Adventist World

10/2024

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Mission

It's what we do.











Cover Photo: Lightstock / Brown Bag Photography

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Praying Hands

By Justin Kim

With 16 other siblings in the house, two brothers of the Dürer family realized their poor goldsmith father would not have the finances to support their dream of furthering their art education. They made a pact through a coin toss. One would attend the academy, while the other worked in the mines. After completion of study, the two would switch.

The winner of the coin toss was Albrecht Dürer, who went off to Nuremberg to study art for four years. His brother Albert financed him through his work at the mines. When the later famed artist returned, the family and village held a dinner in his honor. It was then that Albrecht sought to swap roles to fulfill their dual ambitions. He would now go to the mines and Albert to the academy.



Photo: Albrecht Dürer, Praying Hands, 1508, Google Art Project

After some silence the brother declined with tears on his face and with his two hands raised. Apparently working in the mines had ruined his fingers with arthritis, removing any artistic dexterity he might have once had. He was happy for this brother's success and lived vicariously through his prominence.

As a tribute to his brother's selflessness and sacrifice, Albrecht modeled his brother's hands in what is today a famous sketch, entitled Praying Hands, and stored today in Vienna, Austria. You may not be familiar with it. But after seeing it, you will remember having seen it somewhere before. Many have a reproduction hanging in their homes, offices, or on some artifact from a Christian bookstore.



More than Christian kitsch, those praying hands symbolize the loss, self-sacrifice, and generous charity of brotherly love. One may counter that scripture says obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22). But note the point that inner sacrificial obedience is better than outward disobedient sacrifice. In other words, it was Jesus' humility and obedience that resulted in a selfless and sacrificial death, even the death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).

How perfect it was to capture these sentiments in the form of praying hands! It is sacrifice that is the circulating currency of the kingdom of God. It is sacrifice that distinguishes the true Christian from the nominal one. It is sacrifice that started the movement, and it is sacrifice that will end it.

Whether it be sacrificing one's youth for a family member, one's wealth for an organization, one's best years for overseas missions, one's highest energies for the gospel, or one's life for our Advent cause, know that we do this in mimicry, in imitation, in honor, and in discipleship of the Son of God, whose hands are praying for us now.



Rex Shepherd, Pathfinder director for the Oklahoma Conference, celebrates the baptism of a Pathfinder during the International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming, U.S.A. On Friday afternoon, August 9, Pathfinders that chose to follow Christ's example had the opportunity to be baptized.

Photo: Kelley Coe, Columbia Union Conference

"We are here to find our way back to the altar. God has chosen us to lead our people, our churches, and our districts during these challenging times when technology can distract us from our responsibilities, families, and spirituality."

—Wendell Mandolang, Southern Asia-Pacific Division secretary, during the Back to the Altar initiative that united more than 1,400 Adventist pastors across the division. The event aimed to encourage and equip church workers with distinct cultural influences and spiritual zeal to care for and teach their church members. Recognizing the distractions and busyness of modern life, the initiative emphasizes the importance of returning to a foundational spiritual practice—spending dedicated, high-quality time in prayer and Bible study.

***Adventist Review* Newsletter**

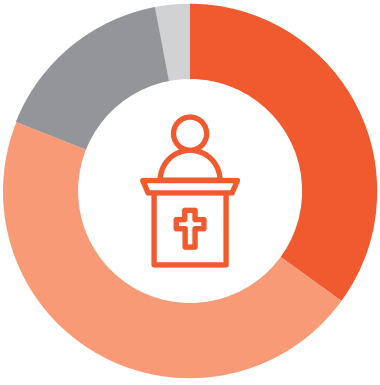
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How often do pastors talk about the mission of the Adventist Church?

Church members were asked how often they heard about the mission of the Adventist Church in sermons.

- **35%** Very frequently
- **46%** Frequently
- **16%** Seldom
- **3%** Never



Scan the QR code to view the complete survey.

N=140,462

Source: 2022-23 Global Church Member Survey

Data provided by the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

"When I first heard about the STORMCo trip to Laos, I was thrilled. . . . I loved everything about the trip: the friendly people, the happy kids, my wonderful team, and of course, the delicious food. It was an unforgettable adventure that touched my heart and showed me the beauty of connecting with others."

—Eh Tha Yu Soe, a participant in the Service to Others Really Matters (STROMCo) mission trip from the Australian Union Conference (AUC), about her experience. The mission trip is part of AUC's annual initiative as part of their global mission partnership program with the church's Southeastern Asia Union Mission and Timor-Leste Mission.

"Jesus told parables to show truths and mysteries of His kingdom, and stories through films have that objective to transmit those same truths and mysteries. . . . That is why these spaces are made for members to put their gifts and talents in service for God."

—Uriel Castellanos, communication director of the Chiapas Mexican Union, about the first film festival held in that region. In addition to the films projected, the event included keynote presentations, talks, and a Q&A session on cinematography and evangelism. Young creatives were challenged to continue growing and producing Christian content that impacts people.

More Than 100

The number of young volunteers from the Caleb Mission Project initiative gathered in Cusco, Peru, to participate in the recovery of public spaces in the historic neighborhood of San Blas, in the capital of the old Inca Empire. Caleb Mission Project is a voluntary social service and evangelism program that encourages Adventist youth to dedicate their vacations to strengthening small congregations and reaching new people. The goal is to mobilize thousands of young people in South America to evangelize in places where there is little to no Adventist presence. This movement, the largest in recent times, engages youth in evangelism with a focus on engagement with God, the church, and the community.

"ExpoBiblia has proved to be a very valuable tool to make thousands of Spanish people aware of the importance of God's Word for society. A recent exhibition drew about 1,000 people to the ExpoBiblia tent, where they could get acquainted with Bible stories, reflect on the importance of the Bible, and ask questions of Adventist member volunteers."

—Gabriel Diaz, Spanish Union Conference evangelism director, about the impact of the ExpoBiblia event. For several years now, Adventists in Spain have used the ExpoBiblia exhibition to highlight the historic role of the Bible, calling people's attention to God's Word. This is a prime method to reach out to a society where most call themselves religious but hardly anyone reads the Bible regularly.



Photo: Chiapas Mexican Union Conference

Andrews University Holds Annual Adventist Family Research Conference

Understanding Diverse Families was the theme of the 2024 event.

Sara Hamstra, Andrews University

The annual Adventist Conference on Family Research and Practice was held at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University (AU) in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, July 18-20. The focus for this year's conference was "Understanding Diverse Families."

This year, for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was held in person, with participants from around the world attending both on campus and online.

The conference was created in the summer of 1975 by John and Millie Youngberg, professors in the School of Education at Andrews University, with the intention of building stronger and healthier families in the context of the church, providing professionals with, according to the event website, "the opportunity to be exposed to best practice strategies and research in the areas of family ministries, family studies, family counseling/therapy, social work, and psychology in order to enhance ministry to families in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and beyond."

The first set of keynote presentations came from Elaine and Willie Oliver, General Conference Family Ministries co-directors. They have shared experience leading marriage conferences and relationship seminars and hosting leadership training conferences in family ministries around the world.

Willie Oliver holds degrees in theology, pastoral counseling, and sociology, and Elaine Oliver has degrees in clinical mental health counseling, counseling psychology, higher education, and educational psychology. Their presentation, titled "The Demography of Difference: Challenges and Opportunities for Ministry to Families," addressed the global reality of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the demography of difference among families in the church, posing challenges to effective ministry, since one size does not fit all, and there is a need to be mindful of these differences.

They also noted that while God's ideal for marriage and family relationships has not changed, family types and structures in the modern world are constantly changing—including the rising rates of intercultural marriages, single-parent families, blended families, childless couples, multigenerational households, immigration and transnational families, same-sex partnerships, families experiencing neurodivergence, and variations resulting from socioeconomic factors.

The Olivers shared the need to be mindful of the "two hands approach" to family ministries in the church. This approach is based on the "understanding that Scripture holds in tension God's divine ideals on one hand and the reality of human brokenness on the other hand," Elaine Oliver explained. She emphasized that each individual's or family's unique experiences contribute to who they are today, and advocated for approaching family ministries with understanding, grace, and compassion, without setting aside the ideals God established in Eden.

The afternoon consisted of smaller breakout sessions. Discussion topics included the development of children's growth mindsets, challenges and opportunities of multigenerational households, family communication patterns and youth mental health, divine attachment theory, narrative discipleship, premarital education, love marriages and arranged marriages in biblical and sociocultural contexts, and trauma-informed communication in family practice.

The second set of keynote presentations came from Arlyn Drew, adjunct professor of systematic theology and Christian philosophy at the Theological Seminary. Her presentations addressed different family structures found both today and in the Old Testament.

The 2025 Adventist Conference on Family Research and Practice is scheduled for July 17-19.



General Conference Family Ministries director Willie Oliver (left) and associate director Elaine Oliver.

Photo: Manuel Monchon, Andrews University

Adventist Meetings in Juba the First Event Booked at Remodeled Stadium

Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist World*

Juba Football Stadium was the venue for the Homecoming series in South Sudan.



A group of Seventh-day Adventist women send their greetings to the world church in Juba, South Sudan, on July 13.

Photo: Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist World*

The scorching sun did not prevent hundreds of Seventh-day Adventist church members, guests, and Bible study interests from finding a place in the stands of the Juba Football Stadium in Juba, South Sudan, July 13. Planned from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. to avoid the hottest part of the day, the Sabbath worship service included congregational singing, offerings, a musical concert of several church choirs, a discussion of the Sabbath School lesson, and the preaching of the Word of God.

The Juba Football Stadium was the venue selected for the first week of the Homecoming evangelistic meetings in Juba. The soccer stadium, which was built in the 1960s, recently underwent major remodeling after the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) decided to fund the project as part of its Forward initiative, which seeks to support and develop soccer in nontraditional places.

Less than a month before the beginning of the evangelistic meetings, the stadium was officially inaugurated, with FIFA president Gianni Infantino attending. The idea was to use the stadium for official international soccer matches and major events. It was then a surprise when, thanks to the support of government officials of South Sudan, including the country's president, Salva Kiir Mayardit, the Adventist Church was allowed to use it for the Homecoming series, according to regional church leaders. "In fact," they said, "it was the first event ever booked in the new stadium."

The July 13 service was translated into Arabic. While English is the common language of most South Sudanese, many speak Arabic, including its Juba and Sudanese variants. Also, South Sudan has an estimated 60 aboriginal languages, including those representing major indigenous groups, such as Dinka and Nuer.

A concert included songs by church choirs and ensemble groups. A children's choir also welcomed members and guests to South Sudan and to the meetings. A male group sang about being as faithful to God as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Bible story, while the choirs reminded those attending the service about the hope that believers have in Jesus and His soon second coming.

Ted N. C. Wilson's message once more appealed to the various groups among those seated in the stands. All those who were ready for their baptism a couple of hours later were invited for a special prayer. At the same time, Wilson made a special point of focusing on those who had not yet committed to Jesus. "If you feel God is calling you, please come so I can pray for you," he told the crowd. "Tell the Lord you are ready to start studying His Word. Tell Him that you want to get ready to be part of His church. Give Him your life today."

