

EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION NEWS AND INSPIRATION

# CONNECT



**JUL-  
SEP  
2017**

**GIVE THEM A PIECE OF THE PIE? pg. 2**

**YOU CAN BE A BURNING BUSH pg. 3**



# GIVE THEM A PIECE OF THE PIE?

Remember attending a General Conference Session with my parents as a teenager. There was a youth ministry video about the importance of empowering youth for ministry and service.

The video showed young people in a kitchen where a chef was baking lots of pies. He gave a piece of the pie to each young person and they enjoyed the taste and the sweetness of those delicious apple pies. Then a subtitle appeared “Give them a piece of the Pie”.

But then something wonderful happened. The chef gave the apron to a young person. And the young people started baking the pies. A young person looked into the camera and said, “while we are happy for the church to give us a piece of the pie, we have learned that making the pie can be even more enjoyable.”

In this youth ministry issue, we decided not to just give our young people a piece of the pie. We have empowered them to start making the pie. I would like to thank the senior class from Maxwell Adventist Academy for writing the feature stories you will read in this special youth ministry edition of CONNECT. As you read these stories and hear their heart and passion for mission, may you be encouraged to equip and empower youth for ministry by encouraging them to start making the pie.

**Philip Baptiste**  
CONNECT Editor

CONNECT (ISSN 0777-001X) Jul-Sep 2017, Volume 2, Number 3. CONNECT is published quarterly four times per year by the East-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 00503 Private Bag Mbagathi, Nairobi Kenya. Free for ECD church members and \$10 per year for subscribers. ©2017 East-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Unless otherwise credited, all images are iStock. Adventist® and Seventh-day Adventist® are registered trademarks of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Contact us by email: info@ecdadventist.org or phone: +254-733-333-373

**EAST CENTRAL  
AFRICA DIVISION**  
www.ecdadventist.org

President  
**Blasious Ruguri**

Executive Secretary  
**Alain Coralie**

Treasurer  
**Jerome Habimana**

Communication  
**Prince Bahati**

**COMMUNICATION  
DIRECTORS**

Burundi Union Mission

**Eric Nsengiyumva**

Ethiopia Union Mission

**Mihret Dagnew**

North East Congo

Union Mission

**Martin Mayenze**

East Congo Union

Mission

**Elkanah Kerosi**

West Congo Union

Mission

**Albert Biselele**

East Kenya Union

Conference

**Catherine Nyameino**

West Kenya Union

Conference

**Samuel Misiani**

Northern Tanzania

Union Conference

**Gideon Msambwa**

Southern Tanzania

Union Mission

**Christopher Ungani**

Uganda Union Mission

**Immanuel Ogwal**

Rwanda Union Mission

**Onesphore**

**Yadusoneye**

South Sudan Attached

Territory

**John Taban**

**CONNECT STAFF**

Editor:

**Philip Baptiste**

Advertising/Web:

**Diane Kibuuka**

Designer:

**Brittany Winkfield**

# YOU CAN BE A BURNING BUSH

**E**xodus 3:1-17 records the remarkable story of the burning bush. Here we find Moses a prince who had now become a shepherd, has a dramatic encounter with a burning bush. As he was tending his father in law's sheep, he sees this bush on fire, but it does not burn. He says "I must turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

I can see Moses in my sanctified imagination. I'm sure that he was well acquainted with this bush. He had probably seen it many times before as he traveled to take the sheep into pasture. But this time the bush was different. So different that he almost didn't recognize it. So different that he had to look around to make sure he was in the same place.

How is it that an ordinary bush that he had seen day after day could transform into something so special? How is it that a regular, ordinary bush, could metamorphose into a burning bush?

The answer is simple. God had entered into the bush. When God enters into something, it is no longer the same. When God comes into something, it moves from being ordinary to become extraordinary.

When God comes into that bush it is transformed. It now has a glow about it as it burns ever so brightly. It was lit! It was inspired! It was transformed by the indescribable, incomparable, presence of the Almighty God. And God used that burning bush to speak to Moses and to call him into ministry and service.

Today, I want to let you know that we are all that Bush. Every young person is a bush; every family member is a bush, every parent, grandmother and young adult is a bush. But God does not want you to merely be an ordinary bush. God is calling you to be a dynamic, powerful, burning bush.

Yes, God wants you to be a burning bush on fire for him. Young man, or young woman, you might feel just like an ordinary bush right now, but if you let Jesus enter you, he can make you extraordinary.

Parents and grandparents

you must not simply be church members or bench warmers. God is calling you to be a burning bush for him. As you read this particular youth ministry issue, it is my prayer for every young person that you would allow the Holy Spirit to enter into your life so that you can become a burning bush for Him.

