

mission

PRODUCED BY
THE OFFICE OF
ADVENTIST MISSION
VOLUME 9
NUMBER 2

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EDITORIAL

We get many magazines delivered to our house. Most times, I don't have an opportunity to read them. But when I received the *Adventist Review* this past January, I took a moment to leaf through it. One article, titled "From Opposition to Champion," caught my attention. It related the story of Peter Keingamba, a man considered an enemy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church because he hated Adventists and their "strange doctrines," especially the Sabbath.

So when a series of evangelistic meetings took place in Keingamba's village, he employed different means to stop them. He attended the meetings to try to catch the young evangelist, C. Pheirim, stating a mistruth—not to hear the messages. He even arranged to have Pheirim assaulted.

Several months later, Keingamba and Pheirim had a chance encounter and Keingamba excitedly shared the news that he had been converted. He went on to become an evangelist, and the article ends with his legacy, citing the number of churches Keingamba planted and the people he led to Christ.

This story reminded me of an *Adventist World* article I had read a year earlier. It was about Tom and Betty, a missionary couple who used an old US Army jeep to transport supplies from village to village. The story

concludes by describing their most interesting "load"—14 young boys ready to attend the Adventist boarding school in a neighboring state.

How are these two stories connected? One of the 14 boys was the young evangelist who played a role in the conversion of Keingamba. How do I know this? The evangelist is my father. Although the second article doesn't provide the full names of the missionaries, I've heard enough stories to know that this couple was Pastor and Mrs. Ashlock. Our family photo albums include pictures of a young me standing next to them when they revisited India years later to celebrate the work they had started many years earlier.

Do I believe in the work of missionaries? I don't have to look far to know the difference that they make has ripple effects.

This issue of *Mission 360°* is filled with stories of missionaries making a difference in the lives of others. As you read them, please pray that the ripple effects of their labors will be felt far and wide for Jesus.

Marietta Fowler
Editorial assistant, *Mission 360°*



Mission 360° on the issuu app. It's the perfect way to spend a Sabbath afternoon!

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ABOUT OUR COVER PHOTO . . .

PHOTO BY RICKY OLIVERAS

A flood of students came rushing out of Sabbath School, excited about the Bible stories they had heard and the lessons they had learned. This girl was part of that group. She attends a boarding school in Southern Asia that recently received a portion of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. It's a true mission school, for many of the students knew nothing about Jesus before enrolling.

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Design: 316 Creative

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VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2

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To support urban centers of influence (Fund # 9730), scan this QR code or visit Global-Mission.org/giving.



Based on the survey's results, the Centro CEF staff set about meeting community needs by conducting health fairs, providing clothing, and tutoring children in subjects such as English, Spanish, and Math.

"We also have a school for the parents where we learn about emotions," says educational coordinator Mairim Acosta. "We [discuss] what good emotional intelligence is and how to develop and practice it with their child."

At the end of the center's first semester, families and volunteers enjoyed an end-of-year holiday program hosted by the staff. During a large celebration with food and music, the children showcased their artwork, and the staff handed out special gifts.

"During the pandemic, the services needed to be adapted a little," says Holly Aviles, Centro CEF's coordinator. "But we continued by doing online workshops for parents and art workshops for the kids." The staff also created a WhatsApp group, where they send daily educational videos, and experimented with hosting a podcast to discuss a variety of topics and promote the center's services. These activities allow them to stay connected with people even when they can't be together physically.

Jalys participates in the children's art workshop. "I like it because I learn many things," she says. Jalys' mom, Laura, says, "We're really happy with the service we receive. It's been a big help to learn in the area of art, and it's been beneficial to my children, who have been quarantining and social distancing. We can't go out much, but these workshops are helping a lot because the kids benefit, learn, and enjoy."

Centro CEF also developed an online women's group to interact with and support each other. "It helped me a lot," says one attendee. "Many times, we need support, and others won't listen. And in my case, I have been living completely alone for three years. It's not easy."

Unlocking Hearts During Lockdown



Ricky Oliveras,
Office of
Adventist
Mission

In Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Adventists have created a space where everyone is welcome. Its formal name is Centro Comunitario, Educativo, y Familiar. But everyone calls it Centro CEF. It's an urban center of influence (UCI) that was started to help people prioritize community, education, and family. Students and faculty from nearby Antillean Adventist University offer programs at the center that promote healthful living.

Before COVID-19 struck, the staff surveyed people in the community to learn about their needs and determine how to best meet them. As they visited homes, they talked with each person to get to know them a little. Then they prayed with them and shared a flyer outlining the services offered at Centro CEF.



Watch this story in action at [m360.tv/s2122!](https://m360.tv/s2122)

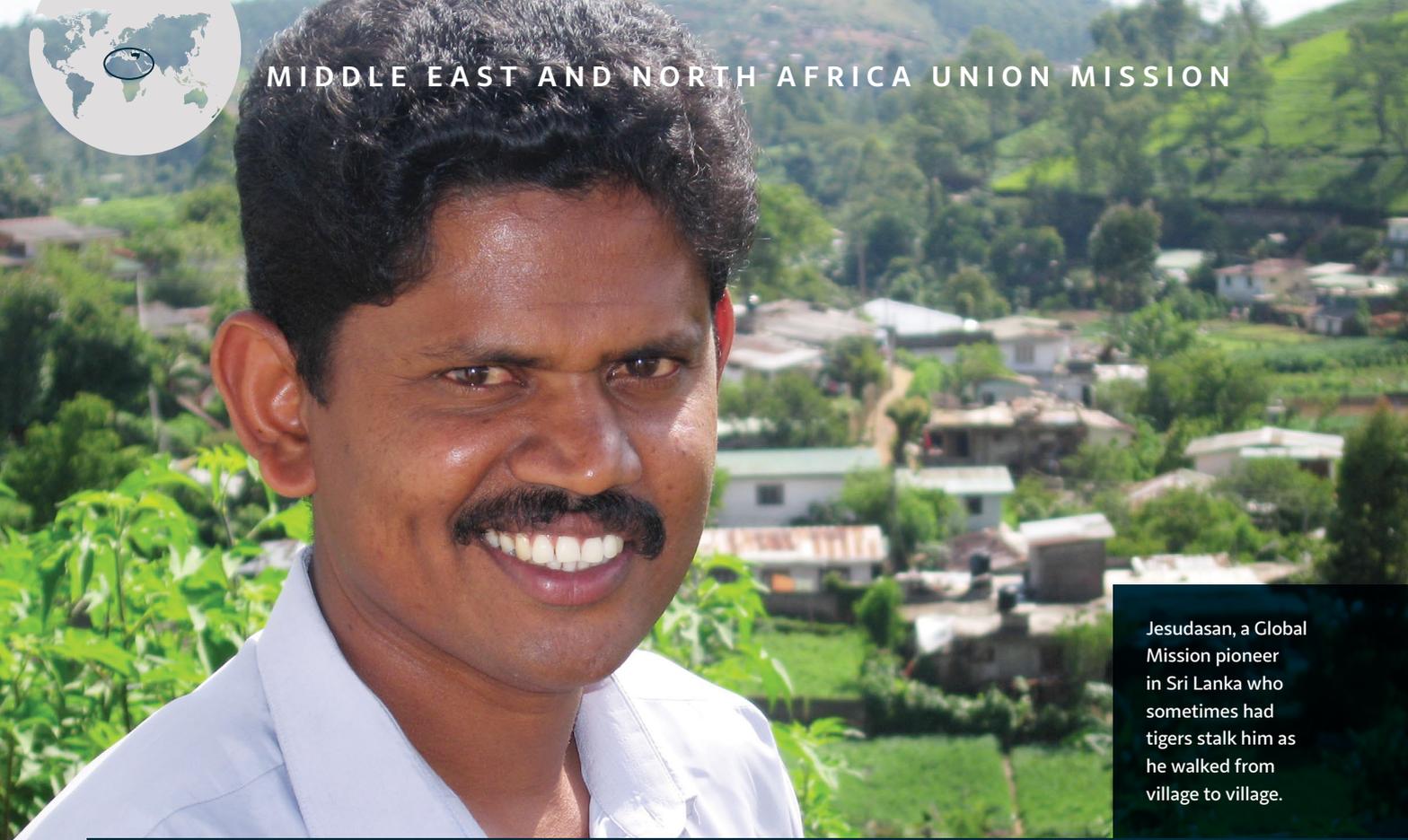
Centro CEF has done amazing things to impact this community in Puerto Rico. "We will continue working for the community, for the family, and for kids' education," says Holly. "We have other activities planned and things to do to impact everyone here. We hope to serve as a blessing for each of them in the midst of these difficult times."