In the late evening the Homecoming series moved to the Adventist compound, where several church institutions are located, including the regional church headquarters, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), a radio station, and two schools. There church members and leaders welcomed the almost 200 individuals who had been baptized a few hours earlier and prayed for them to stay faithful and connected to Jesus. Once more, Wilson appealed to those who were still struggling with their decision to follow Jesus. Dozens responded to his call.

Adventists Participate as Chaplains in the 2024 Olympic Games

They are playing an important role assisting athletes seeking spiritual support.

Franco-Belgian Union Conference Communication Department and *Adventist World*

As part of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Protestant Federation of France (FPF) established a chaplaincy dedicated to athletes and their entourage. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was represented there, regional church leaders reported.

The Protestant chaplaincy, located in the heart of the Olympic Village, had the mission of offering spiritual support to approximately 15,000 athletes, including 4,500 for the Paralympic Games. An interfaith chapel served as a reception space where chaplains listened and talked to the athletes and their teams. This spiritual presence responded to various needs: stress management, ethical issues, competitive pressure, or simply the need for an attentive ear in a high-performance context, leaders reported.

ADVENTIST CONTRIBUTION

The Adventist Church was represented by Pascal Rodet, pastor and ministerial secretary at the Franco-Belgian Union Conference. Drawing on his experience as a former director of the Adventist Youth Department, he brought his expertise in supporting people. Joël Abati, a former Olympic handball champion, brought a unique perspective as a former top athlete.

"As chaplain of the Paris Games, I am at the service of the athletes and their staff, to welcome them in their spiritual expectations," Rodet said. "It is a great responsibility for me, and I am happy about it." This Adventist participation aims to bring a specific sensitivity to the chaplaincy, thus enriching the overall approach to spiritual assistance offered, leaders said.

AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE

Although some delegations came with their own chaplains, this was not the case for all athletes, especially the French-speaking ones. The Protestant chaplaincy, including the Adventist presence, therefore played a crucial role for these athletes seeking spiritual support.

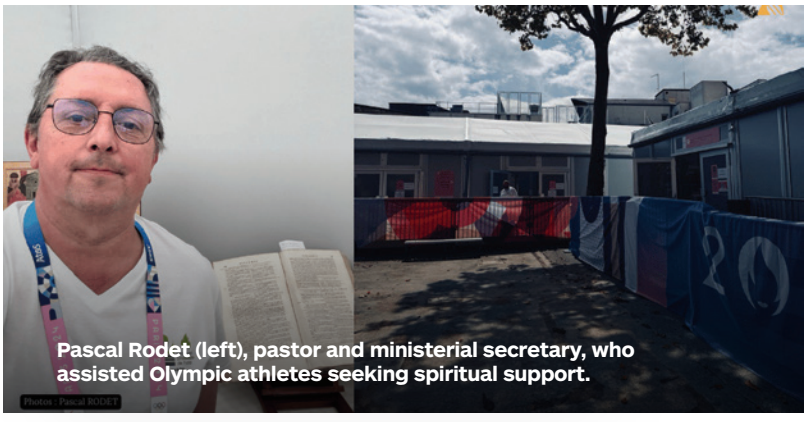
The chaplains, selected and trained by the FPF, have to navigate a complex environment, taking into account the geopolitical and cultural dimensions of the Olympic Games. Their training includes elements of the history of the Games and awareness of their social and human impact.

COMMITMENT TO VISITORS

In addition, the Adventist Church mobilized to welcome and support the public. This multifaceted initiative included the organization of health exhibitions and concerts.

The distribution of Christian literature sought to respond to the spiritual questions that the event might have raised. Several Adventist churches have opened their doors, creating havens of peace in the heart of the Olympic excitement. Pastors specially trained in chaplaincy are present to listen and offer advice. Finally, a strengthened presence on social networks is making it possible to reach a wider audience and respond in real time to the spiritual needs of visitors. "This global approach demonstrates the desire of the Adventist Church to be fully present and accessible during this global event, in line with its mission of spiritual guidance and service to the community," church leaders said.

Beyond the Olympic Village, all the Christian churches in the Paris region welcomed and ministered to the public at the Olympics. A network of parishes and churches came together to meet the psychological and spiritual needs of visitors. The participation of the Adventist Church is part of a broader approach, which aims to offer spiritual support adapted to the diversity of athletes and spectators, church leaders explained. "This initiative underlines the importance given to the spiritual dimension in top-level sport and major international events," they said.



Pascal Rodet (left), pastor and ministerial secretary, who assisted Olympic athletes seeking spiritual support.

Photos: courtesy of Pascal Rodet

Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist World*

Mission Focus



Members of the GC Secretariat team and Maranatha Volunteers International leaders pose for a group photo outside the Mantilla Seventh-day Adventist Church in Havana, Cuba, July 31.

Photo: Marcos Paseggi, *Adventist Review*

GC Secretariat Combines Mission and Service Across Churches in Havana

Cuba project helps visitors connect with members, reach friends and neighbors.

It was midmorning, and the sun was already bright when a volunteer crew arrived at the Mantilla Seventh-day Adventist Church in Havana, Cuba, July 31. The group quickly exited three vans and entered the sanctuary, where local church leaders and others were waiting for them.

The multiage group of volunteers belonged to the General Conference (GC) Secretariat of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. Led by GC secretary Erton Köhler, they were in Cuba for an outreach and evangelistic initiative across several churches in Havana, in partnership with Maranatha Volunteers International, an independent supporting ministry of the Adventist Church.

"Let's gather together to organize today's work," said John D. Thomas, a retired leader who dedicated his career to serving the church as a missionary abroad and as General Conference associate secretary at the church's headquarters. Thomas, who was born in the mission field to missionary parents, is probably one of the most experienced mission volunteers. Even in retirement, he continues supporting outreach and evangelistic initiatives wherever there's a need. "I had decided to keep participating in two mission initiatives a year," Thomas said. "Well, this year, I think it will be more like five projects for me," he said.

At the other end of the spectrum is Reiko Davis, who serves at the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research at the GC. Except for a brief trip across the border near San Diego when she was a child, she had never been outside the United States. In fact, she had to rush a request to get her passport on time to be part of the trip.

"This mission trip has been my first, but certainly won't be my last," Davis said. "It has impacted me so much that I know these days in Cuba are changing me in ways I had not anticipated. I will leave with life-transforming experiences and a stronger desire to serve others."

The Mantilla church is one of the largest Adventist congregations in Havana. Built by Maranatha in 1996-1997, the church was in desperate need of some paint and minor repairs. Most of the fans inside the church were not working properly, so Maranatha also provided new fans to help members weather the stifling summer conditions.

Led by a local Maranatha crew and local church leaders, the GC Secretariat team scraped walls and repainted not only the sanctuary and the baptistry area but also several adjacent halls where children and youth usually meet. Another group battled the extreme heat on a cloudless day to paint the church's main entrance. "We are doing our best to leave this building as beautiful as possible," one volunteer said. "We want members and visitors to remember that God deserves our best. And a well-taken-care-of church building is always a silent witness in its neighborhood."

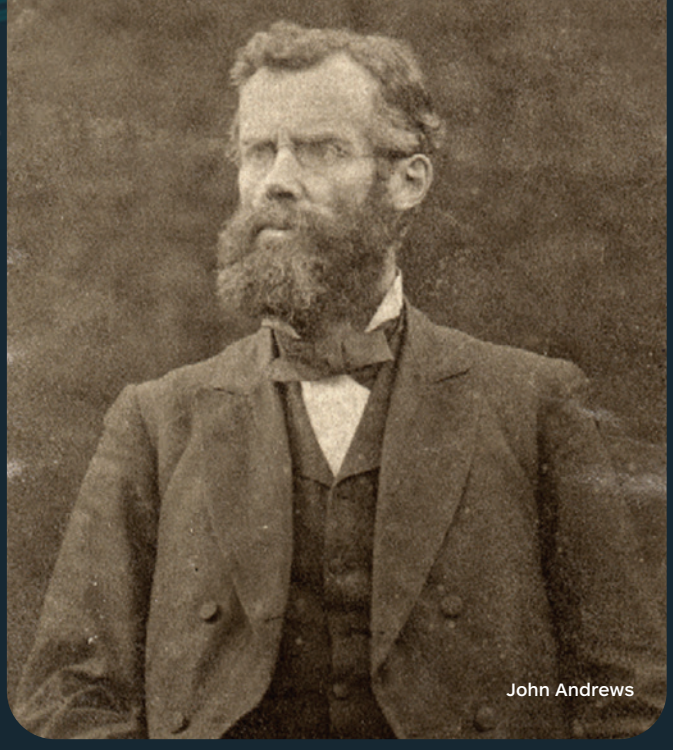
The project in Cuba highlighted the importance of partnerships to create synergy in the mission field. Maranatha has been present in Cuba since 1996 and is an expert in managing the logistics needed in such a challenging territory. GC Secretariat, on the other hand, provided its workforce and invested some funds in supporting Adventist mission in Cuba.

"Serving others is always a joy," one volunteer said. "Serving in Cuba, a life-transforming experience."

Keeping Mission a Priority

Starting foreign missions came with its challenges

BY GILBERT M. VALENTINE



John Andrews

Center for Adventist Research

Both John Andrews and his church faced daunting challenges when the church decided to send him overseas as its first missionary in late August 1874. Procrastination repeatedly delayed the final decision as church leaders wrestled with various apprehensions. Andrews was on the brink of leaving for Europe on his own, with encouragement but no official action. Should missions overseas be a priority for the church at that time? Did they have the right person? Was he ready? Could the church in America afford the loss of his skills? Why had there not been some specific direction from the visions? Did they have enough resources? Eventually, in a rather awkward conclusion to the debate, on the very last night of the 1874 General Conference Session, wearied delegates voted "to instruct" the General Conference Committee to send Andrews ASAP. Mission to the world should become a priority.

GETTING STARTED

Andrews left Boston with his family less than a month later, on September 15. But as a harbinger of the financial ambiguities and constraints to come, he had to himself pay the fares of his two dependent children, the freight for his library, and the expenses of mission work stops en route.

Increasingly aware of the need to reach out to foreign language groups, the church had struggled since 1870 to prepare simple tracts suited for foreign language translation. Then it struggled some more to find competent translators. The project had dragged on because other seemingly more important local priorities intervened, such as serious conflicts among the senior leadership team and unmet demand for local evangelistic projects.

The lack of personnel threatened to derail Andrews' mission even as he arrived in Switzerland. The expatriate preacher, who himself, on arrival, would need to learn to converse in the local language, had planned on the assistance of two full-time Swiss workers (one French-speaking and the other a German speaker). They were not available. His French-speaking assistant, quickly discouraged at the difficulty of evangelism, withdrew and eventually went back to watchmaking. His German-speaking helper, Jakob Erzberger, had fallen out of fellowship over some conflict, left town, and gone into private employment. For several months Andrews had to labor intensively to rehabilitate his German-speaking colleague, heal the breach with the Sabbathkeepers, and get the mission back on track. He never did succeed in getting his other Swiss candidate into full-time service.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

And there were yet other challenges. The network of Swiss Sabbathkeepers who were to resource the mission had found themselves going deeply into debt in an effort to revive their watchmaking business just before Andrews arrived. Seemingly more important family obligations claimed priority. They helped as generously as they could, but local mission resources were inadequate. Andrews also found to his distress that evangelism was expensive in Europe. Renting a hall for meetings, for example, cost up to three times more than in America.