Allow Him to set your faith on fire. Allow him to use you in ways that you never thought possible. Become a burning bush so that God can speak through you and use you to reach the world with the good news of Jesus! You can be a burning bush!

---

Dr. Blasious Ruguri is President of the East-Central Africa Division.

**ALLOW HIM  
TO SET  
YOUR FAITH  
ON FIRE!**



# TANZANIA AND UGANDA ON FIRE WITH 117,000 BAPTISMS

## TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT EVANGELISM SPREADS ACROSS AFRICA

A major evangelistic thrust in Tanzania and Uganda has resulted in 117,000 baptisms, dramatically expanding a Seventh-day Adventist initiative to proclaim Jesus' soon coming through Total Member Involvement evangelism.

About 24,000 speakers, mostly lay people participated in the 8,000 sites during the June 16 – July 1 evangelistic meetings that were held in the neighboring African countries.

“We praise the Lord for His leading this far,” said Joel Okindoh, director of evangelism for the Adventist Church's East-Central Africa Division, whose territory included Tanzania and Uganda.

Okindoh said 80,806 people were baptized in Tanzania, and another 35,969 people were baptized in Uganda. Additional evangelistic meetings are being held in the two countries this month, and more baptisms are expected, he said.

The recent baptisms brings the church membership to about 600,000 in Tanzania and 330,000 in Uganda.

Okindoh credited Total Member Involvement, or TMI, with playing a key role in the baptisms and said all

church members needed to be encouraged to make it part of their everyday lives.

TMI is a world church initiative that encourages each of the church's 20 million members to actively share Jesus with others.

Among the TMI efforts in Uganda, Adventist health professionals ran a weeklong free medical clinic in the city of Mbarara that treated more than 800 people a day, the East-Central Africa Division said on its website.

Ham Youngsik, a South Korean pastor and missionary, who assisted with the free clinic, expressed joy that 35 patients were baptized.

The latest baptisms mark the second time that the Adventist Church has surpassed the 100,000 mark during a TMI evangelistic campaign. A similar initiative in May 2016 resulted in 110,000 baptisms in Rwanda, which is also part of the East-Central Africa Division. TMI evangelism took off with 30,000 baptisms in Zimbabwe in 2015, and it has led to thousands of baptisms in Romania, Ukraine, and the Philippines so far this year. In Kenya, 73,000 people were baptized in March alone as local church members aim for

an annual record of 400,000 baptisms.

“After the Total Member Involvement experience in Rwanda in 2016, TMI has become a standard feature of the East-Central Africa Division!” Adventist Church president Ted N.C. Wilson said on his Facebook page. “We praise God for how the lay people are rallying to the call to become completely involved in soul winning. What a joy to see the thousands upon thousands being baptized through the Holy Spirit's power and the hard work of pastors and lay people united in mission for Christ sharing the good news of the three angels' messages and Christ's soon coming. Let's all be part of TMI!”

Duane McKey, who oversees TMI for the Adventist world church, said that after Rwanda the world church provided the East-Central Africa Division with 1,200 special video projectors that work with only a flash drive, no computer needed, and he encouraged division leaders to hold 20,000 evangelistic series in 2017.

“It looks like they are well on their way,” he said by e-mail. “Like Pastor Blasious Ruguri, president of the East-Central Africa Division, says, “God is up to something HUGE.”



TMI evangelism has not only led growing numbers of people to Christ but also encouraged visiting speakers to expand the program in other countries. Hugely successful evangelistic meetings across Romania in February prompted the Inter-European Division, whose leaders preached at the meetings, to announce that it would expand the initiative throughout its territory.

About 550 foreign guests from within and without the East-Central Africa Division participated in the Tanzania and Uganda events. The visitors left inspired to follow the model in their home countries.

---

Andrew McChesney,  
Adventist Mission

# KEEP THE FUTURE IN GOD'S HANDS

## A WAY TO KEEP YOUTH IN CHURCH AND IN CHRIST

In the recent years the Adventist Church has had a significant loss in the membership of the youth in the church. This loss is probably one of the most important issues the church faces today. Although the church is still growing, this loss undercuts the growth of the Church, and takes away some of the potential future leaders of the Church.

There have been a variety of studies conducted to discover why some youth are becoming disconnected. As a young person, I feel that the main reason why youth sometimes slip away is because they may be in church but not necessarily in Christ.

It is much harder for youth to first conform to the ways of the Church before having a true relationship with Christ, and being shown his love by those around them. If we were able to first help our young people have a true and authentic relationship with Christ, then it would be much easier to have them stay in the church.

Through their relationship with Christ it would then be easier for them to understand the doctrines of the church and happily comply with them.

