating the 16th ARISE class since the school's beginning. Students came from all over the United States, including Indiana, California, Washington, Texas, Oregon, Michigan, Kentucky, Arizona, and Florida. International students came from Canada, Finland, and England. Our youngest student was 17-years-old, and our most senior student was 70.

These recent graduates will go on to serve God and the world in various capacities. Some will continue their college education and be witnesses in academic settings. Others will serve in mission fields throughout the world, and still

others will serve in their workplaces, in professional careers, in full-time ministry, in humanitarian causes, and in many other ways.

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One of the most exciting aspects of the ARISE program is actually seeing students in action as they reach out to others in the community. It is particularly special to see students from a previous year reaching out to others, some of whom are actually future students. This was a golden year in that respect. A group of students from the 2014 class stayed an extra year to participate in an internship program. This involved different aspects of ministry, including initiatives on the campus of the University of Oregon. Two of these interns, Olga and

Amir, had a providential encounter that has led to a life-changing experience.

One outreach day in January, after going door to door until sunset, Amir and Olga decided to visit the campus of the University of Oregon and interact with whatever random students they might encounter. At that point, Olga was lacking motivation and enthusiasm, preferring to call it a day and head home. But after encouragement from Amir and a sincere prayer, Olga was determined to put her heart into it. "Let's go," she said. "Let's see who God puts in our path." Neither of them had any idea that what awaited them was a divine appointment they would have surely missed had they not ventured on campus.

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While loitering in one of the public squares, they went in opposite directions to interact with different students. After a short, cordial conversation with a student that led to a dead end, Olga noticed a girl sitting alone and attentively reading a book. The girl's name was Esther, and surprisingly, the book she was reading was a Bible. It turns out that Esther was reading in preparation to lead out in her weekly collegiate Bible study group. Olga and Amir agreed to attend and meet the rest of the group. That same week, Storyline Adventist Church, a church plant launched in partnership between Light Bearers and the Oregon Conference, was having a Sabbath service on campus, and Olga invited those in the group to check it out. Esther attended the service on Sabbath and was blessed.

As Olga and Amir continued to attend Esther's weekly Bible study group, they developed friendships with members of the group, became active in the discussions, and fellowshiped at their potlucks. All this was with no hidden agenda, but rather simply to make friends. Several weeks later, Amir had the opportunity to preach at Storyline Adventist Church, and they invited Esther to attend again. This time, Olga was surprised to hear Esther say, "Happy Sabbath," on her way out after the service.

Eventually, Olga was given the opportunity to lead out at Esther's weekly Bible study. During the discussion with the group, Amir shared a testimony about his experience as an ARISE student which piqued Esther's interest. After the study, he shared with her about the ARISE curriculum that journeys through the story of redemption in Scripture. Olga was thinking to herself, "Why is Amir talking about ARISE? Why would Esther want to attend a school affiliated with another church?" Both Olga and Amir left the study completely shocked at Esther's high level of interest in the things they were sharing.

But that was only the beginning. Within a couple of weeks, they were amazed to learn that Esther had officially applied to the ARISE program! During her studies at ARISE, Esther has truly blossomed in every way. As graduation weekend approached, she expressed her desire to be baptized. And as if things could not get any better, Esther has decided to participate in the 2016 ARISE internship program beginning in mid-January.

So what began as a random encounter on a gloomy day, turned out to be an incredible divine appointment that has led to great blessings. ARISE students reaching out to others who, unbeknownst to them, are actually future ARISE students themselves who will catch a vision for the everlasting gospel that will compel them to share it with still others. May this beautiful cycle continue to build up the kingdom of God on earth and to inspire fresh minds to tell the glorious story of redemption, calling others to join in on this awesome journey. 🕯



#### ARE YOU A RELUCTANT WITNESS?

Visit [lightbearers.org/arise/](http://lightbearers.org/arise/) to learn more about ARISE and see if God is calling you to be a more effective witness for Him!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## DECEMBER 30-JANUARY 3

GYC  
Louisville, KY  
<https://gycweb.org/>  
Ty Gibson

## JANUARY 9

Cascade Seventh-day Adventist  
Church, Bend, OR  
[www.cascadesda.org](http://www.cascadesda.org) | 541.749.9005  
James Rafferty

## JANUARY 16

Cascade Seventh-day Adventist  
Church, Bend, OR  
[www.cascadesda.org](http://www.cascadesda.org) | 541.749.9005  
James Rafferty

## JANUARY 19-22

Pacific Union College  
Week of Prayer  
[www.puc.edu](http://www.puc.edu)  
Jeffrey Rosario

## JANUARY 30

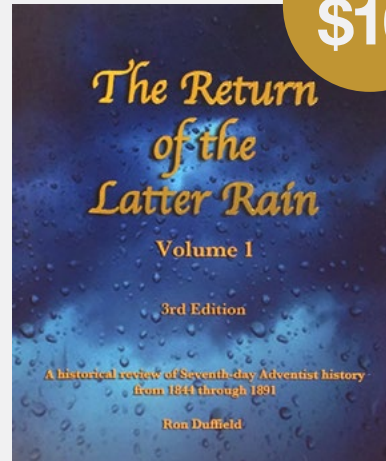
Cascade Seventh-day Adventist  
Church, Bend, OR  
[www.cascadesda.org](http://www.cascadesda.org) | 541.749.9005  
James Rafferty

## FEBRUARY 12-14

Lake Union Youth Congress  
Chicago, IL  
<http://www.lucyouth.org>  
Jeffrey Rosario



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