This quarter, a portion of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help support the ministry of this UCI. You can also support UCIs around the world anytime with your donations to Global Mission. Please give generously to reach those who don't know Jesus!



- 1 Centro CEF coordinator Holly Aviles with neighborhood children
- 2 Centro CEF staff pray as part of their ministry
- 3 Staff members podcast to connect with the community during COVID-19 restrictions
- 4 Staff member presenting online art class
- 5 Centro CEF offers free health screenings to the community





Jesudasan, a Global Mission pioneer in Sri Lanka who sometimes had tigers stalk him as he walked from village to village.

Little Is Much When God Is in It



Rick McEdward is the president of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.

Upon completing my seminary training, I was assigned to pastor a group of new believers facing a big challenge. They needed to purchase property on which to build a church, but they didn't have anywhere near the money required.

At the time, my wife, Marcia, and I owned some worn-out furniture, a well-used car, and little else. As we joined the church members in fundraising, we asked God to guide us in our efforts to fulfill His mission in our new community. Then we made our pledge. It was far less than other families were giving, but it was much more than we could afford. It was an act of faith.

During the next several months, we experienced so many miracles of God's providence. Somehow He multiplied the little we had and added many blessings besides. Sometimes, an elderly man would give us fresh greens from his garden, or we would find bags of groceries by our door. Other times a birthday or Christmas gift of cash met our obligations exactly. When the campaign was over, we found that we had received back what we had committed. Hearing our story, one church member

told us, "You didn't have enough faith; if you had pledged more, God would have met that too!"

We learned many lessons about trusting God day by day, expressed beautifully in the words of the old gospel song, "Little Is Much When God Is in It." We had no idea those lessons would one day be valuable to us as cross-cultural missionaries for the church.

In 2000, we felt a strong pull on our hearts to the mission field. The doors didn't open immediately, but eventually, we were called to Sri Lanka, where I served as the coordinator for Global Mission. Financial resources were tight, and we frequently experienced a need for more qualified people to help open up new work. Yet God continually used little to provide much for His work. During our time there, several new congregations were formed, and new workers appeared, committed to the task of sharing the gospel in spite of invariably challenging circumstances.

I remember one young man who became a Global Mission pioneer. He was a humble person who had grown up working on the local tea plantations. During his first week of service, he

built a small place of prayer that consisted of four posts and some palm branches in the middle of a plantation. He started a prayer meeting which, over time, grew into four new worship groups. He did what he knew, and God blessed him.

Another Global Mission pioneer sometimes had tigers stalk him as he walked from village to village late at night to share the love of God. The groups he formed and nurtured were always full of joyful people who knew that Jesus had set them free from fear. His long walks repeatedly wore holes through his shoes until they could be no longer repaired.

God took the hours and miles offered by this servant and made something beautiful out of them.

Since 2016, Marcia and I have served in the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (MENA). To say that the task here is immense is an understatement. MENA comprises 20 nations, none of which are Christian. In only seven is the church legal. In the other nations, mission work is illegal, and being a Christian can bring persecution. With a population of more than 558 million people, most of whom do not know the basics of God's plan of salvation, the MENA territory is considered one of the most challenging mission tasks remaining.

Currently, MENA has 5,200 church members spread among these 20 nations, meaning there is 1 Seventh-day Adventist for every 107,000 people. Our small band of workers seems insignificant when compared to the populations around us. Even our faithful workers often feel unequipped for the daily challenges they face. We can easily ask the question, "Who is qualified for this task?" Then we remember the promises of God, whose "strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). He always fulfills His promises. Every week, I hear stories about people who have found joy and hope in Jesus. Even with few frontline workers available in needy areas throughout MENA, we see, day by day, how God is using the little we have to provide for His work.

One young man living in London had a strong impression that he should return to his home country in the Middle East. He couldn't understand why this was being asked of him, but he knew it was a call from God. In the middle of winter, when it was cold and rainy, he returned to his home city, one of the largest in the world.

One day as he was walking along a busy street, he stopped at a rack of books along the sidewalk. His eyes were drawn to one book. Once it was in his hands, he couldn't put it down. That book dramatically changed his trajectory, leading him to give his life to the Lord as a Global Mission pioneer. At that very same book rack he would tell people stories about Jesus and invite them to come to the

onsite worship center. His life has since taken him to other places, but today there is a congregation made up of local people worshipping each Sabbath. God is doing something special in this large city!

We see stories like this in most MENA countries, stories that can't be told because of the security risk to individuals who are faithfully sharing the message with others. Each story in the Middle East and North Africa represents the work of the Holy Spirit, a work that defies national boundaries and communication barriers. Every day we see the fruit of God's love being demonstrated by church members and workers throughout this immense territory.

I've heard some people say, "I can't give much to the mission offering, so what difference can my small gift make?" This question always makes me think of the Bible stories about David and Goliath, the boy with the two fish and five loaves, and the widow's mite—stories that speak of God taking our small offerings and making them powerfully effective.