Another reason some youth slip away is negative social views of being a part of the Church. To the youth, social image is very important.

With the introduction of social media, whose main purpose is to promote self image, the importance of social acceptance is only growing.

If we can help the youth understand that we should not conform to the ways of the world and stand strong in Christ, we can keep them from feeling pressurized by the outside world to leave the Church. If we can show that persecution is a blessing, and an opportunity to show the love of Christ, then they would be more willing to endure it.

**“Do not conform to the ways of the world and stand strong in Christ.”**

Lastly, as a young person, it is very difficult to stay in the church when many of the messages being preached are not seemingly relevant to the life situations and problems that youth are facing.

Notwithstanding, the sermons being preached in many of our Churches do not have something that we can all learn from. However, if the Church could have a service for the youth that shares messages that apply to them, then perhaps going to church would be something to look forward to.

If the message was impressed upon the preacher with the youth in mind, there would be a change in how the youth view attending church. When the youth reckon that the Church is taking time to dive into their world and evaluate their problems so that they can give a message that applies to them, they will want to get more involved.

The youth are the future of the world. More importantly the youth are the future of the Church. If we can accommodate them, teach them the Scripture in a manner that shows its relevance, and show them the undying love of Christ then they may want to know Him for themselves, and then we can secure the future of the Church.

---

Gitari Tirima

# STOP TALKING!

## A MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANS

“Oh, I’m praying for you brother” we say with what appears to be sincerity in our voices, yet, the same voice is used a few minutes later to shatter that “brother’s” name. She said “thank you for being my friend” two steps later “that’s her, the one who’s too broke to pay rent.” Hypocrisy has become the norm, and gossip the only topic of conversation. Please stop. Stop talking.

Stop talking about this or that, he or she. In fact stop listening too. How many times have we heard this kind of atrocity and ignored it? Never mind, It would probably be easier to count the number of meals we have consumed so far. We have grown so immune to it, at least, when it’s done to others. Wait- sounds like the complete opposite of the second most important commandment. Clearly we forgot to practice what we preach.

What is the difference between a sermon and gossip? Is it the words? Do they seem to be kinder, tender or loving? Or maybe even truthful? The difference is not what is said or how it’s said; the difference is what it’s based on. A sermon merely based on words might as well be a synonym of gossip.

Our tendency to associate a sermon with words is any Christian’s biggest mistake. There is a reason why 1 John 3:18 reminds us not to love in words or talk but in deed and truth; the world has heard over and over what we have to say, saying it again -be it once or a million times- will not draw a soul to Christ. We need to start living in the truth, then and only then will it be effectively shared.

When we look at the gospels we are constantly reminded of Jesus’ humble actions. Jesus came on earth to represent the Father, rarely did He sit and talk about who the Father is, He walked like the Father would, served like the Father would, forgave like the Father would, most importantly He loved like the father would. Words without actions were never His aim, His words were only the icing to his action.

We, in turn, are called to be the light of the world, to demonstrate Christ’s character. That light will not shine while we are judging each other, that light will not shine while we are lying to each other, that light will not shine through words. Christ’s light solely shines in good works, and gives glory to the Father.



Let’s lift Him up in our actions, demonstrating exactly who He is. We need each other, coming together will be the best way to demonstrate His character. Reach out and hold someone, dry another’s tear, make them laugh. Live with a serving spirit and a humble heart.

This is not in anyway a call to stop Christians from preaching, instead this is a call for Christians to stop talking and start preaching. We need sermons without words, we need examples by deeds, wholeness in Christ not just ‘holiness’ on Sabbath. So preach it, preach it with your kindness, preach it with forgiveness, preach it with fairness, preach like Christ. Preach without talking.

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. -Philippians 4:8.*

---

Cindy Ruvebana

# SAY GOODBYE TO BORING SERMONS

As Mindy sat down to hear the preacher, all that was ringing in her ears was, “Blah, blah, blah, Jesus, blah, blah, blah, second coming”, and couldn’t wait till the preacher shouted a hearty, “Amen!” and returned to his seat. All Mindy wants is for church not to be as boring. She’d rather be on the next plane to Paris, or take a trip to Disneyland and ride the most feared roller coaster. However, what Mindy doesn’t know is that she can have a roller coaster ride at church! Here are some tips that Mindy might have missed out on during her experience at church.

**1. Try and get the topic to relate to you.** You see, most of us teens just tune out on specific subjects if they don’t relate to us right there and then. But little do we know that sometimes, the preacher says something really cool and we often just don’t care because we forget to make the topic relatable to ourselves.