Andrews bravely launched a journal to overcome barriers of culture and geography. It too was not cheap. Battle Creek leaders had expected the mission to become completely self-supporting in a short time. It took the best part of a decade. In the meantime the situation frustrated leaders in Battle Creek, and Andrews had to deal with unfair criticism and misunderstanding. With limited resources he struggled to keep his focus on outreach and growth as the priority.

He learned to speak French. That took much more time than he expected and was much more difficult for his 45-year-old brain than he could have imagined. But he persevered. It was critical to his success—a priority. And he succeeded. And he learned to cope with culture shock—the hard way—by battling through discouragement and disorientation and learning from mistakes.

The most serious threat to the success of his mission enterprise was the deep financial depression that had begun to overwhelm Europe and America by the time Andrews arrived in Switzerland in 1874. It lasted until 1879. Economists called it "the first truly international crisis," and it added huge complexity to Andrews' task as he set out to launch his missionary journal, *Les Signes des Temps,* 18 months after he arrived.

What economists call the "long recession" began with the collapse of the Vienna stock market in 1873. The financial contagion spread across Europe and infected America, leading the country to adopt the "gold standard" for its currency. Panic ensued, banks closed, and across America 18,000 businesses and 289 railroads went bankrupt. Unemployment mushroomed, and household income diminished. Church finances shriveled.

INNOVATING FOR MISSION

By 1879 the times had become "perfectly terrible," and James White could see that "there was no money in the country." The crisis led to a period of uncertainty, confusion, and a sense of panic. Workers were laid off at the General Conference office. The Review and Herald took on huge expensive loans from East Coast insurers to keep operational even as it cut salaries by 17 percent. Management added a wool-knitting business to occupy vacant floor space to try to generate added income. Ellen White could see the Pacific Press heading for bankruptcy. The large new church building project in Oakland, California, became a financial embarrassment, and the huge debt yet to be paid on the new 3,000-seat Tabernacle in Battle Creek seemed overwhelming. Ellen White lamented that the church had stepped in "too deep" in the many new projects it had undertaken.

At first she advised that the "foreign missions should not be hampered." It was a priority. But then as the crisis deepened, she too called for retrenchment and for a hold to be put on foreign work. The "means are needed more at present" at the heart of the work, she urged. Foreign mission slipped down the list of priorities. The new press planned for Switzerland was postponed. Then advice came that the Swiss work should be closed and relocated to England, where it could be consolidated with Loughborough's work. This would be less expensive, and people speaking English would theoretically respond to the Advent message more quickly. Any new press could be built there if the British eventually developed a large enough constituency. The new planning struck Andrews like a body blow.* Had they forgotten that Providence had opened the work in Switzerland?

Through these confused times Andrews held on to his faith that mission could be done in foreign languages, and he prayed and labored for his work in Europe. He and Stephen Haskell launched into 1879 with a New Year's Day meeting in the new Battle Creek church, focusing on prayer and stewardship. The two leaders introduced new plans for church finance. Tithing was to replace the inadequate Systematic Benevolence plan, a major change made urgent by the financial crisis—a silver lining. Church members responded sacrificially with large donations. As the months of 1879 passed by, the financial crisis began to wane.

At the end of his report on the European Mission at the March 1879 General Conference Session, just before he returned to Switzerland, Andrews proposed another groundbreaking initiative. A new "officer" should be appointed for the General Conference leadership team, one specifically to take care of the "foreign work." The new role would "expedite correspondence" to avoid the frustrating delays and misunderstandings previously experienced, and, more important, help keep mission truly a priority. His proposal was approved and adopted a few months later. Further choppy seas lay ahead for the church as it struggled to continue to learn how to do overseas mission and to keep it a priority. It is a task in which it succeeded. But it is a task that presents itself anew in each generation.

* For sources and more details about this challenging but reassuring period in Adventist mission development, see Gilbert M. Valentine, *J. N. Andrews: Mission Pioneer, Evangelist, and Thought Leader* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2019), pp. 630-638.

Gilbert M. Valentine, Ph.D., is retired from teaching at the School of Education at La Sierra University and now teaches occasionally at the H.M.S. Richards Divinity School as an adjunct.

A Heritage of Mission

Stories of courage and self-sacrifice

BY DAVID TRIM

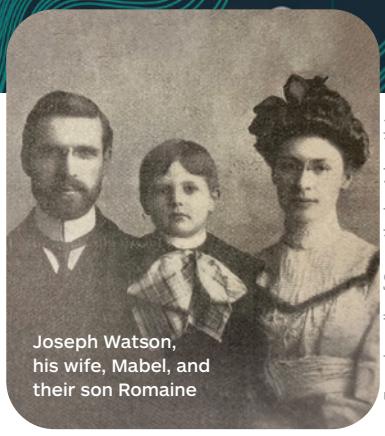


Ellen G. White Estate

Missionaries in front of the British Mission House, Ravenswood, Shirley Road, Southhampton, May 19, 1882: (back row, left to right) Jennie Ings, Miss Thayer, Mrs. Gardner, Delmar Loughborough, Mary Jane Loughborough, Anna Loughborough, H. L. Jones (behind metal arch); (front row, left to right) William Ings, Mr. Gardner, Stephen Haskell, John Loughborough

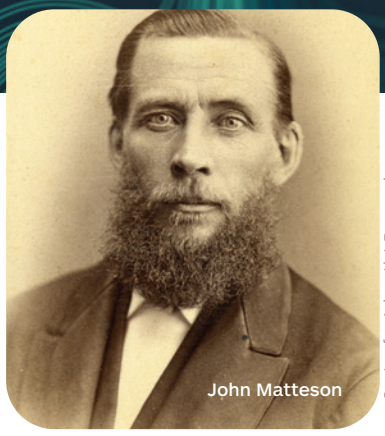
John Nevins Andrews and his children, Charles and Mary, were the denomination's first missionaries, but their departure to Switzerland was not, of course, the last departure of Adventist missionaries. In December 1875 the Canadian Adventist minister Daniel Bourdeau and his wife, Marion, were sent to Switzerland to help Andrews. In 1877 John Matteson, a Danish-American minister, and his wife, Anna, were sent as the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to Scandinavia. In 1878 John Loughborough and his wife, Anna, went as the first missionaries to Great Britain. Meanwhile, in November 1877 William and Jennie Ings and another female missionary, Maud Sisley, were sent to Switzerland to reinforce Andrews. Other missionaries followed: to Switzerland, to Scandinavia, and to Britain. In 1878, meanwhile, Herbert Ribton, a self-supporting worker, went to Egypt with his wife, Adelaide, and daughter Nina, but in 1882 Ribton was murdered, and the mission in Egypt was abandoned. In 1885 the first missionaries officially sent by the denomination outside Europe sailed from America for Australia, a large party led by Stephen Haskell. Two years later another large party followed, sailing for South Africa under the leadership of Dores A. Robinson and his wife, Edna.

Seventh-day Adventists now had a presence on four continents, but administrative and financial difficulties slowed the pace of mission expansion in the 1890s. A major reorganization of the denomination, for mission, took place at the 1901 General Conference Session, concluded at the 1903 Session, and thereafter the numbers of missionaries sent out each year increased dramatically and in general kept increasing for the next 70 years,



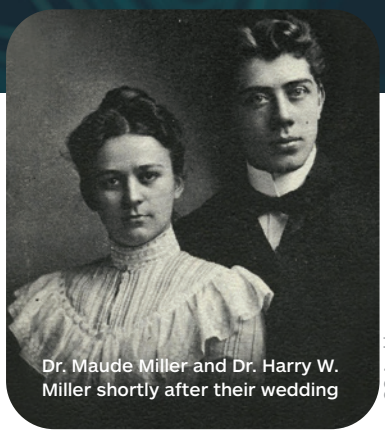
Joseph Watson, his wife, Mabel, and their son Romaine

Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists



John Matteson

Center for Adventist Research



Dr. Maude Miller and Dr. Harry W. Miller shortly after their wedding

GC Archives

except during the two world wars and the Great Depression.

As more missionaries went out, however, there were more stories of tragedy. Worldwide mission in the early twentieth century meant working in places where all kinds of tropical diseases were endemic, for many of which there was no cure, at least at the start of the twentieth century. Many missionaries died—most are forgotten today, but not by our heavenly Father. What is remarkable is that there was never any shortage of new missionaries to replace those who fell in the line of duty. Also extraordinary is that what was often on the mind of dying missionaries, or their loved ones, was the need for new missionaries to come out and join the work.

In June 1903, for example, Joseph Watson, his wife, Mabel, and their son Romaine arrived at Malamulo Mission Station, in what was then Nyasaland (today's country of Malawi). Sadly, Joseph soon contracted cerebral malaria and died on December 11, 1903. He was buried at Malamulo, where his body still lies today in a quiet grave. Joseph had served as a missionary for only six months.

In a letter written shortly before his death, Joseph stated: "I am satisfied that this great continent of Africa is not to be warned of the coming of the Lord without much hard work and some real sacrifice. But so many seem to think that the Lord will perform wonderful miracles while we stand by and look on and see the results."[1]

In 1905 Charles Enoch went with his wife, also a nurse, and a young child to the West Indies as medical missionaries. The Enoch family landed in Barbados in November 1905 and opened treatment rooms in Bridgetown. In 1906 they moved 200 miles to the southwest, to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, where Charles's brother, George, had served since 1901. The Enochs opened a new treatment room, but Charles contracted yellow fever on February 1, 1907, and died on February 5. He had been in the Caribbean for a little more than 14 months.[2]

George Enoch wrote of his brother Charles: "I am thankful that he died at his post of duty. . . . We have no regrets to offer, but take this bereavement as one more link to bind our lives on the altar of missionary endeavor." George acknowledged that "our hearts are bowed in sadness," but his real concern is evident when he writes, "Still the thought presses heavily upon us, Will this branch of the work in the West Indies, which we strove together so hard to get upon its feet, be now left to languish for the lack of consecrated workers?"

Dr. Maude Amelia Thompson was a classmate of Dr. Harry W. Miller's at the American Medical Missionary College; they graduated in 1902, when Maude was still only 22 years old. The two doctors married on July 2, 1902, and in 1903 they were called to serve as missionaries in China. According to colleagues, Maude preferred to wear Chinese dress, and "she worked energetically in mastering the language and teaching the gospel as well as caring for the large number of sick children and women" who came "every day" for treatment.