Here in the 10/40 Window, we can personally and dramatically see how God uses the smallest of offerings to change the lives of those who seek Him. Every day we pray for God to pour out visions and dreams on the people of this territory, dreams leading people to ask a Seventh-day Adventist about Jesus and His soon return. Our prayers are being answered. It is the stories of changed lives that tell how much my offering still matters.

God's mustard-seed conspiracy is still moving forward through you. I want to thank all our church members around the world. Through your contributions to the mission offerings, God is working miracles. It's worth repeating—little is much when God is in it!

Adapted with permission from *Dynamic Steward* magazine, vol. 24, no. 1.

Global Mission supports thousands of local church planters, called pioneers, in starting new groups of believers in areas of the 10/40 Window where there is no Adventist presence. But they need our help. Please support their ministry with your prayers and donations at Global-Mission.org/giving.



To see what's happening in mission in the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission, [visit m360.tv/middleeast](https://m360.tv/middleeast).



Actions Speak Louder Than Words



From the United States, **Leilani Pollock** served as a volunteer kindergarten teacher in Albania. She is a senior at Southern Adventist University, earning a degree in kinesiology.

I was super jetlagged but too nervous and excited to sleep. I couldn't believe I was actually in Albania and that, within a few days, I'd be starting my new job teaching English to kids in the country's first Adventist kindergarten.

I had wanted to be a student missionary (SM) since attending the student mission vespers program my freshman year at Southern Adventist University. As I watched the SMs carrying flags from different nations, I felt a strong tug on my heart. I, too, wanted to serve!

I hadn't had a particular country in mind, but I'd asked God to send me somewhere unfamiliar to me. He had answered that prayer; I couldn't even speak the language! As I lay in bed that first night, the reality of just how different everything was crushed down on me. How could I have committed a year of my life, so far from family and friends, to teach kids I couldn't even

communicate with? Had I been crazy to accept this call?

Tortured with loneliness and doubt, I wish I could have known then what I know now: God is always in control, He is always with us, and He will always provide for our needs. Unfortunately, it took some time for me to realize this.

My first day at the kindergarten was one of the hardest days of my life. The kids, all 31 of them, wanted nothing to do with me. And I couldn't understand a thing my coworkers were trying to tell me.

A month later, things hadn't improved. The kids weren't learning much English, and their parents were getting frustrated with me. I didn't feel qualified to do the job I thought God had called me to do. I felt like a failure.

I prayed a lot those first weeks and clung to God's promises. And then, slowly, I began to see

When I started my mission assignment in Albania, I was terrified of not being able to speak the language, but God reminded me often that actions speak louder than words.

His leading. He put amazing people in my life who listened to and encouraged me. Although my coworkers couldn't speak English, they helped me with the children, gave me hugs to let me know they thought I was doing a good job, and included me in their crazy adventures. My landlady and landlord welcomed me into their home like their long-lost daughter. And my new Albanian friends served as eager translators.

I was especially thankful that God put Pauline in my life. She was one of my first close friends in Albania and the first person I was able to witness to there. She helped me realize that I loved sharing God with others.

After a while, the kids started to respond to me. They were curious about the American teacher who wouldn't leave. So they started trying to speak English to communicate with me.

One of my favorite breakthroughs was with a boy who had messed up the classroom and then thrown himself on the floor. Refusing to pick up the mess, I just sat down beside him and looked at him. Once he realized I wasn't going to clean up, I told him he had two choices. He could pick up the room, apologize to his teacher, and join the rest of the kids in their fun activity, or he could stay on the floor and miss out on what they were doing. Suddenly, he ran to me and gave me a big hug. He picked up the room, apologized to his teacher, and joined the rest of the kids as if nothing had happened. I was so happy because he had understood me. I had been able to get through to him! From then on, the kids were eager to learn. I rejoiced in how much progress God had enabled me to make with them.

When I started my mission assignment in Albania, I was terrified of not being able to speak the language, but God reminded me often that actions speak louder than words. The things people did showed me how much they cared about me. And somehow, God used my actions to show them a glimpse of His love. In the end, we communicated just fine!



2

1 Leilani in her classroom

2 Leilani's students shower her with hugs



Would you like to help make a positive impact in the lives of others? If so, please consider volunteering through Adventist Volunteer Service, which facilitates church members' volunteer service around the world. Volunteers ages 18 to 80 may serve as pastors, teachers, medical professionals, computer technicians, orphanage workers, farmers, and more. To learn more, visit AdventistVolunteers.org.



Watch this story at
[m360.tv/s20411!](http://m360.tv/s20411)

A composite image of Earth from space. The Earth is shown in the center, with a cross superimposed on it. The sun is visible in the upper right corner, casting a long shadow of the cross across the Earth's surface. The background is a deep blue space filled with stars.

The Echoing Call

Thirty-one years ago, the Seventh-day Adventist Church embarked on a bold new mission focus that would totally change the face of the church.

Church leaders identified key areas where mission was struggling. Although the church was growing rapidly in certain parts of the world, many areas and people groups remained totally unreached.

The church would continue working in areas where it was doing well. But something needed to change if we were to be faithful to the Great Commission to go to all peoples. At the 1990 General Conference Session, Global Mission was created to focus on mission with a renewed sense of urgency. It was given two primary goals:

1. Alert church members to the large number of unreached people groups
2. Plant new groups of believers among those groups

Since 1990, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has nearly quadrupled in size. Millions of new believers have found life in Jesus and joined the Adventist family. They've come from new territories, new people groups, and various cultures. They've brought joy to heaven and strength to God's church.

We praise God for the thousands of new groups of believers that have been started.

And yet, we're still here.

Mothers still sit and beg beside busy city streets.

Many still wake each morning in fear of the spirit world.

Millions in the 10/40 Window have never even heard the name of Jesus.

Only one-third of the people on earth are Christians. Two-thirds follow other world religions, and a growing number claim no religion at all.

Cities are growing rapidly.

And there are still cities of more than a million people with no recorded visit by even one Seventh-day Adventist.

We so long for Jesus to come.

That's why Global Mission continues to focus on unreached people in the 10/40 Window, the cities, and the secular and postmodern West.

That's why Global Mission sends out thousands of pioneers to start new groups of believers among the unreached and supports tentmakers in the world's most challenging regions.

And that's why Global Mission is helping start hundreds of urban centers of influence in cities across the globe.

Today, six Global Mission centers focus on the most effective ways to share the good news with people from non-Christian backgrounds. These centers find the best ways to build bridges of understanding and help field-test resource materials, methods, and models. Their goal is to remove the barriers that make it difficult for people to understand and accept the gospel.

We praise God for the millions who have found peace and hope in Jesus since Global Mission began.