**2. Put yourself in the situation the preacher is talking about.** For example, if the preacher is preaching about the story of David and Goliath, you might put yourself in that situation and act like you were one of the angels watching David defeat Goliath while eating popcorn! It sounds

crazy! But if that keeps you interested in what the preacher says, do it!

**3. Try a different church.** It might sound absurd, however it’s true. In most cases, people find themselves in the wrong churches because that’s where they were raised up or found themselves in circumstances that forced them to go to that Church. Then in the end, people end up not having an interest in the sermons the pastor gives or find the worship style of the church boring. And when these people finally feel the urge to go find a church which they really like, they find themselves learning more about Jesus and understanding

the Bible better!

Sometimes, not only does it take us time to get acquainted with the sermon, but also the Church, to realize that the Church is amazing and can actually give us a spiritual thrill of a lifetime! However, if that’s not the case, there are various ways to make us have an amazing adventure when the pastor is preaching. So if you’re struggling with staying awake, paying attention, or zoning out, try these ideas! They might be the best for you!

---

Makani Chiyabi



# SPREADING THE GOSPEL USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

It is without question that the main goal of the Adventist Church is to spread the word and call people to be disciples of Christ. However, like any institution of scale that has been around for decades, innovation somehow gets lost in bureaucracy. Some people might be skeptical about having innovation and the church in the same statement (since it is a buzz word commonly associated with business) but this shouldn’t be the case. Innovation can and should exist in the church.

Using technology is a staple in any institution existing

in this current age and the Adventist Church has made strides in using technology as a platform to better spread Christ’s message in the world today. Although their methods are effective, I believe the Adventist Church could greatly benefit from taking a closer look at newer technology and how it could be harnessed to increase productivity within the church and spread Christ’s message more efficiently and effectively.

But what is Artificial Intelligence and how can we use it in the church? Artificial Intelligence isn’t as frightening

as it sounds, it ranges from the more complex autonomous cars to simple tasks like the one farmer who uses it to classify and sort different cucumbers for pricing. Artificial intelligence is the ability of computers to learn from data and apply the knowledge to complete different tasks. Similar to how human beings learn, the computer is able to identify patterns in data and use those patterns to recognize real world objects and much more. Common examples of this include, the voice assistant in your phone and the algorithm that decides what advertisements you see on

your Facebook feed. This technology is relevant to the Church because it enables the Church to offer a more personalized approach to spreading the word as well as the ability to increase productivity through more focused goals and missions.

Living in the information age, it’s very easy for people to get distracted. As the Adventist church continues to grow I do hope that they consider AI in their future.

---

Saron Woldegabriel



# PRESENT BUT ABSENT PARENTS

## DO YOU THINK YOU SPEND ENOUGH TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN?

In today's world, parents are concerned with work, work, and more work. This is understandable, however, because every child needs to be provided for with the basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and an education.

But what if this is not your child's needs? From the moment a child is born, there is a bond created between the parent and the child. As the child gains more independence, they no longer need you and this could cause a drift in the bond created from a young age.

Believe it or not, many children understand that their parents have to work to be able to provide for them and their many wants and needs. Parents, not recognizing that their children need their attention and love, substitute this with other things instead, and acquire the latest iPhone 7, pay for fast internet and cable TV, presents they unwrap but never use, and give them money that they cannot handle to buy who knows what.

Children then develop into adults who cannot handle real-life emotions and are therefore emotionally unstable due to their absent parents. What many parents do not know is this absence could lead to clinical diseases such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Discipline, fear of being emotionally attached, anger issues, selfishness, substance abuse, fear of letting-go, clinginess, low self-esteem are some of the problems that could arise when a child does not have a parent to pay attention to them.

Leah, an eighteen-year-old about to go to college, suffers from present but absent parents. She was born and raised in the church and goes through all the motions that every regular family would go through such as going to church together, eating together or even sitting in the living room together.

You may ask yourself then, what is the problem? The problem is that even though Leah and her family do all these lovely things together, they do not have time to interact. On their way to church, both parents are either on their phone or listening to news on the radio. When seated in the living room, the parents are either on their phones, watching the television, or working from home.

Leah then feels neglected and has no one to talk to, even though her parents are physically present with her. Leah has been unable to make steady friendships in high school and has



poor self-esteem. She is unable to talk to her parents about this because they are constantly busy, even though they are regularly at home.

Ronald Rohner from the University of Connecticut did a research on the effect on children when their parents ignore them and was quoted saying: "In our half-century of international research, we've not found any other class of experience that has a strong and consistent effect upon personality development as does the experience of being rejected, especially by parents in childhood."