In the winter of 1904-1905 Maude contracted sprue, a tropical disease with horrible symptoms. And yet, as fellow missionaries marveled: "During her illness her hope and courage found many expressions which we cherish to our comfort. . . . Although we do not understand the reason," they continued, "we know God's ways are . . . above our ways. May the seed of a consecrated life laid down in the line of duty and self-sacrifice be watered of God to bring forth a glorious harvest of souls from China ere the soon coming of our King."[3]

The examples and the sentiments are humbling. May the spirit of courage and self-sacrifice that characterized early Adventist missionaries be alive and well in the Adventist Church today, that the three angels' messages may boldly be proclaimed throughout the world.

[1] Michael W. Campbell, "Joseph H. Watson (1869-1903) and Mabel Edith (Aldrich) (later Bailey) (1876-1964)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=7JA1.
[2] The story of the Enochs is taken from D.J.B. Trim, *A Living Sacrifice: Unsung Heroes of Adventist Mission* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2019), pp. 50, 51.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.

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The Crucial Element

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Building a network of care for those serving abroad

BY AMY WHITSETT

It was midnight on New Year's Eve in Bangkok, Thailand. Giddy with excitement, my sons began setting up a series of fireworks they had convinced my husband to help them purchase at the Chinese market weeks before. But what was supposed to be a fun-filled night with school friends turned into a nightmare when the grand finale, a five-inch firework shell, blew into our son's face. The next minutes are a blur in my memory, but I remember being surrounded by our sons' schoolmates; flicking burning embers from my son's face, hair, and ears; and trying to assess his physical injuries in the darkness of midnight. Minutes later we lifted him into the back seat of our car, where I cradled his head as we sped to the closest hospital, where he was briefly assessed and admitted to the ICU.

Leaving our 15-year-old son in the ICU, not yet having any idea of the extent of his injuries, was one of the hardest things my husband and I have ever had to do. Sleep was impossible, as hundreds of unanswered questions swirled in our heads. Had we been negligent in letting him light the fireworks? If we had paid more attention, would he have avoided injury? What about his physical injuries? Had he lost an eye? What if the accident had blinded him? Would his face be disfigured for life? And what about brain injury? Certainly the impact had done damage. But how much damage? Would he need emergency surgery in the night to relieve pressure building up in his brain? What if he survived the initial impact, only to suffer the devastating effects of brain trauma and damage?

And what about his emotional state? He was alone, surrounded by strange beeps and buzzes, and unable to understand much of the language. Was he afraid? What questions were keeping him awake? Was he crying? How much pain was he in? Could he advocate for himself? Or was he just trying to hold on until morning, when he could hear our voices and feel our touch again? These questions overwhelmed me even more than the medical questions did. I longed to be with him in the ICU, to hold his hand and let him know that he wasn't alone.

With tears streaming down our faces, my husband and I held each other as we prayed for our son and for the medical personnel caring for him. In spite of the questions bombarding our thoughts, we eventually fell into a restless, fitful sleep.

A lot happened over the next few days. But several days and a couple of surgeries later, our son was released from the hospital. During the next few weeks he experienced a full and miraculous recovery. So miraculous, in fact, that if you met him, you would never know he had been hit in the face by a five-inch burning firework shell. God was indeed good to us!

A SIGNIFICANT RISK

Our story is unique. But every missionary has their own stories to tell. Some may not encounter this type of trauma, and others may experience far worse. But every missionary faces difficult and challenging situations that impact them deeply, some even leaving lifelong scars. It's a risk we recognize is part of the cost of being a cross-cultural missionary.

Paul was a missionary very familiar with hardships. In 2 Corinthians 11 he lists the trials he had endured to that point: multiple beatings, attempted stonings, several shipwrecks, a day and night stranded at sea, danger from rivers, bandits, those he was serving, and those who were his own—any of which today's missionaries would receive special debriefing and even counseling for as part of the recovery process. But while he learned to rejoice in his infirmities (2 Cor. 12:9) and to be content regardless of the circumstances in which he found himself (Phil. 4:11-13), he also understood the value of having a community of support. Eight times in his writings he pleads for his readers to pray for him. Sometimes he was asking for prayers for a fruitful ministry. But at other times his requests were much more personal as he asked for protection from danger or deliverance from prison.

But prayer wasn't the only thing Paul was desperate for. Not long before his death he wrote from prison, urging Timothy to "come to me quickly" and to bring Mark with him (2 Tim. 4:9,

11). Everyone else was gone, and though his trust and faith in God never wavered, Paul knew the value of human companionship during difficult times. Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10 says, "Two are better than one . . . : If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (NIV). Paul, I am certain, understood this and was self-aware and confident enough to ask for support when he most needed it.

CARE DEFINED

While few of our missionaries today face shipwrecks or stonings, as Paul experienced, and communication and transportation make keeping in touch with family and friends at home easier than in J. N. Andrews' day, the realities of missionary life are no less difficult or challenging. Not only do bad things happen as a result of living in a sinful world, but our missionaries truly do wrestle against principalities and powers and "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12, NIV). As missionaries engage in spiritual war against the enemy in enemy territory, Satan redoubles his efforts to stop progress. And he does all in his power to keep even one sinner from hope and freedom, often directly targeting missionaries and other gospel workers with his attacks.

In light of this, the General Conference (GC) has recognized the need for an improved system of support for missionaries, especially as we engage Mission Refocus, an initiative in which mission calls and budgets are being realigned to have a greater focus on reaching the unreached and establishing worshipping groups where there currently are none. Realizing that these frontline workers will be working in more isolated and challenging conditions, a new position, the International Service Employee (ISE) care and support manager, has been created to develop a comprehensive system of support for GC missionaries working outside their home divisions. But what does missionary care look like?

Harry Hoffman, a leader in member or missionary care, defines missionary care as providing comprehensive care that addresses the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational needs of individuals and families engaged in cross-cultural work. The goal is to ensure their well-being and effectiveness in their service roles and includes such services as counseling, medical care, debriefing, training, and ongoing support to help individuals and their families thrive in their challenging environments. While we are still exploring what all that looks like in the context of our missionary program, we are committed to doing all that we can to help our missionaries not just survive but thrive in the mission field.

A SUPPORT SYSTEM

When I think back to our own experience in the mission field, including our son's accident, I recognize that we pulled through difficult situations because we had a team of supporters who walked with us through our "mountaintops" as well as our "valleys." When our son was injured, the International Personnel Resources Services team at the General Conference worked with us to make sure that the hospital bills were paid and that a plan was in place should our son need to be evacuated to a better hospital. They prayed with us and stayed in contact through the duration of his hospitalization. The local church leadership visited us in the hospital and encircled our son's hospital bed as they prayed for his healing. Teachers and students from our son's school made a poster with get-well notes, which he kept for years. Local church members visited us in our home, bringing food and praying with us for our son's recovery. Family and friends back in our home country mobilized prayer chains so we were covered with prayer 24/7. And my mother took vacation days to travel to be with us and help support our son's recovery. We discovered that our community of support was a worldwide community, without which our experience may have been very different.

So what can you do to help support our missionaries?

Pray faithfully. Contact your division office to learn about missionaries serving in your division and pray for them. You may want to choose one family a day, week, or month. Or you may want to pray for missionaries who are serving in a specific country or division. You could also choose to pray for the missionaries working at one of our many medical or educational institutions. If possible, contact the family and ask how you can pray for them. If you can't contact them, pray that God will give them a sense of purpose, divine encounters, and courage in the face of adversity. They also need strength, health, and resilient marriages. Pray for their personal lives. Some are learning how to raise children in a different culture, while others are separated from their children as they attend school in a different country. Still others are negotiating care for elderly parents. Pray that God will bless them with wisdom and a sense of peace that comes from His presence as they navigate the challenges of mission service. Most of all, pray that they experience joy in the journey of service.

Send a package. Nothing is more fun than opening a package from "home." I remember our boys fighting to see who got to open

packages that came from Grandma and Grandpa. It was important to them because the winner got to enjoy the fleeting whiffs of "home" as the box was opened. While the smell didn't last, the love they felt from the carefully packed toys, books, and T-shirts did. And the goodies included for my husband and me provided for a fun and stress-relieving mini vacation as we enjoyed the tastes and pleasures of "home." Perhaps there are missionaries serving from your country or division who would benefit from a "taste of home."

Invest in a missionary marriage. Life in the mission field is busy and stressful. Not only are there the regular pressures of work, but there are the pressures that come from seeing so much need and feeling a burden to make a difference. Missionary life is a 24/7 endeavor. This often means that missionaries don't have a lot of time to invest in their marriages. Sending a gift card to be used for a date night or sponsoring a missionary couple to a marriage retreat while they are on annual leave can make a big difference and communicates "we care"!

Adopt a missionary teen. Being a missionary kid is exciting, but it is also full of challenges. One of the challenges many of our missionary teens face is leaving their families to attend school. If you live near an academy or college, check to see if there are any missionary kids you can befriend. Studies show that adverse childhood experiences, including the loss that comes with international moves, can be counteracted by positive childhood experiences, such as being able to express their emotions in a supportive environment and having nonparent adults interested and invested in their well-being. Perhaps you can become a mentor to a missionary teen or young adult. As a parent of missionary kids, I can assure you that your efforts will be appreciated and can make a big difference in a missionary kid's life.

There are many other things that you can do to encourage and care for missionaries. Perhaps you have some ideas already. Maybe you need more suggestions. Or perhaps you are not sure that you have the time or resources needed to make a difference. I would encourage you to pray about it and ask God to show you what you can do to help missionaries feel supported.

I remember a retired church member on a limited income who would give us a bag of chocolate chips each annual leave so we could make cookies for our boys. It was a simple gesture, but it made us feel loved and cared for. So trust me—regardless of what you choose to do, whether big or small, you *can* make a difference! Together we can provide the care and support our missionaries need not only to survive the mission field but also to thrive in their missionary calling!

Amy Whitsett is currently serving as the International Service Employee care and support manager for the General Conference.

Together we can provide the care and support our missionaries need not only to survive the mission field but also to thrive in their missionary calling!



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Tools in the Master's Hands

Why worldwide evangelistic initiatives are essential for the Adventist movement

BY MARCOS PASEGGI

It was clear that the incredibly tall and slender old woman in a blue head scarf wanted to tell me something. Holding her Bible with both hands, she would move her hands in prayer position, while saying a few words in a language that I could not understand. Then she would raise her arms to the sky while still holding firmly to her Bible, showing her white teeth against the dark, shimmering skin of her face under a scorching noonday sun. I smiled back, not sure I understood what she was trying to tell me.

I was on assignment for *Adventist Review*, covering evangelistic meetings in Juba, South Sudan, as part of the Homecoming series across the East-Central Africa Division in July 2024. The Sabbath worship service had just ended, led by General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson. Hundreds had walked to the stage in the center of the newly renovated Juba Football Stadium for a special dedicatory prayer. Many of them would be baptized a couple of hours later in a nearby branch of the Nile River. Scores of others had responded to an altar call for the first time, signaling a commitment to start taking Bible studies to prepare themselves for a future baptism. Now, as the service wrapped up, it was time to greet people, take photos, and enjoy the matchless fellowship of the Adventist worldwide family.