But we need more Global Mission pioneers.
We need more urban centers of influence.
We need more prayer.

Thirty-one years ago, Adventist Church leaders cast a bold vision for mission.

That vision still burns strong . . . to reach unreached people, to reach teeming cities, to reach those who feel no need for religion.

Today, we still need people to answer the call to mission, to reach the unreached with hope, to share the good news of Jesus.

We need people who will answer the call that still echoes after 31 years.

We need people who will say, "*I will go!*"



Rick Kajiura,
Office of
Adventist
Mission



Reach the World: I Will Go is the Seventh-day Adventist Church's strategic plan for 2020 to 2025. It's a rallying cry to all members to fulfill the Great Commission, inspiring and equipping them to use their God-given spiritual gifts in witness and service to Christ. I Will Go outlines specific objectives and ways to accomplish this task. Explore the I Will Go plan at IWillGO2020.org and find your place in this global movement!



Watch "The Echoing Call" at **m360.tv/s2047**.



Seeds Planted, Lives Changed

When we're asked to share a testimony or a special experience with God, we often think about something extraordinary. We're used to estimating the level of success in numbers: programs held, events organized, books sold, or people baptized. But have you ever thought about seeds planted and lives changed because God put you in a particular place at a particular time?

My wife, Kseniia, and I served as volunteer missionaries for three years on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. We lived and worked in Paphos, a city on the southwest coast where the apostles Paul and Barnabas preached in biblical times. Paphos has a population of more than one million and only 100 some Adventists. Every soul is precious because it takes a lot of effort and time to reach people.

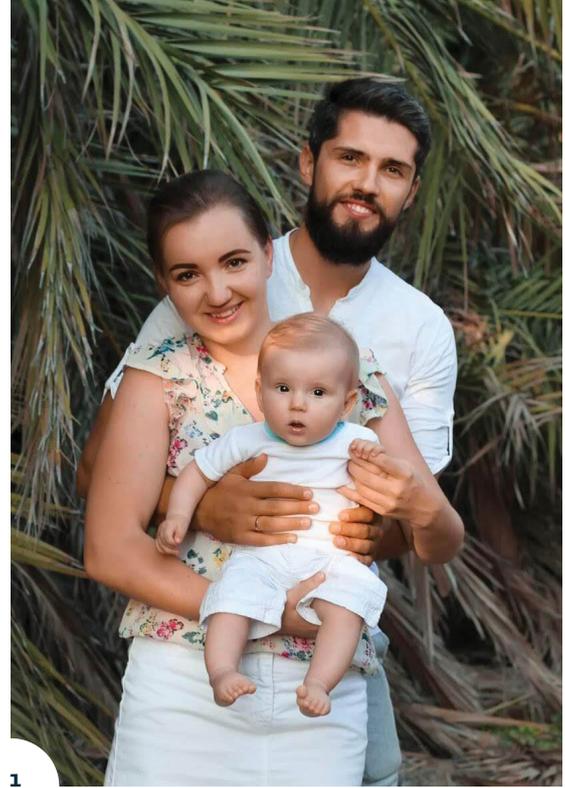
Two years before we went to Cyprus, a man named Leonidas began attending a home church in Paphos. He liked what he heard and started coming whenever he had time. Later, after he married, his wife Katerina joined him for Sabbath worship.

Unfortunately, Satan doesn't like it when people come to God, so he created circumstances that discouraged the couple from attending anymore. But the church members didn't forget them. They prayed earnestly that Leonidas and Katerina would return someday.

Several people had been baptized as the result of the ministry of the home church. It was to disciple these new believers and share God's love with more people in Paphos that Kseniia and I accepted a call to start and lead an urban center of influence.

One of the first things we decided to do at the center was offer free English classes to help people and make new friends. One day, a man contacted us for information about the classes. It turned out to be Leonidas! He wanted Katerina to attend the lessons.

Leonidas accompanied Katerina on the first day of class, and after the lesson, he asked me a



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few tricky questions. It was like he was testing me. So you can imagine how surprised I was when he said, "We used to attend an Adventist group. I was told you came here to take care of the church and serve people. I respect the teaching of this church. Can you come to our house to give Katerina and me Bible studies?"

Kseniia and I were thrilled to give Leonidas and Katerina Bible studies, and as we did, the four of us became good friends. Their experience of coming to Jesus is a special story to us because we



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Originally from Ukraine, **Pastor Bogdan and Kseniia Osadchuk** served three years as volunteers in Cyprus, leading an urban center of influence and planting a church.

saw God working in their hearts in a miraculous way. Leonidas was the first to join the meetings, but then God worked through Katerina to help her husband grow in Christ. We know for sure that a heart that was “rocky ground” can become “good soil” (Matthew 13). Nothing is impossible for our almighty God if we let Him use us as His instruments.

The most important lesson we’ve learned working with people is that we never know how far our efforts can reach. Sometimes it’s tempting to feel disappointed because we think we’re not doing a good job sharing Jesus. But we should never feel that what we’re doing is of no value because only God knows people’s hearts. He is always there to strengthen, support, and guide us, putting us in just the right place at just the right time to touch a life for Jesus. The only thing required of us is to work and trust.

It’s been five months since we left Cyprus, but we still keep in touch with the church members, including Katerina and Leonidas. What joy it has brought to our hearts to learn that they are taking the lead in organizing the church plant’s ministries and events!

- 1 The Osadchuk family in Cyprus
- 2 Leonidas holding his daughter during a baby dedication ceremony led by Pastor Osadchuk
- 3 Vacation Bible School, summer 2020
- 4 The Osadchuks’ church plant in Cyprus with members from more than 15 countries



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service

If you're interested in being a volunteer, visit AdventistVolunteers.org.



Watch video stories about Adventist Volunteer Service missionaries at m360.tv/avs.

3



4





Aya's House of Kids



1



Ricky Oliveras,
Office of
Adventist
Mission

Aya wanted to create a fun and safe space for kids in Tokyo, so about two years ago, she started hosting children in her home at least twice a week. They play, talk, eat, and learn about God. And for many of the children, this is where they hear about Jesus for the first time!

The challenge of spreading the gospel in one of the world's largest cities is intimidating. To reach everyone in Tokyo, every church member here would have to minister to about 10,000 people!

So each person who walks through Aya's door is a blessing. The house sits next to a beautiful park

where kids can play and easily visit Aya's home. The bottom level is an open space, perfect for their events. But this space is more than just a place to get together. It's a space where kids can just be kids.

Many of the children were bullied at school or felt as if they didn't belong. Here, they feel safe enough to open up. In some cases, this is the only place where they aren't judged or criticized for sharing their problems and feelings. They go to Aya for mentorship and to ask for advice.