The solution to this growing problem is time. Constantly spending time with your children enables you to create a bond. Starting small with things like conversation on your way to school, asking your child to help in the kitchen and simply inquiring about your child's day is a good way to build a relationship. These small acts teach your child, regardless of how old they are, to be able to build relationships and enable them to realize how much you value them.

Ephesians 6:4 says "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Love begins at home and parents can ensure that their children grow up in the wisdom of the Lord by simply spending more time with them, and ensuring that they have a good role model, not a screen or substance, to listen to them, to counsel them and to guide them.

Just as God showed Love to His son, parents must also show love by spending their time on the most precious gift God has given them, their children. By addressing this growing challenge in our communities, we can solve many of society's problems that develop from having present but absent parents.

Jean Dinda



# ISOLATED WHERE MANY ARE GATHERED

## FEELING ALONE IN THE CROWD



**T**his morning, halfway into the church service, Ginny walked out. For weeks, she had constantly tried to feel like she belonged; lingering after worship, and making desperate attempts to engage someone in a conversation. But nothing.

Just like Ginny, this is a common experience for church folks in a new church. A person may walk into a church and leave alone every Sabbath. They arrive at the church, find a seat, sing praise songs, listen to the sermon, then leave having never really spoken to anyone. They find themselves alone in a crowd.

The funny thing is that most of these people do not like to be left alone. They want to feel acknowledged and part of the church. They long for someone to reach out, introducing them to the church family, friends, and perhaps even inviting them to Lunch.

Furthermore, they may have come from a family where there was a lack of worship to God and yearning for a change, a connection with God, they find a church thinking that they will feel like they belong and at home. Rather, they get the cold treatment from its members then think that this is how all churches must behave when they have a new, odd member.

What might be worse than this is a church recognizing some new faces in the crowd, making them feel welcome by giving them greetings, but then not attempting to have any more association with them afterwards. They are treated like royalty and then expected to navigate themselves in the activities or practices of the church alone. There is no more greeting or welcoming for why should that be done? They already know how the church works right?

But, what if that's not the case. What if the church is actually not unfriendly. A brother from the church Ginny had left said, "We are just scared to make anyone feel uncomfortable".

Nevertheless, churches who are scared of making anyone feel uncomfortable will end up losing those searching for connection and discipleship. How many people have left churches because they don't feel connected with its' members, thus making them feel so isolated and lonely?

The Bible tells us that we are all one in Christ. Some may feel like they don't belong but we need not to put our value in the church. We need to put it in the only person who understands and will take us for who we are; Gentile or Jew.

In the parable of the prodigal son, when the lost son came

back home, his older brother hated the fact that he had more attention than he who had stayed faithful. But we were reminded in the parable that we all belong in God's family. And to us now, that is the church.

While some at church may be snobby in not wanting to make the new folks feel welcome, the Bible counsels us that we should greet and encourage them. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

In other words, God dwells where many are gathered in fellowship but as 'One.' That is, a Family. A church family will humbly serve one another, have open arms to anyone from anywhere, constantly spend time together, and express affirmation and encouragement often. In addition, a church family will go seeking how they may serve others and help them know Christ. That is what is needed in the hearts and minds of the church for them to practice and for situations like Ginny's to be avoided.

So today, let's start looking out for those who seem lost in church and give them a hand. Then they won't just feel welcome, but feel like they belong.

---

Jochebed Sam-Nwoamah

## ADVENTISTS IN BURUNDI GEAR UP FOR TMI IN 2018

### TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Adventist church members in Burundi are excited about a huge event taking place in Burundi June 15 - June 30, 2018. Under the banner of the world church's Total Member Involvement initiative, the East-Central Africa Division has hosted simultaneous country wide evangelistic campaigns in each of the eleven countries within ECD.

The event scheduled to be held within the last three weeks of July is expected to make a huge impact across the country. The Southern Union Conference in the US has committed to send 15 - 20 pastors to Burundi to preach during the campaign, and many more pastors, lay people and church administrators have signed up to be a part of the Burundi TMI Event.

Church leaders at the East-Central Africa Division will be hosting the large evangelistic event in the country of Burundi and in the DCR next year in June. Every Church will have

## SPECIAL NEEDS RALLY YIELDS 20 BAPTISMS IN KINSHASA



a site and there will be three messages shared nightly; a health message, a childrens message and an evangelist message. The people of Burundi are expecting a rich harvest as a result of the TMI Event in 2018.

More than 20 deaf and special needs individuals were baptized at the Bandal Church in Kinshasa Congo on May 20th as a result of the special needs ministry event hosted by ECD General Field Secretary, Paul Muasya.

Hundreds gathered to witness the baptismal celebration as the new believers found hope in Jesus and shared appreciation for the incredible compassion of the Adventist church.