This scene in Juba was as neat and original as could be. At the same time, it was one more iteration of similar scenes in other venues and with other brothers and sisters around the world. As I commune with engaged Adventist members devoted to reaching out others for Jesus all around the world, time after time I have come to the same logical conclusion: There is probably nothing that energizes Seventh-day Adventists more than mobilizing together for a common missionary goal. And Adventists can't possibly look better than when they devote their time, energies, and funds for mission.

A WORLDWIDE INITIATIVE

Against that backdrop, the General Conference (GC) multiyear initiative of supporting massive regional evangelistic efforts around the world has often helped church leaders and members to leave their comfort zones to reach out to others. At the same time, in the thousands —if not millions— reached, it has instilled a desire to take the Bible seriously and study it to find out God's will for their lives.

These worldwide initiatives require incredibly complex logistical coordination, and have enlisted the support of Adventist World Radio, Hope Channel, *Adventist Review*, GC departments, and others. They have also required the

Photo: Laymen's Ministries

buy-in of church regions around the world, without which no localized evangelistic effort would be successful.

While the GC's role as a facilitator includes a rather structured approach to evangelism, the system has been flexible enough to allow for regional adaptations that consider the realities on the ground. Evangelistic meetings have taken place in stadiums, public halls, local churches, and even on the premises of private businesses and homes. They have included multiweek meetings, short reaping campaigns after months of small group efforts, health fairs and free clinics, one-on-one or door-to-door contacts on streets and neighborhoods, and more. And they have resulted in massive baptisms in oceans, rivers, lakes, and pools, but also in smaller ceremonies in churches, schools, and even prisons. The meetings have even helped to sow and water seeds of faith that only God knows when they will finally grow, flourish, and be ripe for the harvest.

No matter the continent or the size of the initiative, evangelism is a catalyst for all that is positive about the Adventist Church. It motivates church leaders. It ignites those church workers and volunteers who get involved. It helps God transform those who are reached. It brings daunting challenges, but at the same time deep satisfaction to the church as a whole. And it is, in short, what distinguishes a social club from a God-led movement.

NO GREATER JOY

In that context I can attest with confidence that there is probably no greater joy than what a person transformed by God's Spirit experiences. Time and again I have witnessed that serene and confident smile transcending all time zones and geographical venues. From the secular nursing student in Japan who found God's truth in urban Tokyo, to the foreign inmate reached by prison ministries while serving time in Madrid, to the Evangelical pastor turned farmer living in the isolated highlands of Papua New Guinea, it is the same reaction: the smile of a person deeply thankful for having found "a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). It is the smile of someone who is now confident about their present and future, because they are grounded in the One who holds that future.

Adventist mission initiatives around the world remind us once and again that God's Spirit knows no boundaries. From the Indian old woman who first got to know Adventists when she underwent a cataract surgery at a makeshift Adventist free clinic, to the agnostic personal trainer at a gym in secular Prague, to a truth-seeking couple in an isolated island corner of Scotland, the Spirit of God keeps working to draw "those who will inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14). And committed Adventist members everywhere feel there is no greater privilege than to be the hands and feet of Jesus to facilitate these experiences.

Every time somebody questions the logic or propriety of funding and staffing massive evangelism efforts, I see one of those smiling faces coming out of the baptismal waters, faces that probably wouldn't have been there but for a son or daughter of God who let themselves be used as a tool in the hands of the Master. When I see them walking out of the waters to a new life in Jesus, I allow myself to envision how many deacons, pastors, and future leaders of God's church are potentially there. And I think of the current church leadership around the world, many of whom can trace their beginnings in leadership to a similar moment.

No matter the continent or the size of the initiative, evangelism is a catalyst for all that is positive about the Adventist Church.

EMBRACED BY THE SAME HOPE

That Sabbath in South Sudan I was reminded of another key element that binds Adventist mission together: the power of enduring hope. As the tall and slender sister in Juba kept motioning and smiling, she showed me her open Bible. It was, I would learn later, a New Testament in Dinka, one of the main indigenous languages in South Sudan. While I couldn't understand the written language, I guessed that "Mathayo" stood for the Gospel of Matthew and saw that she had it opened to chapters 24 and 25.

A couple of minutes later I finally managed to secure the assistance of a young Dinka interpreter. The old woman kept motioning, raising her arms to the sky, while she talked, this time to the interpreter.

"What is she saying?" I eagerly asked him.

The interpreter looked at me as if I were missing the obvious.

"She says, 'We'll see each other again,' " he told me. "She says, 'I'll meet you in heaven.' "

Marcos Paseggi is senior news correspondent of *Adventist World* and, together with his wife, Cintia, is passionate about transmitting the Adventist faith to his two teenage sons.

Global View

Answering the Call

A legacy of mission

It all began with a little booklet containing a very long title: "Tract, Showing That the Seventh Day Should Be Observed as the Sabbath, Instead of the First Day; 'According to the Commandment,'" by T. M. Preble, published in 1845.

No one knows exactly how the 12-page tract ended up in the home of Edward and Sarah Andrews in Paris, Maine, but somehow 15-year-old Marian Stowell found it and began reading. The Stowells had sold their farm in anticipation of Christ's second coming and were taken in by the Andrews family following the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844.

Impressed by what she read, Marian shared Preble's tract with her older brother, Oswald, who was also convinced by the truth. Together the two siblings kept the next Sabbath the best they knew how. The following Monday, Marian offered the tract to 17-year-old John Andrews.

After reading, John asked Marian if her parents had read the tract. "'No,' Marian replied, 'but I have. Are you willing to keep the true Sabbath, John?' The next weekend both families, youth and parents together, kept the Sabbath, holding a service in one of the rooms of their house."[1]

A REMARKABLE LIFE

It was the beginning of a remarkable life of service for John Nevins Andrews. Diving deeply into the topic of the seventh-day Sabbath, Andrews would eventually write what became the seminal work on this foundational Bible teaching: *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week—Its Old Testament Origins, and Observance at the Time of Christ, in the Early Christian Church, and in the Middle Ages.* The book, first published in 1859, is still being sold on Amazon today.

Known for his earnestness, honesty, and piety from a young age, J. N. Andrews was always willing to accept the call to selflessly serve God and His church. His keen mind, ready pen, and leadership qualities led him to give valuable guidance in the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Whether serving as an unpaid itinerant evangelist in northern New England, or as editor of the *Review and Herald*, or as a member of the committees that voted the name "Seventh-day Adventist" in 1860 and organized the General Conference in 1863, or serving as the third General Conference president (1867-1869), Andrews wholeheartedly dedicated himself to God's mission.

WILLING TO SERVE

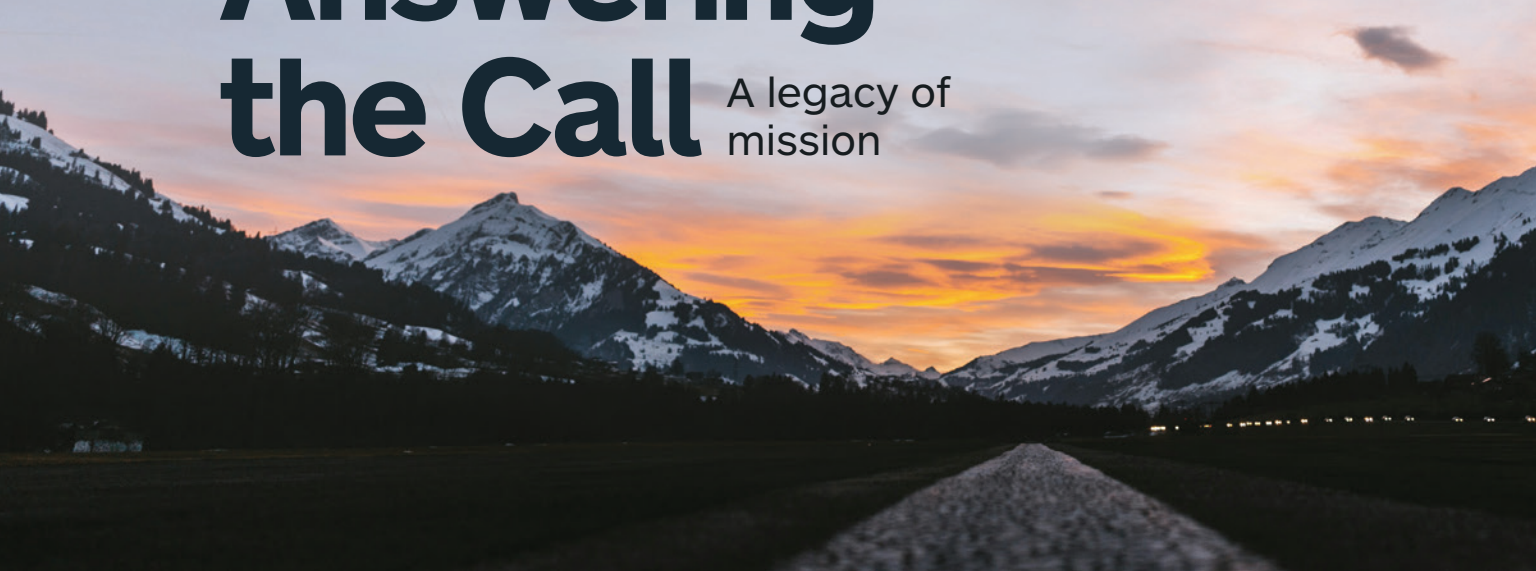
That's why it was not a surprise when, at a General Conference Session on August 14, 1874, delegates voted to "instruct the Executive Committee to send Elder J. N. Andrews to Switzerland as soon as practicable."[2]

Believers in Switzerland had been pleading for a missionary from the United States to come and help establish the Adventist work in their country, and Andrews answered the call—along with his children, Mary, 12, and Charles, 16.

On September 15 the Andrews family was on board the Cunard liner *Atlas*, heading to Liverpool, England, then on to Switzerland. Sadly, the little family was without their wife and mother, as Angeline Andrews had passed away in March 1872.

DEDICATED TO THE WORK

Immediately upon arrival Andrews plunged into his work, helping to organize Sabbath believers and placing an ad in the newspaper inviting all who wished to come and join them. But perhaps the biggest burden on Andrews' heart was to





John Nevins Andrews with his wife, Angeline, and two children, Mary and Charles.

Ellen G. White Estate

publish a French version of *Signs of the Times* (*Les Signes des Temps*). To do this properly, he and his children were determined to learn the French language well. They made a covenant to speak only French at home, or German as an exception. English was reserved only for emergencies or for specially allotted times.