This all started two years ago when Aya felt a need for something more than her daily routine. She visited a mothers support group, and someone in the group recommended that Aya connect with another woman named Sachiko. The two quickly became friends. Sachiko brought her kids to Aya's home, and they made it a regular event.

"The second week, third week, fourth week, the kids were coming to play," Aya says. "Then other kids started showing up. We didn't advertise at all. Eventually, a lot of kids came, and we were meeting in my tiny home."

Each time, the kids played, and Sachiko and Aya shared something from the Bible with them. Aya contacted the parents to let them know where their kids were and what was happening.

Sachiko and Aya started renting a community hall four times a month, but they wanted to meet twice as often as that. So Aya prayed for God to provide a new meeting place. She was also praying for a new home since her apartment contract was ending.

One day, she walked by a house for sale but thought it would be impossible to buy it because real estate in Tokyo is so expensive. But Aya's husband came home one day with some good



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news. He told her that his new job would allow them to afford the home they wanted to use for ministry!

“This was God’s voice speaking to me,” Aya says. “The location was good, the money was taken care of, and God was providing everything.”

Since then, Aya has dedicated the space to serving her community. She loves the families who gather in her home, but she knows the work doesn’t end here.

Millions of people who live in Tokyo are largely unreached. How will we ever reach them? Visit m360.tv/s2034 and discover how you can be part of Mission Unusual Tokyo!



Check out Aya’s House of Kids at m360.tv/s21111.

- 1 Aya, center, loves to tell children and their parents about Jesus
- 2 Aki, left, learning to skateboard
- 3 Games are a great way for the children to have fun, exercise, and connect socially
- 4 The children love Aya’s delicious, healthy food





Building Gers for Eternity

1

Have you ever built a house? Apart from professionals in the construction field, I would venture to say the answer is “no.” How about a tree house? My attempt to build a two-story tree house when I was 10 failed miserably when the second floor collapsed onto the first—it was a good thing I was sitting on the second floor when that happened. How about a tent? Not the throw-in-the-air pop-up style tent, but a complex one with all kinds of connecting rods and ties and stakes? A Mongolian *ger* probably most closely resembles an elaborate semipermanent tent.



Originally from the United States, Joanne Kim (née Park) is the education and development director of the Mongolia Mission. She was an Adventist Frontier Missions pioneer missionary to Mongolia (1992–1998) and helped plant the first Adventist church in the nation’s capital, Ulaanbaatar. She was called back to Mongolia in 2017 to promote Adventist education in the establishment of an international academy. It is part of the Gateway Project urban center of influence, which also includes a vocational school, an agriculture center, a wellness center, and a Mongolian cultural and recreation center.

The Mongolian *ger* is a masterpiece of design and assembly. The same concept has been used for millennia, with very few modifications. The basic building blocks consist of *modon shal*, the wooden floor; *khana*, the walls; *toone*, the crown or ring; *ohn*, the wooden poles; and *dehver*, the felt covering.

Assembling and disassembling a *ger*, even for newbies like me (with a little local help), takes only a few hours. The number of lattice wall sections determines the size of the *ger*. *Gers* can have anywhere from 3 to 12 *khana*, but the average Mongolian *ger* has 5, which provides roughly 270 to 323 square feet (25 to 30 square meters) of living space.

These *gers*, constructed without rebar, concrete, or even a single nail, are made entirely of organic materials: wooden lattice walls, beams, and poles along with animal felts and rawhide ties. They don’t seem like they would be very sturdy, but *gers* can withstand howling desert storms, rain, hail, and whiteout blizzards, as long as they are built correctly.

Proper assembly of the walls, attachment to the crown, and secure fastening of the leather ties are crucial to the overall soundness of a *ger*. I liken it to our Christian lives: the lattice walls are the biblical tenets that form the core structure of our relationship with God. The rods that attach us to the Crown (our Father) are our earnest prayers to stay connected. And the secure fastening of the leather knots is the Holy Spirit’s binding power to keep us connected to the Crown. But none of this matters if the *ger* is not placed on a solid foundation. *Gers* must be built on flat, stable, and solid ground. Likewise, our Christian walk must be built on a strong foundation—and no greater foundation exists than Jesus Christ, our Rock and Salvation.

Just as important as the *ger* is what goes into it. Traditional Mongolian furniture is simple but useful, maximizing the small space, where upward of a dozen family members eat, sleep, work, and



2



3



4

live. The table, chairs, beds, and wardrobes may seem quite humble, but they are skillfully and beautifully made and last for generations. What do we fill our lives with? Cheap, showy, useless, superfluous things and relationships that serve no eternal purpose? Or meaningful, enduring, priceless artifacts of our walk with Jesus?

**“Through wisdom a house is built,
And by understanding it is established;
By knowledge the rooms are filled
With all precious and pleasant riches”**
(Proverbs 24:3, 4, NKJV.)

Even the smallest mini-*gers* (our young children) can be made to withstand all that the world throws at them and stand firm for Christ, as long as they are built well. Building these mini-*gers* (raising a new generation of Adventist Christians in Mongolia) is my current mission. The first Seventh-day Adventists in Mongolia were baptized on October 16, 1993, and the Adventist Church was officially organized on October 4, 1997. Now, nearly 30 years after the three angels’ messages first entered Mongolia, we are blessed with a second and even a third generation of Adventist young people. We want these mini-*gers* to be built properly on the right Foundation, so we’re preparing special education and training facilities for them through Gateway International Education Corporation.

By faith, we have begun construction on the Gateway Project: an important resource for the continued winning of souls in Mongolia. We’ve hit numerous obstacles along the way, not least of which are the delays and hardships caused by the COVID crisis, but we are building on solid ground—both literally and figuratively. So, we push forward, one day at a time—waiting on the Lord and planning how we will fill these *gers* with the knowledge of God’s grace and the warmth of His welcome.