Pastor Musaya said "The Adventist church in the East-Central Africa region is passionate about ministering and reaching out to the people in our communities with physical challenges and special needs. We embrace them and show them the love of Jesus through practical assistance, loving service, and a ministry of care and compassion."

## TMI LEADERSHIP SUMMIT EQUIPS FOR EXCELLENCE

Top leaders from the Adventist Church in Ethiopia were trained and equipped for mission at the recent TMI Leadership Convention sponsored by the East-Central Africa Division. Leaders were inspired with presentations by world church vice president, Geoffrey Mbwana, Assistant to the world church president Larry Evans, and world church Family Ministries Directors, Willie and Elaine Oliver.

Presenters covered topics such as, Leadership and Church Policy, The Leaders Family, Strategies for Leadership Excellence, Communication for Leaders, and the Leaders Role in Church Unity. Participants shared that they were energized to lead like Jesus, serve with humility, and have a commitment to excellence.



Philip Baptiste is the Editor for Connect and Special Assistant to the President of the East-Central Africa Division

## WE BAPTIZED 20,000 —NOW WHAT!



Over 400 pastors and church leaders gathered at the University of Eastern Africa Baraton in Kenya at the end of April, for a five-day pastors convention sponsored by the West Kenya Union Conference.



Keynote speakers for the event included GT Ng, Executive Secretary of the General Conference, Hensley Mooroooven,

Associate Secretary of the General Conference, Alain Coralie, Executive Secretary, East-Central Division, and Pastor Musa Mitekaro, Ministerial Director of the East-Central Africa Division.

The pastors meeting was a follow up to the recent Total Member Involvement initiative that took place last month in the country of Kenya. Over 1,400 sites across the union conducted simultaneous evangelist campaigns for two weeks baptizing more than 20,000 new members.

GT Ng, challenged the pastors to be faithful stewards in whatever office they have been called to serve. “Why is it that when you are called to a higher position, God has called you, but when you are sent to the Island of Patmos the nominating committee has made a mistake? We need to be faithful stewards in any position we have been called to serve,” said Dr. Ng.



Samuel Misiani is the Communication Director for the West Kenya Union Conference. Robert Onsare is a student at the University of Eastern Africa Baraton.

Hensley Mooroooven gave a compelling presentation citing research showing that growing churches share common principles in reaching out the world and retaining new members. Alain Coralie, encouraged pastors and members to pray for the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit to accomplish their divine mission. Quoting Ellen White, he said: “There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly committed to God.”



The Union leaders and pastors resolved to strengthen the new members through nurture and retention programs, prayer, Bible study and involvement in mission. Participants also committed to help new members discover their spiritual gifts and to utilize information and communication technology such as the social media, websites and cell phones for ministry.

## WOMEN ENERGIZED FOR MISSION AT THE MOMBASA SUMMIT IN KENYA

Over 5,600 delegates attended the Women’s Summit held in Mombasa, Kenya, April 12 – 15, 2017 hosted by the Kenya Coast Field. The theme for the event was “Chosen for Mission!” The women gathered to be equipped and energized for ministry.

Special guests to the summit included: Debbie Molabo, Women’s and Children’s Ministries Director of the East-Central Africa Division, Pastor Kenneth Maena, the president of the West Kenya Union Conference. Pastor Samuel Lumwe, General Conference Associate Director for the Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations and Nene Molefi a specialized trainer from South Africa.

Topics addressed were: Powerful Prayer, Stewardship, Emotional Intelligence, How to be a Godly woman and more. The summit culminated with 96 women deciding to be baptized and surrender their lives to Jesus. The women also distributed bibles to the community, assisted the sick and children with special needs and donated clothes, shoes and food to orphan children.

Philip Baptiste is the Editor for Connect and Special Assistant to the President of the East-Central Africa Division



# PASTORS MEETINGS CULMINATE IN 54 ORDINATIONS IN THE COUNTRY OF RWANDA



**54** pastors were ordained in Rwanda following a national three-day ministerial convention held in the city of Nyamata.

After the baptism of more than 100,000 last year, one of the challenges the Rwanda Union Mission faced was a lack of ordained ministers to carry out the mission and attend to the new members.

So on Sabbath June 3rd, 2017, thousands of church members gathered from around the region under beautiful white tents to witness the unprecedented event. Pastoral couples marched down a beautiful carpet attired in their Sabbath best for this very special occasion.

It was a grand celebration! Pastor Blasious Ruguri, President of the Adventist Church in East-Central Africa region and keynote speaker for the event, said, "God has found the answer to the challenge in Rwanda at the right time." He added that "the ordination

was another testimony of the incredible church growth of the church in Rwanda."