The work done by the little family was phenomenal. John Andrews composed original articles in French or translated articles accurately from the *Review* and the *Signs*. Charles set the type, and Mary, who learned to speak French like a native, helped read the proofs. *Les Signes* rose from a circulation of 500 to as many as 5,000. The magazine was going to addresses in 50 of the 62 districts of France, across Switzerland, and to numerous other European countries of the time, including Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Prussia, Saxony, Alsace, Belgium, Holland, England, Wales, Scotland, Italy, and Spain. Reaching beyond central Europe, *Les Signes* even found its way into homes in Russia, India, Egypt, and North and South America![3]

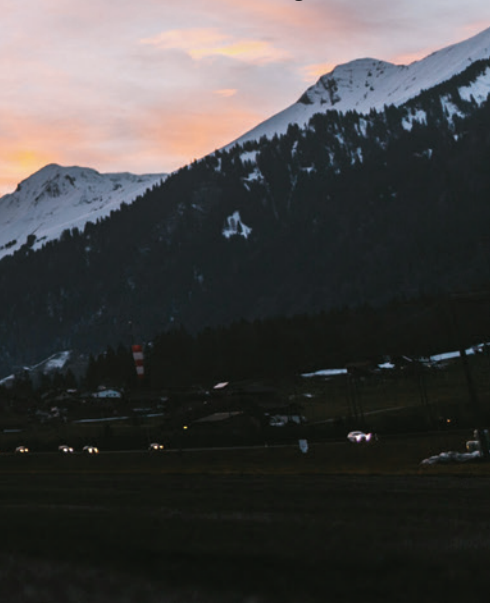


Photo: Leonard von Bibra

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Truly this family answered God's call to mission and served Him faithfully, some even unto death (see Rev. 2:10). Mary Andrews contracted consumption (tuberculosis) and died in 1878, at the age of 17. Her father, John, refused to leave the bedside of his dying daughter, and caught the disease. He died on October 21, 1883, at the age of 54. Following the death of his father, Charles returned to the United States and later married Marie Ann Dietschy, whom he had met in Switzerland. He took a job at the Review and Herald publishing house, which he held until his death on July 14, 1927.

A FINE EXAMPLE

The Andrews family set a fine example of what it means to answer God's call. Some today are still asked to leave home and loved ones and travel to a foreign land, where they learn a new language to reach the people there. And some, even today, give their lives as they serve in mission. Many serve as medical missionaries, teachers, and other frontline workers. Others are called to go across the street and share God's love and good news with their neighbors. Many spread God's Word through literature, whether it be the printed page, the Internet, social media, or other means. *All* are called to join God's mission.

Inspiration tells us, "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.

"The salvation of sinners requires earnest, personal labor. We are to bear to them the word of life, *not to wait for them to come to us*. Oh, that I could speak words to men and women that would arouse them to diligent action!" wrote Ellen White. "The moments now granted to us are few. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. We have no time to lose. Every moment is golden and altogether too precious to be devoted merely to self-serving. Who will seek God earnestly and from Him draw strength and grace to be His faithful workers in the missionary field?"[4]

Will you answer God's call, saying, "I Will Go," and be a missionary for Him today during Global Total Member Involvement as we lift up Christ, His righteousness, His three angels' messages, His sanctuary message, His health message, and His soon coming?

[1] C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to The World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1977), p. 167.
[2] General Conference Session minutes, August 15, 1874, 7:30 p.m., p. 84, https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1863-88.pdf.
[3] Maxwell, pp. 172, 173.
[4] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 117. (Italics supplied.)

Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Additional articles and commentaries are available on X (formerly Twitter): @pastortedwilson and on Facebook: @Pastor Ted Wilson.

Diamond Fields Benevolent Home in Kimberley, South Africa



Discovering the Spirit of Prophecy

Heralds of Hope

The Adventist missionary legacy in South Africa

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, . . . who proclaims salvation" (Isa. 52:7). This year the Seventh-day Adventist Church remembers the sending of J. N. Andrews as the first official foreign missionary to Europe 150 years ago. Yet 1874 was not the beginning of foreign mission work. Before that date, in South Africa, a newly converted Seventh-day Adventist named William Hunt prepared the way for the establishment of the mission work there.

Hunt was a prospector and mine digger originally from Wales, United Kingdom. He moved to Canada, then to the United States, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1856. In 1869 he learned about Seventh-day Adventists through a paper critical of the church. Hunt contacted J. N. Loughborough and, through correspondence, purchased Adventist books and other materials.

While digging gold in Gold Hill, Nevada, Hunt went to Bloomfield, California, and for two weeks attended evangelistic meetings led by Loughborough between December 1870 and January 1871. He fully accepted the Adventist message and was baptized. Hunt was also interested in everything written by Seventh-day Adventists. He purchased Loughborough's personal evangelistic charts; various books, including Ellen White's *Testimonies for the Church*; and a subscription to the *Review and Herald*.[1]

Within weeks he traveled to the diamond mines in Kimberley, South Africa, via New Zealand and Australia, arriving toward the end of 1871. He took a quantity of Adventist literature with him. As he shared these materials, he continued to order new supplies from America. Sometime around 1878 Hunt placed Seventh-day Adventist literature in the hands of J.H.C. Wilson, a Wesleyan Methodist class leader and lay preacher. Wilson wrote to the *Review and Herald* and described the conversion of both he and his wife to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. He mentioned sharing the message with several others who also became believers.[2]

THE WORK EXPANDS

About 1885, separate from Hunt's influence, both George J. Van Druten and Peter J. D. Wessels, members of the Dutch Reformed Church, became Sabbathkeepers. One Sabbath afternoon following their decision, George and his wife, Mary Van Druten, passed by Hunt's shack and saw him reading his Bible, dressed in his best clothes. They met with him and learned about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and were shocked to discover that there were about 30,000 members keeping the Sabbath in the United States.

Toward the end of 1885 Van Druten introduced Peter Wessels to Hunt. Not long after this, both men asked Hunt to write to America and request that a Dutch missionary be sent to South Africa. They enclosed a substantial sum of 50 pounds. At the 1886 General Conference

Photos courtesy of the author.

Richard Moko on top left, back row



Session G. I. Butler spoke with astonishment: "Just think of it! Such a sum of money sent to a distant land, to strangers, to bring them to the truth of God!"[3] Upon hearing this "Macedonian call," the assembled delegates arose and sang the doxology.

The next year, in July 1887, C. L. Boyd and D. A. Robinson with their families and four additional Bible workers and colporteurs arrived in Cape Town, South Africa, to begin their work. Boyd continued to Kimberley and found about a dozen believers there. Before the end of 1887, the Beaconsfield Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kimberley was organized with 21 members.[4] By 1890 a church building was erected. It remains the oldest Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa—probably in the entire continent of Africa. The church was designated a national monument in South Africa in 1967, but now has the status of a provincial monument.

In October of 1894 S. N. Haskell arrived for a second time in South Africa and played an important role in furthering the Adventist work.[5] He focused on personal ministries, including establishing a school in Beaconsfield with Sarah Peck as the teacher, and a health facility called the "Kimberley Bath and Benevolent Society for Miners," located on the east side of the "Big Hole" diamond mine. George Van Druten also operated a store north of the "Big Hole." A native ministry was also begun. The newly established church and the various ministries brought increased interest among people in the region, and the work began to expand.

INDIGENOUS LEADERS ESTABLISHED

Richard Moko, the first native African convert, joined the church in Kimberley at some point between 1892 and 1895. A descendant of paramount chiefs of the Gaika tribe, he also became the first native missionary and ordained pastor. Pastor Moko was an effective evangelist and preacher. Besides his native language, he was also fluent in English and Dutch. His self-sacrificial ministry resulted in many native converts. He faithfully served the Lord until his passing on January 7, 1932.[6]

Ellen White took a particular interest in the South African mission. The Boyd and Robinson missionary teams joined Ellen White in Moss, Norway, in the summer of 1887 on their way to South Africa. When the Wessels family visited Battle Creek in 1889, they became acquainted with her. Ellen White wrote many times to the various members of the Wessels family between 1890 and 1908. She also received many divine messages for those working in South Africa. God gave special attention to this important mission field and those who were leaders in the work.[7]

EARLY HISTORICAL SITES

In 2023, Markus Kutzschbach, executive director of Adventist Heritage Ministries, in cooperation with Michael Sokupa, an associate director of the White Estate, rediscovered the unmarked grave of William Hunt in the Dutoitspan Cemetery outside of Kimberley, South Africa, near what was once the Wesselton diamond mine. Soon the church in South Africa will provide a gravestone to commemorate Hunt's role as the first Seventh-day Adventist pioneer in Africa. There are also plans to do restoration work on the Beaconsfield Church.

This historical site reminds us of God's mighty work of establishing the church on the continent of Africa where today there are more than 10 million members. David's song of praise declares that "one generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts" (Ps. 145:4).

[1] J. N. Loughborough, "California," *Review and Herald*, Feb. 7, 1871, p. 62; J. N. Loughborough, "Present Truth on the Pacific Coast XXVIII," *Pacific Union Recorder*, Aug. 9, 1906, p. 1.
[2] J.H C. Wilson, "A Letter From Africa," *Review and Herald*, June 6, 1878, p. 183.
[3] G. I. Butler, "Important Plans and Issues Contemplated by the General Conference," *Review and Herald*, Dec. 7, 1886, p. 760.
[4] C. L. Boyd, "Sabbath-Keepers in Africa," *Review and Herald*, Oct. 11, 1887, p. 634.
[5] S. N. Haskell, "The Work in Africa," *Bible Echo*, January 1888, p. 12; M. E. Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1925), pp. 489, 490.
[6] J. L Robison, "The Passing of Richard Moko," *Review and Herald*, Apr. 7, 1932, p. 331; see also Olsen, p. 488.
[7] See Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Southern Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1974); Ellen G. White manuscript release 491, *The Ellen G. White Africa Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976).

Merlin D. Burt is director of the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland.



Faith in Action

Dreams Come True

Bringing joy and Jesus to India's orphans

BY JEFF REICH

Mareeswaran had always dreamed of riding a bike but never thought he would have the opportunity. His father had died when he was an infant, so, without a father and being extremely poor, with a mother who could not care for him, his hopes of riding a bike seemed out of his grasp. He longed for such a wonderful experience. To many abandoned children in India, a dream such as riding a bike, which might seem commonplace, is completely unattainable.

Fortunately, Mareeswaran was welcomed into our Laymen Ministries India Children's Home. Moses Samuel, orphanage director, brought his bicycle to the boys' home so that Mareeswaran could learn to ride it. To Mareeswaran's astonishment, he learned to ride in just one day! He thanks God for this opportunity. Most important, Mareeswaran has learned a lot about Jesus and His love while staying in our home. "I surrender my life to Him. I would like to follow Him and inherit eternal life," says Mareeswaran.

Something as simple as riding a bike brings joy to these orphan boys. It is our goal to have the children's home be a real home—a safe place to be loved, encouraged, educated, and taught good values.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Operated by Seventh-day Adventists, Laymen Ministries is a self-supporting missionary organization. Since 1985 we have been producing mission-focused magazines with thought-provoking articles designed for the laity dealing with current issues and practical experiences. It started out first as a newsletter, then progressed into a quarterly pamphlet, and today is a full-color magazine.

We support mission projects and missionaries around the world. We currently work in seven different countries and have a wide range of mission projects, such as building schools for indigenous children in various countries, running an orphanage in India, teaching health and hygiene along with the gospel message to people in Nepal, operating prison ministries in Romania and the Philippines, and producing TV programs both in India and here in the United States.

In 2017 Laymen Ministries India secured a building and land in the far southeastern tip of India in the state of Tamil Nadu from the Southern Asia Division. The facility had been empty for a few years. It had been designed to be used as a community outreach center to train people from the local villages—youth in computer technologies and women in tailoring and sewing—to support themselves. The people who had this dream were never able get the center operating, and then the project sponsor passed away. The building and land were offered to Laymen Ministries India.