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8



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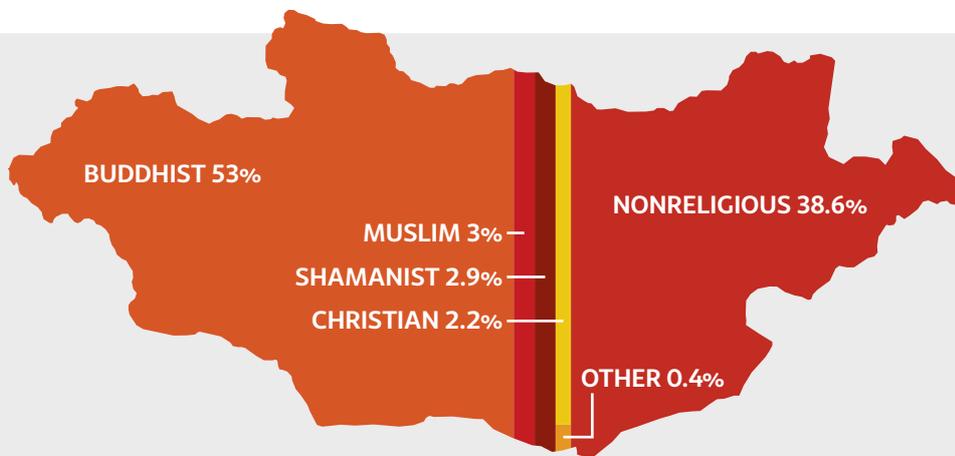
9

- 1 Preparing the crown to be raised
- 2 Steadying the crown as the first rods are attached
- 3 Connecting the last few rods
- 4 Securing the felt insulation
- 5 Covering the felt insulation with the traditional white cover
- 6 Tying the cover in place
- 7 Adding an inner liner to keep dust out
- 8 Simple furnishings for the Gateway guard's ger
- 9 Joanne, with her two youngest children, Jordan and Jaira, in front of the finished ger
- 10 Phase one of the Gateway Project, the grades 6–12 academy

THE NEED IN Mongolia

Population 3,198,913
(July 2021, est.)

*East Asia/Southeast Asia: Mongolia," World Factbook, April 20, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mongolia/#people-and-society>.



Mongolia Fast Facts

- The first Adventist missionaries to Mongolia were Russians who began working there in the 1920s
- In 1991, after the end of the communist regime, missionaries again entered Mongolia, and two years later, the first Adventist Christians were baptized
- Mongolia now has 3,066 members* worshipping in 11 churches, companies, and groups

*Church membership as of 2019. Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, "Global Mission Table 2," in *2020 Annual Statistical Report* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020), 103.

How You Can Help

PRAY: More than half of Mongolia's population of three million people live in its capital, Ulaanbaatar. Please pray that the Gateway Project urban center of influence will have a strong impact on reaching hearts for Jesus in this city.

GIVE: Please further Global Mission work in Mongolia and Southeast Asia by supporting Global Mission pioneers and urban centers of influence in the 10/40 Window at Global-Mission.org/giving.





Mr. Fire



**Mission 360°
is now available
on the issuu app
and issuu.com**

The author serves as a tentmaker in the Middle East and North Africa region. We are withholding her identity to protect her ministry.

You probably wouldn't like Mr. Fire if you met him. That's not his real name, but that's what his name means in English. Many times I've thought, *How appropriate*, because he gets angry easily and yells a lot. I think everyone in our company is scared of him. I used to be, but God opened so many doors to get me a job working for him that I decided his yelling was a mission opportunity!

I had wanted to be a tentmaker for years. When I finished my engineering degree, I decided to send a resume to international companies in the Middle East and wait for God's leading. Eventually, I got a job in a laboratory.

For the next couple of months, I worked alone in a room and had no contact with other employees. "Lord," I prayed, "I didn't come to the Middle East to sit alone in this quiet room. Please give me people to witness to!"

I felt impressed to circulate my resume again, this time to companies outside my career field. I shouldn't have been surprised, then, to find myself standing in the office of the scowling, preoccupied manager of a rug import company. How could I complain to God if He gave me Mr. Fire?

Mr. Fire was serious and straight to the point. The company needed an export manager, the position offered good pay, and I would have plenty of interaction with people. I could imagine that the job would be a real tentmaking mission.

Trying to exude confidence, I answered Mr. Fire's questions as professionally as possible. But the odds of making a good impression were against me. I had no experience in export management and wasn't fluent in the language. Plus, I told him that I wouldn't work on Saturday because it was my worship day. I thought he hadn't heard me until he mumbled, "We don't deal with anything



about religion here.” Then, with little explanation about the job and a warning to work hard, he hired me.

The work environment was like none I had ever experienced. Mr. Fire’s mode of operation was to yell at everyone, convinced it was the only way to be heard and get things done. The employees had followed his lead. I, too, was concerned about being taken seriously, but I was determined to resist the toxic company culture. And my behavior didn’t go unnoticed.

One day, a colleague quietly asked, “Why don’t you yell?” I also noticed that I surprised my coworkers whenever I said “Thank you” for anything. I realized that working hard was my witness, saying thank you was my testimony, and not yelling was my best outreach.

One day, Mr. Fire seemed pleased at the number of orders I had processed that week, though he certainly didn’t say so outright. I took advantage of the relatively positive moment and tried to offhandedly suggest that he would get better work out of Leyla, an employee he frequently yelled at, if he treated her kindly. As usual, he gave no indication that he heard me, so I was surprised when a few days later, Leyla came to me grinning. For the first time in the three years that she had worked there, Mr. Fire had complimented her work.

Over time, I got to know my coworkers better, and we began to encourage each other. It took some of the sting out of the yelling we received. I also began doing better at my job and communicating in the local language. I praised God that we were getting great business results. Mr. Fire seemed to trust me more.

Then one day, he announced that I would represent the company at an annual weekend trade show. I felt honored, but I knew that one of the busiest days of the event would be a Sabbath. “I can’t work from sundown Friday evening to sundown on Saturday evening,” I reminded him.

“You will represent us,” he replied.

“But I will not go if . . .”

“Talk to your priest,” he interrupted. “I do not want to discuss this.”

“This isn’t about my priest’s permission,” I ventured. “It’s about my conviction.” His face froze, then darkened for a moment. I fully expected him to fire me, but for some reason, he didn’t.

I’ve always imagined that I would witness about the Sabbath by explaining why I kept it and what it meant to me. I would answer probing questions and inspire my curious audience to further study. But Mr. Fire brushed off anything I tried to say.

Then, one day, as I pushed back cautiously at one more of his trade show suggestions, he



GLOBAL MISSION

suddenly stopped short, as if he had finally heard something. “So, what do you do on Sabbath?” he asked. I was so shocked, I couldn’t answer immediately. When I regrouped my thoughts, I said something about worship, time with God, Bible study, and encouraging others. I could tell I was referring to things completely foreign to him, but it was the beginning of our ongoing conversations. They were all short, interrupted by a phone call or an appointment, but he began surprising me. Once, in the middle of a discussion on an important transaction, he randomly threw in, “So what happens after death?” He began wishing me a happy Sabbath when I left on Fridays.

The day of the trade show arrived, and I learned, as expected, that some of the meetings were scheduled for Sabbath. As the weekend drew closer, I was surprised when Mr. Fire postponed the most important meetings that were scheduled on Saturday and helped me have the day free. I experienced a wonderful day worshipping the Lord at a nearby church. My heart felt like bursting in praise to God.

At the show the next day, something unexpected happened, giving me more reasons to praise the Lord. During meetings held in our booth, Mr. Fire asked me questions such as “What is in the Bible?” and “Who wrote it?”