Ruguri charged the newly ordained ministers to follow the steps of Jesus and the example of the apostles as they work to fulfill the mission. He reminded the pastor's wives that they had become mothers twice. First for their children and second for all the children in the church. He also told the couples that ministry is not a shortcut to wealth but a gateway to servanthood and selfless service for the Savior.

Pastor Alain Coralie, Executive Secretary of the Adventist church in East-Central Africa region, said, "The best gift ordained ministers need nowadays is genuine prayer." He prayed for their success in mission and the power of the Holy Spirit to attend them in their service.

Many of the 54 ordained ministers were veterans who have served the church for many years baptizing

thousands of people. The church members joyously appreciated their service as they came forward to be ordained.

Pastor Hesron Byilingiro president of the Adventist Church in Rwanda joyously expressed his happiness and thanksgiving for the dynamic growth of the church in Rwanda.

Before the ordination, there had been a three-day ministerial convention, which brought together over 400 pastors and church leaders to be equipped and trained for ministry excellence.

Church leaders expressed that most of the pastors had been so busy energizing and reviving church members, that they never had their own particular time to discuss the various missional challenges in their territory.

Participants shared that they were excited by the convention and grateful since it provided

the opportunity for them to share experiences with other pastors, build comradery and find common solutions together.

During the Convention, Pastor Coralie, gave a special presentation on prayer ministry. He reminded them that many Adventists read the word and teach it but they pray less. As a result, they do not see God's miracles.

Rwanda Union Mission has nudged a membership of more than 800, 000 registered Adventists in a country with a population of over 12,000,000.

---

Prince Bahati is the Communication Director of the East-Central Africa Division

# A CHURCH BUILDING PROJECT IN JUBA BRINGS HOPE TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN

The Seventh-day Adventist Church represented by the leadership of Greater Equatoria Field has begun construction of a mega-church complex to be built near its headquarters in the city of Juba, South Sudan.

The Adventist church started in the Sudan during the 1970's and since then has been a church that has witnessed growth even under difficult circumstances, since the country has most of its history dominated by conflicts. War erupted in 1983 immediately after the entry of the church around 1979, lasting for 21 years till the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which saw the country, headed for independence that was realized in 2011.

Since then, the church has never had a permanent building to host its growing membership particularly in the city of Juba. The church, which

had less than 200 worshippers on Sabbath in 2007 and only in a single central worship place located in its current headquarters, has now grown to over ten congregations within the city including two very large churches.

The small building that existed since the 80s is no longer capable of housing the ever-growing number of worshippers that assemble every Sabbath. Moreover, it has also grown too old as a facility. Based on this, the members of the church took a bold step of faith and decided to build a decent and modern sanctuary for the Lord with a capacity to accommodate 3,500 people with offices, and a children's chapel included. "We'll build the new church by faith even in troublous times," said one of the construction committee members responsible for raising money and overseeing the building of the church.

Why at such a time one may ask, for people in distress to dare think of such a major project at a time when South Sudan is suffering from high inflation and economic meltdown? Why build in a land that has been declared famine-ridden with the majority of the population either displaced or living as refugees in other countries? "Well, we just want to honor God. There's no best time". Says one of the leaders, "God is God regardless of what happens around before, now or in the future, He remains God, He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is God who deserves our worship praises and honor".

The story, therefore, becomes almost a replica of Nehemiah's story when he decided he would move back from exile to rebuild the ruined walls of Jerusalem. His decision was born out of faith, fear of God

and will to honor God. Before stepping forward, he delved into prayer seeking approval and support from the God of heaven. Though facing opposition and hardship at the time, he was determined to see the job accomplished under Gods guidance and help.

The construction work started early in 2017 and is continuing. The church in Juba is moving forward in faith believing that the God who provided resources for the children of Israel while journeying in the desert is with them, and will see them through until the dreams of this sanctuary become a reality. Church leaders are soliciting prayer for the church in Juba as they embark upon this new project.

---

John Taban is Communication Director for the South Sudan Attached Territory



# TEACHERS TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT YIELDS 144 VOP GRADUATES IN TANZANIA

**A**dventist teachers in Tanzania are sharing Christ and serving people by offering free education to public school students in the rocky city of Mwanza. After realizing that parents pay a lot of money to have their children taught when school is on break, the teachers decided to offer free education to students in the community.

During the summer session, Teachers at the Nyanza Adventist Secondary school have also been giving Bible studies to 144 students who received the Voice of Prophecy certificates at the school's graduation ceremony. The majority of the students who completed the Bible lessons, 111 to be exact, were non-Adventist.

