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GLOBAL MISSION  
**frontline**

Stories and News From Our Frontline Workers

**“God took  
me from the  
garbage, next  
to the rats,  
and set me up  
as a king.”**

Photo for illustration only

**B**utros was known as the boy with a hard face. Even at the tender age of five, hatred filled his heart. “I grew up describing myself as a beast,” he says, “and the world around me seemed to agree.”

Butros’ family was originally from a Christian village in the mountains of Lebanon, but as civil war spread in the 1970s and their family home was destroyed, his father moved them to the outskirts of Beirut. He hoped the new location would be safe, but it soon became so dangerous that he forbade his children from playing outside.

Butros defied his father’s order, and that’s how he “met” the being who would

come to control his life. The imposing figure was wearing a black robe and holding a long stick. “Go to your mom on the roof,” he commanded. “Tell everyone on the way not to hide in the shelter but to live normally.”

When Butros told his neighbors what he had seen, they brought him pictures of different saints they worshiped. He kissed the picture that resembled the being, and the neighbors accepted the message. Later that day, 31 bombs fell on the community. No one went to the shelter. Later, when they saw it lay in ruins, they believed the saint had spared their lives. It was a miraculous beginning, one that

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Butros realized later was orchestrated by a power other than God.

As soon as Butros was old enough, he joined a political army to protect his people. “We would put a picture of Jesus on our guns and go out to fight,” he recalls. “I didn’t realize that I was actually fighting Jesus every day.” Pounding his chest with his fist, he acknowledges, “I had a big hate in here for anyone different than me—anyone with a different faith, different country, or different blood.”

Butros’ violent life placed him in a position of power over those around him. He intimidated and controlled his family and neighbors. No one around him felt safe. Instead, they embraced the saint he followed and believed in the power Butros had under his care.

Butros recalls the darkness of those days. “Every time I felt angry or met a problem, I saw the saint standing next to me, telling me I was indebted to him for everything. I had been taught that Jesus would punish me if I didn’t do what He wanted, that I had to kneel in front of Him the whole day like a slave if I wanted him to accept me. I decided I loved the saint more because if I wanted a car, money, health, or advice, I would pray to the saint, and he would give it to me. I had everything I wanted but happiness.”

This horrifying truth overwhelmed him the day he picked up the car of his dreams and was test-driving it along a coastline highway. Instead of feeling euphoric, he felt lost and cold. Butros pulled off the road along the large rocks and pounding waves and threw himself down into the water. “I didn’t try to swim or save myself,” he says. “I was thinking of only one thing: Nobody loves me; they are only scared of me. I don’t deserve to survive on this earth. I figured the hell I would face when I died was better than living.”

Suddenly, a woman on an apartment balcony high above the shore spotted Butros and began shouting for help. Butros tried to push himself under the water but because he had broken his arm on a rock, he found it impossible. “I don’t know how long I was there desperately bobbing,” he says. “Maybe 30 minutes passed before a group of fishermen dragged me into their boat. Though I was only half conscious, I knew I didn’t want to be saved, and I threw myself back into the water. Another small boat joined them. They finally dragged me onboard the second boat and tied me down.

Something in Butros began to change that day. He chose to stop hurting people. And he decided, for the first time in his life, to pray to God instead of the saint. “Put someone in my life who will love my little boy,” he asked. Khalil, only 4 months old, needed care after his parents’ separation.

Eventually, Butros met Joelle, a kind woman who, to his surprise, respected him. He was divorced now, and the two fell in love and married.

Butros remembered hearing that a Bible in the home would bring many blessings, so he set an open Bible on a chest in their living room. “Every month I read one page and put it back on the chest,” he says. After a few months, he had read as far as Genesis 3, where God spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden. He noted that God communicated with them directly and not through a saint. He wanted to learn more about God, but because he couldn’t read well, he needed assistance. He began asking Christians he knew to help him study the Bible, but no one seemed interested.

Butros’ breakthrough came soon after he opened his own auto servicing shop. Joelle told him that one of her students needed to replace a blown tire. This student was a Seventh-day Adventist

frontline worker in Lebanon. The tire change led to a conversation, friendship, and then Bible studies. Butros met with his new friend only four times before he made the momentous decision to give his life to Jesus and share his experience with his family.