At one point, we began talking about prayer. I encouraged Mr. Fire to pray to God as his friend and father. I asked if I could pray with him, and he agreed. “Do you have anything special you would like me to pray for?”

“No,” he responded hesitatingly. “Well, pray for my children.”

I prayed a short, simple prayer for Mr. Fire’s family, mentioning each person by name. I also asked God to bless the company and Mr. Fire in his role as manager. When I opened my eyes at the end, he stood silent. The man who always talked loudly and intimidatingly, always drilling me with questions, was standing there without words. His eyes were brimming with tears. He quietly thanked me and left for a pressing meeting.

There are no words to express what those moments meant to me. I was so thankful. After the show, Mr. Fire and I talked occasionally about spiritual things, and I was able to see a shift in his perspective on Christianity. One day, he introduced me to a customer by saying I was the one who taught him what real Christianity is.

Unfortunately, Mr. Fire left the company a few months ago, and I haven’t seen him in a while. God knows everything, though, and I’m sure the Holy Spirit is still working in his heart. Please pray for Mr. Fire. Pray that the fire in him will be tamed by God and replaced by a burning desire for His grace and love.

Tentmakers

Our church faces tremendous challenges in sharing Jesus in closed countries, countries that have shut their borders to organized churches and traditional missionaries. But a tentmaker can bypass these barriers! Total Employment is the Global Mission tentmaker program.

A tentmaker is an Adventist professional who chooses to follow the example of the apostle Paul. Paul supported his ministry with his tentmaking trade, and as he talked with his customers, he looked for opportunities to lend a listening ear, meet a need, and share the good news of the gospel.

Like Paul, tentmakers mingle with people in the secular workplace while engaging in intentional, personal outreach. They form long-lasting relationships that enable them to touch hearts for Christ in ways they never could if they were official church workers.

Your donations to Global Mission help encourage and equip tentmakers by providing them with much-needed coaching, training, and spiritual support.

Tentmakers are making a difference for Jesus, but they need your help. Please support their ministry with your prayers and donations.

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Is God calling you to be a tentmaker?

Hundreds of Adventist professionals of all types are needed. To learn more, please visit TotalEmployment.org.

Charlotte Cornelia Isbell Blake

The story of the first African-American Seventh-day Adventist to become a licensed physician

Dr. Charlotte (Lottie) Cornelia Isbell Blake served the church as a pioneering physician, hospital administrator, medical missionary, and teacher. The following story was adapted from a longer article in the online Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists (ESDA) at encyclopedia.adventist.org.



Ella Louise Smith Simmons is a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Early life

Lottie Isbell was born on June 10, 1876, to Thomas and Frances (Fannie) Isbell in Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia.¹

She was born in the home of her maternal grandfather, John Charles Diuguid who owned a blacksmith shop and the property adjacent to the Helm House where General Robert E. Lee surrendered to end the US Civil War.² Lottie was the first of eleven children. Six of her siblings died in infancy: Sarah E., Charles, Faith, Hope, Ethel, and Gertrude E. Two of the four who survived into adulthood, Mamie Louise and Raymond David, did not reach age 30. The other two, Thomas Oscar and Veola Garry (Cox), like Lottie, experienced long lives.³

In pursuit of better economic opportunities and to escape the harsh challenges of post-Civil War violence and racial prejudice, the Isbells relocated to Columbus, Ohio, when Lottie was three years old. There Thomas worked as a carpenter, and Fannie worked as a seamstress while caring for their home and growing family.



Lottie Isbell, American Medical Missionary College (AMMC) class of 1902 (Photo courtesy of Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loma Linda University)

The Isbells, who were devout Christians, helped establish the Union Grove Baptist Church in Columbus. Lottie remained Baptist until 1896 when, at age 20, she, her sister Mamie, and their mother joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church along with two of Lottie's aunts.⁴

Advanced education

Lottie had just completed a two-year teachers' training course and was planning to teach in the same public schools in which she had been educated. However, her conversion launched her onto an extraordinary path of medical missionary service. Her new church family recognized her exceptional gifts and intellect, and she accepted their advice to study at the Adventist Nurses' Training School at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan.⁵

After enrolling in 1896, Lottie, along with other students, lived in the home of the well-known physician and head of Battle Creek Sanitarium, John Harvey Kellogg. Kellogg recognized Lottie's potential and mentored her.⁶ When she completed the nursing program with the intent of becoming a missionary nurse somewhere in Africa, he guided her to study medicine at the American Medical Missionary College in Battle Creek (Adventism's

Lottie Isbell, seated at center, American Medical Missionary College (AMMC) class of 1902 in Battle Creek Sanitarium Laboratory (Photo courtesy of Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loma Linda University)



first medical school, a forerunner to Loma Linda University in California). Lottie followed his advice and graduated at the top of her class in 1902.⁷ Thus, she became the first African-American Seventh-day Adventist to become a degreed medical doctor.⁸

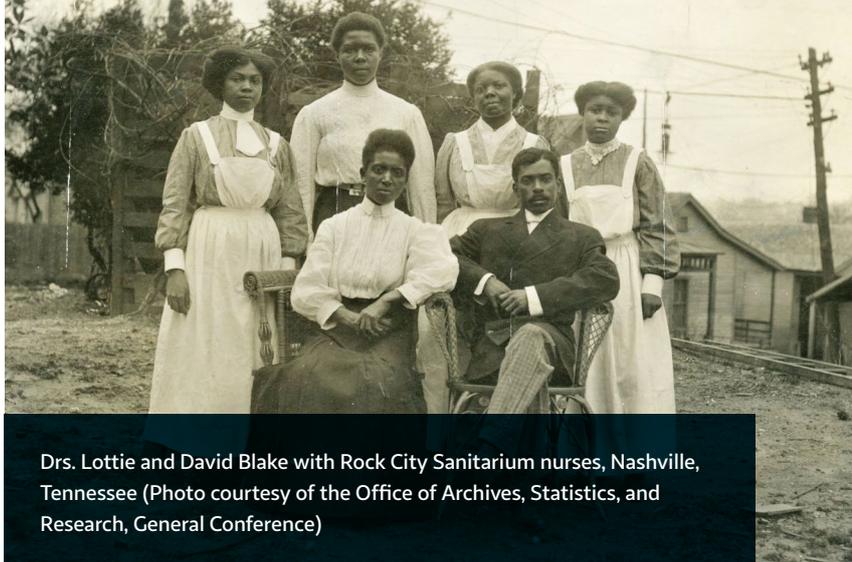
Entry into medical ministry

Dr. Kellogg advised Dr. Isbell to give up her aspirations for mission service in Africa and instead practice medicine and establish a sanitarium and nurses' training center for blacks in the southern United States. Once again, she followed his advice. She accepted a call to serve as the director of the Rock City Sanitarium in Nashville, Tennessee, founded in 1901.⁹ The well-informed, sophisticated black community did not readily accept the natural remedies offered by Dr. Isbell. Theirs was an academic community, and they had become accustomed to what they felt were the more advanced approaches to medicine practiced at the Meharry Medical College, also located in Nashville. They labeled Dr. Isbell's hydrotherapy disdainfully as "rag treatments."¹⁰