According to the headmaster of the school, Sosthenes Mgunda, parents were overwhelmed with joy and felt the offer was too good to be true. Once they saw that the offer of free education was real with no strings attached, they enrolled their high school students for the summer session.

The free summer school conducted classes during the same hours as in regular times. The purpose, the headmaster said was to have children from non-Adventists parents taste and experience the joy of Adventist education and go home with the Adventist message.

Students were involved in studying both an academic curriculum along with the Adventist churches, Voice of Prophecy lessons. Teachers were willing to teach free of charge as they saw this as their way to get involved in the world churches Total Member Involvement initiative.

Students from a variety of denominations such as Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants enrolled along with students from several other religions. In addition to free education, the students were also provided with free breakfast.

Martha Paulo, one of the parents said, she had never seen such kindness in a church before. As a non-Adventist, she commended the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania for the intellectual growth and character development she has seen her son exhibit when he comes home from school each day.

According to the teachers, the majority of those who completed Voice of Prophecy lessons are preparing for baptism. They added that this type of community-based evangelism would be done every year.

Pastor Godwin Lekundayo, Northern Tanzania Union Conference president and Pastor Joel Okindoh, ECD TMI coordinator commended the school for their commitment to "Total Teacher Involvement." The three-week Total Member Involvement or TMI evangelist meetings being held across the country of Tanzania are in their second week and are taking place in over 5,000 sites.




---

Prince Bahati is Communication Director of the East-Central Africa Division, and Gideon Msambwa is Communication Director of the Northern Tanzania Union Conference

## A TASTE OF TMI

**A** departmental director from the Uganda Union had a joyous experience when he volunteered to preach for a two week evangelistic campaign in northern Uganda. Elder Immanuel Ogwal who is not a pastor but serves as the Union communication director was nervous during the meetings especially when night after night he made appeals and no one came forward for baptism.

He began to pray and ask God that at least five people would respond. The last weekend of the meetings a drunk man came forward and gave his life to Jesus. 40 more followed him and at the end 137 people were baptized.

“As the candidates names were being recorded, tears of joy rolled down from my eyes seeing more than 100 people waiting in two lines to be baptized,” says Pastor Ogwal. “

You have given me 132 more!  
Let your name be glorified!

First, he says, “Pray.” God works with our willingness, not our ability. Second, he says “Be willing to learn.” Third, “Never give up on a soul Jesus died for,” and fourth “Embrace technology as a tool for sharing the message.”



## ADVENTIST TMI MEDICAL CAMPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MBARARA

**O**ver 800 people received free medical treatment daily at a free Medical Camp coordinated by the Adventist church in Uganda. Local government leaders in the District of Mbarara were overwhelmed with joy as they attended medical camps and saw thousands of people get a better sense of their health as a result of the Adventist mobile medical treatment centers.

Geoffrey Magyezi, the District Police Commissioner (DPC) said the Adventist church was contributing to crime eradication through their outreach. He illustrated this by saying that before the medical camp, they had arrested a parent who had stolen money. As they interrogated her, she said she stole to get money to take her child to the hospital. Therefore, he said, the church had come at the right time to save lives in the region.

As for Jolly Kagira who was representing the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), the TMI medical camps should be a beginning of partnership between her government and the Adventist church in the eradication of poverty and drug addiction. As a Christian, she added, with the word of God the church is able to foil evils better than the police with the sword of the law.

According to Kakuru Bernard, of the Southern West Uganda Field, the success of the medical camp was a result of church members understanding of Total Member Involvement. He revealed that they provided medicine, eyeglasses, dental treatment and so much more. The local government also participated in the event. They supplied equipment for blood testing; drugs

for malaria, and sent some medical staff from Mbarara Referral Hospital to work in conjunction with Adventist health professionals.

Fred Mwesije is 42 years old and attends the local Baptist Church. He came for skin disease and HIV/Aids testing. He said their community has known the Seventh-day Adventists as a caring church.

Pastor Ham Youngsik, is a Korean Adventist Missionary in the region. As the coordinator of TMI in Mbarara, he was happy to see church members sharing Christian love. He said, “God avails money and skills to do his work.” He saw patients who could not travel long distances being reached in their homes to receive free treatment. His heart was touched when he witnessed 35 of those treated in the medical Camp make decisions for baptism.



TMI meetings in Uganda were held from June 15 - July 1 and more than 3,000 sites in the country have been reached.

Prince Bahati is the Communication Director for the East-Central Africa Division



**CONNECT**

Private Bag  
Mbagathi, 00503  
Nairobi, Kenya

PERIODICALS

# Mission Priority

it's harvest time | John 4:35

## Join us in Total Member Involvement

“Mission Priority” is a personal appeal for every single Adventist member to become totally involved in the life and mission of the church.