We immediately turned the facility into an orphanage for boys. Director Samuel was himself raised an orphan. He worked his way through school and university, obtaining a

Photos: Laymen's Ministries

This orphan boy greatly appreciates the opportunity to be at our "Home."

The boys, at a young age, learn to study the Bible on their own!



Now children who once slept under bridges, ate from garbage piles, or came from abusive situations have opportunities.

business management degree. He had a desire to help orphans, just as he had been helped. He had 25 years of experience as an orphanage director before coming to work with us. He and his wife, Sonna, along with a few paid helpers, set out to make this a model orphanage in the state of Tamil Nadu—and today it is.

But we faced a problem. Although this home was only for boys, we were getting a lot of requests for girl orphans to come. The government mandated that we needed a separate living area for the girls, sharing only the dining area and the study hall. So we set out right away not only to expand the boys' quarters but to add on the necessary rooms and dormitory for girls to comply with the government regulations. This, of course, was a considerable investment of means, but through our faithful donors God graciously supplied us with what was needed, and today we have a complete faculty capable of having both male and female orphans. And by God's grace we also have a community outreach to the local villagers, offering tailoring and computer classes, just as the original owners had envisioned.

PATIENCE PAYS OFF

Joseph was only 15 years old, but his distended belly made him look much older. This was the result of alcohol consumption and tobacco use. Joseph had lost his father in a family fight, and he had been living in the home of a relative, where he had learned to use alcohol and tobacco. Later he lived in an orphanage where he was made to sleep in the corridor of the dorm because he wet the bed. One day his maternal grandfather found him lying miserably in the corridor in a heavy rain. He quickly informed the government authorities about the situation, and consequently, the government sent Joseph to us.

Upon observing his physical condition, some people were against his admission into our home, but Joseph did not have anywhere else to live. Jesus says, "And the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37), so we took Joseph into our home.

In the beginning it was difficult to reach him. He cut himself and intentionally bruised his arms and legs. He would purposely disobey. But slowly, as he was shown love and acceptance, he started to change by God's grace. The boy who did not have any interest in his studies now has plans for his next grade level. He is currently in tenth grade, and his first government exam is just ahead. We are giving Joseph an expert teacher to help him prepare. Please pray that God will bless this young man!

These are just two examples of the kinds of situations our children's home deals with. We get children from many different walks of life. At the time of this writing we have seven girls and 15 boys, with more coming soon. The stories we could tell regarding where some of these children come from—it's a sad testimony! But now the children who once slept under bridges, ate from garbage piles, or came from abusive situations have the opportunity for a good Christian education, wholesome food, clean environment, and, more than anything else, a loving Christ-centered family-style home. Please pray for our children's home.

Jeff Reich is the president of Laymen's Ministries, based in **Idaho, United States.**

God, Wisdom, and Humans

Q **I have noticed that Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes are different from the rest of the books of the Bible. What is the purpose of these books?**

A Scholars have identified the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes as wisdom literature partly because the term *wisdom* and similar ones are common in them. As a type of literature, they have some common characteristic (e.g., sayings, dialogues, riddles, didactic narratives). Wisdom is also a way of thinking. The sages believed that the world in which we live is meaningful, even though they could not fathom all of its intricacies. They observed human conduct and experiences as well as the natural world and drew from their observations reliable information and useful behavioral principles. The content of the wisdom books is generally organized around three main areas.

NATURE WISDOM

Guided by the Spirit, Solomon observed the natural world and wrote about plant life and about "animals, birds, crawling things, and fish" (1 Kings 4:33).* This capacity to observe, organize, draw conclusions, and apply them to human conduct was a divine gift to Solomon (1 Kings 3:12, 13). The following cases illustrate how the observation of nature is applied to human conduct. "Go to the ant, you lazy one, observe its ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer, or ruler, prepares its food in the summer and gathers its provision in the harvest" (Prov. 6:6-8). Here Proverbs uncovers knowledge of the natural world and derives ethical teachings from that knowledge.

PRACTICAL WISDOM

Practical wisdom focuses upon human relationships in an ordered society and provides instructions regarding how to act in a way that encourages peaceful relationships. Practical wisdom is functional and dynamic and not just intellectual curiosity. In many cases it is needed in order to make right decisions (1 Kings 3:16-18). Most proverbs deal with practical wisdom: "Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise" (Prov. 17:28); "Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and one who speaks right is loved" (Prov. 16:13). Only those who behave properly are wise and live in peace with others.

THEOLOGICAL WISDOM

This type of wisdom stresses the limits of human wisdom and identifies God as the fountain of true wisdom (Prov. 8). Wisdom is seen as a mediator of revelation. The ultimate meaning of the world of nature and of human experience is located in God's wisdom. Among other things, theological wisdom attempts to understand, or at least discusses, how God can be a good loving God in the presence of human suffering. Job and Ecclesiastes are good examples of theological wisdom. This type of wisdom is based on the fact that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). The sages began their task with the presupposition that there is a loving God who created everything there is, and found joy in honoring Him. Theological wisdom provides the foundation for nature wisdom and practical wisdom. The way things function is perceived in general to include expressions of divine wisdom, and consequently, to study human behavior and the natural world is an exploration in divine wisdom that climaxed, according to the New Testament, in the incarnation of wisdom in Christ.

We could say that wisdom is a pragmatic quest for understanding God's creation in terms of our relationship with nature, people, and God, and that it uses specific literary forms to communicate its findings. Those are the three levels of relationships within which we exist, and learning how to navigate them will add peace to your life and length of years.

* Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved.

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, Th.D., is retired after a career serving as pastor, professor, and theologian.



Health & Wellness

Silent Threat

The impact of plastic pollution on our health

The Adventist Church shares comprehensive information on health but does not speak much on the negative health effects of global pollution, including environmental breakdown of plastic products. Should we be concerned about this issue?

Yes, and we are concerned! In 2002 the General Conference Health Ministries Department launched a health resource named CELEBRATIONS,® [1] which expands on the eight natural laws of health[2] and includes a chapter on the importance of the environment. The global increase of plastic use has resulted in widespread environmental contamination, impacting our health negatively through breakdown products. These include microplastics, toxic additives, and damaging byproducts that pose real and potential risks to health by infiltrating ecosystems, food chains, and water supplies.

Microplastics, tiny plastic particles less than five millimeters in diameter, have been detected in oceans, rivers, soil, and air. They originate from plastic breakdown debris. Humans are exposed to microplastics through inhalation and contaminated food and water. Studies suggest that microplastics can cause inflammation and oxidative stress, and damage genetic information in cells, all of which are linked to cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and neurodegenerative conditions. The ability of microplastics to absorb and concentrate toxic chemicals, including persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and heavy metals, increases their harmful effects when ingested.

Plastics contain additives, such as plasticizers (phthalates), flame retardants (polybrominated diphenyl ethers, PBDEs), and stabilizers (bisphenols). These additives can leach out of plastic products over time, especially when exposed to heat, sunlight, or mechanical stress. Humans are exposed through direct contact, ingestion of contaminated food and beverages, and inhalation of dust particles. Phthalates and bisphenol A (BPA), for example, are known endocrine disruptors, interfering with hormone function and leading to reproductive issues, developmental problems in children, and increased risks of certain cancers. PBDEs may be associated with thyroid dysfunction, neurodevelopmental deficits, and impaired immune responses.

Ingested and inhaled plastic breakdown byproducts may contribute to systemic toxicity, including liver and kidney damage, respiratory issues, and disruptions in the endocrine system. Plastics and their breakdown products can become concentrated in living organisms (intake exceeds excretion) and increase in concentration (biomagnify) up the food chain. Fish and shellfish often ingest microplastics, mistaking them for food. Humans consuming contaminated marine products are at risk of ingesting accumulated toxins. This bioaccumulation may lead to higher concentrations of toxic substances in human tissues, resulting in chronic health problems such as immunotoxicity, infertility, and metabolic disorders.

Plastic pollution has also been found in drinking water sources worldwide. Microplastics and associated chemicals can infiltrate water supplies through surface runoff, wastewater discharge, and atmospheric deposition. These contaminants pose a direct health risk, particularly in regions lacking advanced water treatment facilities.

Environmental breakdown products of plastic represent a growing threat to human health globally. We know this broken planet will be made new when Jesus returns. We nevertheless have been appointed stewards of the earth and its rich resources that sustain life. The Bible states that in the end, God's wrath will come and "destroy those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18). We have a duty to educate our communities, recycle, and strive to secure safe water resources, sharing the love of Jesus, the true Water of Life!

[1] Retrieved from https://www.healthministries.com/celebrations/.
[2] Ellen G. White, "Natural Remedies," *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 127.

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.
Zeno L. Charles-Marcel, a board-certified internist, is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.

Photo: Sansert Sangsakawrat / iStock / Getty Images Plus / Getty Images



An Artist for God



"May I Tell You a Story?"

BY DICK DUERKSEN

I will be returning to Vietnam in a few weeks, where I will be giving lectures to art students at five different universities. I will be speaking about how art was given by the Creator to show how we can experience wholeness and how we can experience healing in our lives. I will be using my own art to illustrate the lectures and will answer many questions."

Pastor Cuong Ngo was born in South Vietnam in 1970, where his family experienced war, violence, starvation, and fear. It was a terrifying time. They were often hungry, hiding, and running from danger. He does not have many good memories from those years.

Pastor Cuong's father was an artist, and the government put him to work painting victory murals and portraits of Ho Chi Minh all over town. Father needed a helper, and Cuong got the job.

"I learned quickly, and painted whole walls with victory murals, and so many portraits that I could almost do them in my sleep."

As the American army left Vietnam, they organized a rescue for Vietnamese who had worked with their army, and for the Vietnamese children who had American soldiers as fathers. Cuong had an adopted brother who was half American, so his entire family was taken to a refugee camp in the Philippines. At the camp American soldiers tried to teach the refugees how to speak English, and to help them know what to expect when they would land in America.

"Douglas Kellum, an American soldier who had become a Christian pastor, came to our camp to teach us about Jesus. I wanted nothing to do with him. I rejected him many times, refusing to listen to his Bible words. I turned away from the pastor and refused to listen to what he was saying."

Pastor Kellum spoke fluent Vietnamese and was able to explain the Bible verses clearly. Cuong's mother loved hearing the stories about Jesus, and about love, grace, and hope. Every day, often many times each day, she urged Cuong to join her and be baptized as a follower of Jesus. Again and again he refused, but after almost six months Mother's love finally broke through his angry heart. Cuong agreed to listen, and to be baptized in the muddy river near the camp.

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Cuong and his family were finally released from the camp and sent to their new home in Oregon, USA. When they landed at Portland International Airport, their baggage was very light, and they did not know enough English to read the airport signs.

"At the airport we were met by a Vietnamese Seventh-day Adventist pastor who spoke both English and Vietnamese, and who quickly brought us into his church. Before long he had all of us in the pews singing hymns."