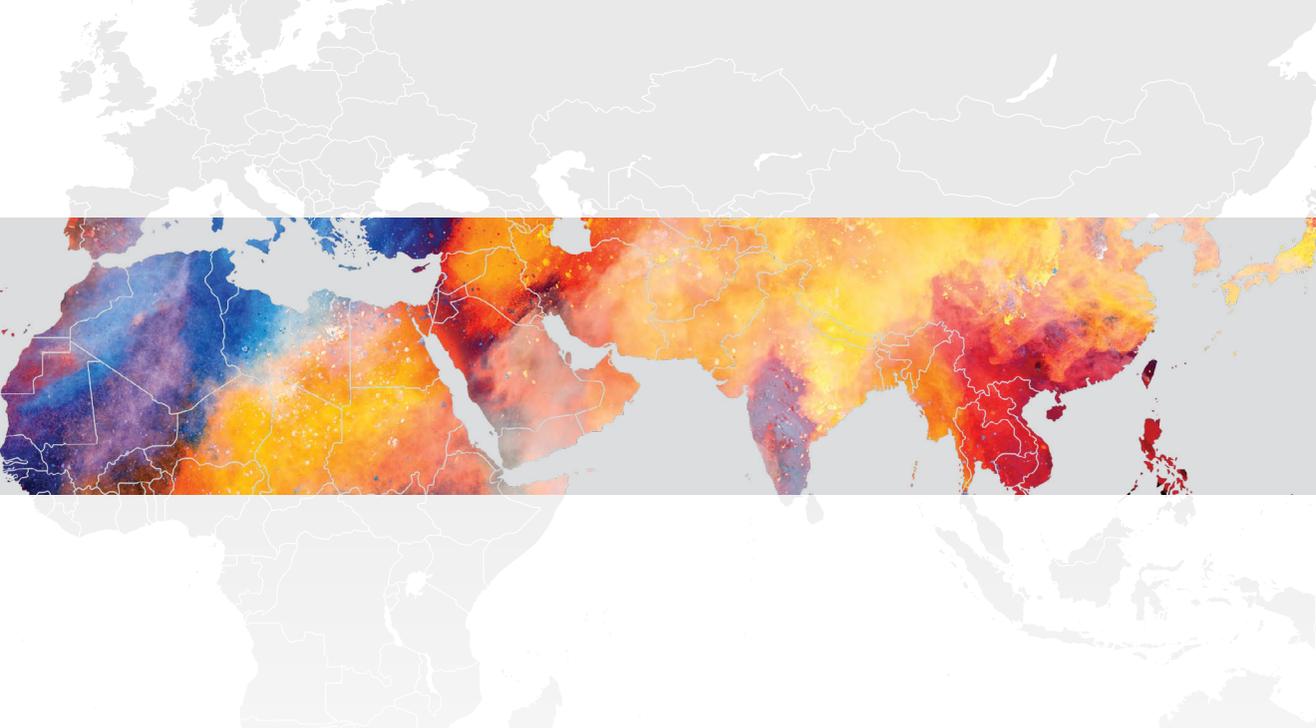
“My life is new now,” Butros exclaims. “God took me from the garbage, next to the rats, and set me up as a king. My face used to be hard, but now it can shine like Moses’ and show others that I have been with Jesus.”

*\*Names have been changed*



As told to **Kathie Lichtenwalter**,  
Middle East and  
North Africa  
Union





**G**lobal Mission is about reaching the unreached for Jesus in the 10/40 Window, which includes the Middle East and North Africa. We do this in various ways, including through the service of Global Mission pioneers, urban centers

of influence, Waldensian students, and tentmakers who use their careers to share Christ.

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**10/40 WINDOW:** 66% of the world's population live in the 10/40 Window, but most have never met Jesus and experienced His saving love. Your gift could help Global Mission pioneers start new groups of believers among unreached people groups.

**URBAN WINDOW:** 43 cities have more than one million inhabitants but no Adventist presence. Your gift could help start centers of influence in those urban settings.

**POST-CHRISTIAN WINDOW:** Throughout Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand most people have developed a post-Christian, secular mindset. Your gift could help reintroduce them to Jesus by starting small worship groups.

## What would you give up for mission?

**November 9** is Annual Sacrifice Offering day. Write "Annual Sacrifice Offering" on your tithe envelope, or visit [global-mission.org/aso](http://global-mission.org/aso)

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