Yet Cuong wasn't happy. He often

Photo courtesy of the author.

stood alone, observing, painting, empty, seeing nowhere to go. Finally, unhappy with his unsettled heart, and knowing that he needed to find himself, he slipped away from home and traveled to San Francisco, searching for something to fill the empty hole in his life.

"I found it there," Cuong smiles. "Not in the stores or the buildings or the culture, but in the flowers, the trees, and the beaches. They spoke to me of Jesus, and the more I listened, the more I felt He was talking to me, loving me, and giving me reasons to accept Him fully."

Back home with his family, he developed a passionate commitment to Jesus and was eager to learn even more. He dreamed that someday he might even be able to be like Jesus, bringing healing and transformation to the lost.

"I was always drawing," Cuong says, "using art to describe how I was hearing God's voice."

SERVICE AT HOME AND ABROAD

Cuong earned degrees in theology and art at Walla Walla College and Andrews University. After completing his Master of Divinity degree at Andrews University, he returned to Oregon to serve as pastor of his own Vietnamese church in Portland, a position he has held for 22 years. In 2015 he wrote his dissertation for a Doctorate of Ministry in preaching.

"Of special value to me are the seven years I spent doing prison ministry in a maximum-security penitentiary. Those weekly visits and Bible studies inspired my love for Jesus and added new depth to my preaching, my writing, and my art."

In 2010 the country of Vietnam gave Pastor Cuong permission to hold a seven-sermon evangelistic series in old Saigon, the first Adventist public evangelism since the end of the war. He preached several more series during the next several years, and in 2023, universities in Hue and Saigon invited him to give lectures to the art students. The pavilions were packed full, with students, professors, and administrators in attendance. Everyone stayed longer than expected, and the faculty was pleased.

"The university president in Hue has told other universities about our experience together, and now I have been invited to give professional lectures at five universities in my home country. They are also asking that I do an art show while I am there."

Pastor Ngo's ministry includes four weekly Zoom programs that have more than 1,000 subscribers from around the world participating each week. His classes are often about the beauty of God's seven days of Creation, teaching students how to use art therapy to help heal hearts and guide listeners to follow God's map to wholeness.

"I teach about how you can have freedom in your heart, freedom from your conscience, freedom to become whole and to thrive. The people are eager to learn, and crowds follow me to talk about my art and to hear more of God's message."

The carefully painted details in Pastor Cuong's portraits tell stories, revealing truths about the person's choices, challenges, and hopes. Look deeply into the eyes, and you will see God's transforming love.

"I am very optimistic about life today, despite all the troubles in the world," Pastor Cuong says. "I see life as beautiful. Whenever I feel discouraged, I walk into God's nature, and there He heals me. It's as if the flowers, grass, and birds all speak His love to me. That gives me hope and makes me whole again."

"I want to go to heaven." Pastor Ngo leans back in his chair beside his paints and brushes for a moment, allowing his mind to travel far away. "But while I'm here, I want to care for my brothers and sisters around the world, to help them see the beauty that God has placed all around them. Seeing that beauty will help them see how God is also growing His wholeness within them."

Dick Duerksen, a pastor and storyteller, lives in **Portland, Oregon, United States.**

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Seventh-day Adventist® Church



Laddie, the Missionary Dog

Have you ever heard of a missionary dog? When I was a little girl, we had a dog named Laddie. He had been abandoned and mistreated, but we rescued him and brought him home. We loved Laddie and took good care of him. We enjoyed brushing his long golden fur, and he would wag his tail excitedly because he loved any attention he could get.

But Laddie had a habit we didn't know how to fix. He loved people so much that he would go on adventures to visit our neighbors! We could be outside playing with him, and if we turned around or went inside for a minute, Laddie would be off to see the neighbors. We got to know the neighbors really well because of Laddie.

One day Laddie got out again! We called and called, but he didn't come running. Pretty soon the phone rang. A nice woman we didn't know was on the phone. She said Laddie had come to visit her, and she asked if we could come pick him up. Of course, we all piled into the car to get Laddie.

When we arrived at the woman's house, we found Laddie snuggled up, getting pets and love from the family he had visited. We had never met these people before, and Laddie had never gone this far from home! As we talked to the woman, Mrs. Smith, and her family, we got to know them better. Mrs. Smith told us about herself. She was a nice woman, but she seemed sad. She had been having health issues and didn't know what to do.

As my mom and dad listened, they learned that Mrs. Smith wanted to be healthier. They knew the perfect place to help her with this—a program at the church during which she could learn about eating better, exercising, and drinking more water. Mrs. Smith said she would love to come to the program! So she and her family came. While they were there, she saw how nicely the families were playing together and how the kids made sure to include her kids. She also learned the importance of eating fresh food such as vegetables and fruits and avoiding meats, especially pork and shellfish. She discovered the benefits of drinking clean water and stopping addictive drinks such as alcohol and caffeine. Most important, she learned how to trust in God.

As she started practicing what she had learned, she felt much better. She wasn't as sad, had more energy, could think more clearly, and began reading her Bible more. After the program we stayed friends with her and started studying the Bible together.

IF A DOG CAN DO IT . . .

All of this happened because of a dog who loved to spend time with people. He was a missionary dog! If a dog can be a missionary, do you think you can too? Laddie couldn't talk, but he could visit people. You can do that too! Find someone

Illustration: Mugi Kinoshita

BY RUTHIE REEVES



If a dog can be a missionary, do you think you can, too?

who needs cheering up and visit them, as Laddie did. Maybe you have an elderly neighbor who would love a visit or a friend who's feeling sad. You could even ask your Sabbath School leader or pastor if you can help organize a program at a local nursing home.

You can visit your neighbors, just as Laddie did! Make sure and take a family member with you. You could make homemade treats to share, or create a card to brighten their day. If they have kids, invite them over for games, crafts, or a little party. It's a fun way to make friends and be a missionary. You can also ask your parents if you can help with something like gardening or housework to show you care.

Laddie couldn't go to school, but he would have loved to learn all the important things there. You can be a missionary by being a diligent student and learning all you can! Proverbs 22:29 says, "Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank" (NIV). Proverbs 4:5 tells us, "Get wisdom! Get understanding!"

By working hard and learning new things, you gain skills that help you as a missionary, both at school and in the mission field. Like the prophet Daniel, you can show God's power by trusting and obeying Him, and your friends will see this and be inspired by your example.

Laddie couldn't pray for people, but you can. Ask your friends if there's something you can pray for. Many people have things they would like someone to pray about. Praying for others shows that you care and that they're important to you and to God.

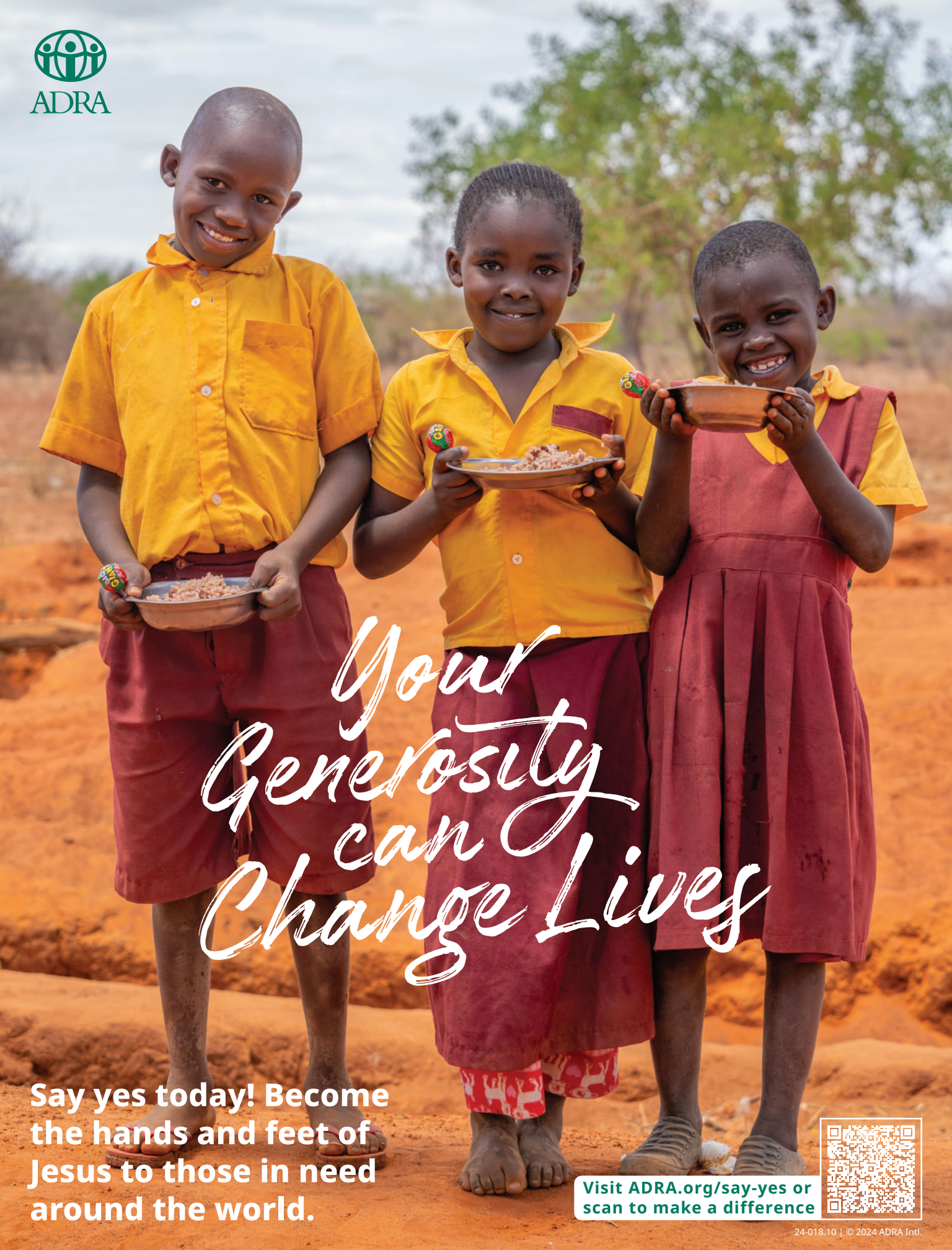
You can be a missionary at church by greeting people and inviting them to Sabbath School. Laddie couldn't attend church, but he would have loved being a greeter. You can make new visitors feel welcome by saying hello, playing nicely with new kids, introducing them to your friends, and showing them around.

Laddie couldn't tell Bible stories, but you can! Learn the stories of the Bible and share them with your friends who might not know them. You could even act out the stories with your friends or use your favorite toys to tell the story in a fun way.

THE REST OF THE STORY

Eventually we invited Mrs. Smith to a special Bible seminar, during which she learned to trust God with her life. At the end of the series, Mrs. Smith decided to give her life to Jesus through baptism. It all started with Laddie making new friends! Like Laddie, you can be a missionary every day by doing small acts of kindness, sharing God's love, and being a good friend. You can make a big difference in someone's life, just as Laddie did!

Ruthie Reeves is the executive director of Starting With Jesus, a ministry focused on helping children develop a daily relationship with Jesus.



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