In the face of this rejection, Dr. Isbell moved her treatment rooms to the Hillcrest community just north of Nashville, hoping the rural population would be more receptive to her natural approaches to medicine. Instead, she met the same resistance as her white male counterpart, Dr. Louis A. Hansen, who offered natural remedies to white populations in the Nashville area. Nevertheless, Dr. Isbell's labor was not in vain. Her Rock City Sanitarium was the forerunner of the Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital, the first black Seventh-day Adventist medical facility in that region. Nellie H. Druillard, whose leadership and philanthropy brought new life to the institution in 1927, turned it over to the General Conference in 1935. It was expanded into a modern hospital that first served black residents and later all residents of the Nashville metropolitan area until its closing in 1983.¹¹

In 1903, because of the resistance and the fact that she was not able to establish a nursing school for blacks in Nashville, Dr. Isbell accepted a call to Alabama to serve as resident physician at the Oakwood Manual Training School (now Oakwood University) near Huntsville. An epidemic had broken out among the orphans who resided at the Oakwood school, and Dr. Isbell made the seriously ill children her immediate priority. She also served in treatment rooms run by a former Battle Creek nursing school classmate in Birmingham, 101 miles (162.5 kilometers) from Huntsville.¹²

In 1905, Dr. Isbell realized a long-cherished dream when she opened a nurses' training program at Oakwood that has continued to the present.¹³ She is recognized as the first black teacher



Drs. Lottie and David Blake with Rock City Sanitarium nurses, Nashville, Tennessee (Photo courtesy of the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference)

and the first with a terminal, doctoral-level degree to serve at Oakwood.¹⁴

Dr. Isbell's initiation into the medical profession would likely have been too challenging for a less determined individual. One author, who characterized her as born to triumph, shared an incident that attests to her tenacity and resilience:

"At the turn of the century in the deep South, a radiant, confident, brown-skinned young lady of 28 years enters a room filled with all white males. A crushing silence descends. Without acknowledging their stares, Dr. Lottie Isbell, a practicing physician for 2 years, takes her seat and begins to write her exam. Once the men overcome their shock of seeing a Black woman physician, they make every effort to let her know she is [not] welcome. She is treated like an alien from outerspace. No one dares sit beside her or utter a word to her.

"The next morning the proctor announces that Dr. Lottie Isbell scored a perfect paper. Suddenly, the doctors rush to her desk and each one tries to sit as close to the brilliant young physician as possible. The doctors openly copy her answers word for [word]. The year was 1904. Dr. Lottie Isbell had scored another triumph. She was now a licensed physician for the State of Alabama."¹⁵

Balancing medicine, mission work, and family

It was during these career-formative years that Dr. Isbell met Pastor David Emanuel Blake. Born in Jamaica on August 24, 1877, he became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1901 and immigrated to South Lancaster, Massachusetts, to study for pastoral ministry at the South Lancaster Academy (later Atlantic Union College). Upon graduation, he entered the ministry in Florida in 1905,¹⁶ and he and Charlotte were united in marriage on September 18, 1907.¹⁷

With encouragement from church leaders, the new couple moved to Nashville, where Lottie re-established the Rock City Sanitarium



Dr. Lottie Blake (Photo courtesy of Columbia Union Visitor, March 10, 1977)

and David pastored a church while studying medicine at the Meharry Medical College. Additionally, David served with Lottie, who had been convinced to reopen treatment rooms for natural remedies at the sanitarium. They worked there until 1912, when David graduated from Meharry as a physician. Upon his graduation, the Blake family moved to Columbus, Ohio, where David organized a small group of believers into what grew into the current Columbus Ephesus Church, and both he and Lottie practiced medicine.¹⁸

Although life in Columbus was comfortable, the Blakes accepted a call to the mission field. In early 1913, David left

Columbus to begin mission work in Panama and establish a home for his young family in the town of Empire.¹⁹ By that time, the Blakes had three daughters, Frances Elizabeth, Sarah Katherine, and Marcia Louise. Later that same year, Lottie and the girls joined David, and soon after, their fourth daughter, Alice Evelyn, was born. Four years later, their fifth child, a son, David, was also born in Panama. For the next four years, the two physicians served as self-supporting medical missionaries in the Canal Zone, Panama. David practiced medicine and engaged in evangelism from the small church they raised up, and Lottie practiced medicine while devoting most of her time to the care and education of their five children. For a while, Lottie also taught the children of several wealthy families in her little school.²⁰

Just after the only hospital in Colón closed due to the completion of the canal in 1913, the Blakes secured a lease on 12 rooms for their medical work in a large building in Cristóbal, the American settlement adjacent to Colón. Then they acquired much-needed medical equipment through the Isthmian Canal Commission from that same hospital closing.²¹ The needs for medical care were great, and the Blakes' services were well received. However, because conditions in Panama took a toll on the family's health, with all members suffering from malaria at some point, they decided to move to another location.

The Blakes next went to serve in Port au Prince, Haiti, where they were again well received in providing medical care while raising up another church.²² However, with five children to care for, they soon were no longer financially able to sustain their ministries. In May 1916, General

Conference leaders responded to their plight and sought to encourage the physician team in their self-supporting work with their vote of an appropriation of \$200 for church and school buildings and a grant-in-aid of \$150 to Dr. David Blake for establishing mission work in Cape Haitien.²³ Soon, though, due to public agitation from revolutions and the US Marine Corps occupation of the nation, and finally, more bouts with malaria, the Blakes moved their family to Charlestown, West Virginia, to establish another medical practice for the two.²⁴

Their plan was to work in Charlestown for a while and then go to South America. However, this was not to be. Before they could begin work in Charlestown, David suffered a severe chill after venturing into the cold rain, developed pneumonia, and died one week later on October 31, 1917. Lottie was left to raise the five children and carry on the medical work alone.

After struggling for several months to provide for her children, Dr. Blake applied for and, on April 28, 1918, was granted eight dollars per week in temporary sustentation funds from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At that time, the four children for whom she was most concerned were ages 3, 6, 8, and 10. Alice, age 5, had gone to live in Pennsylvania with a Seventh-day Adventist aunt. The other four children were taken to live with other family members. To Dr. Blake's chagrin, these family members, who had been practicing Seventh-day Adventists, had become vexed by newly imposed segregation policies or practices in Adventist congregations and had left the church. Although Dr. Blake experienced some of the same vexations, she remained loyal to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and was adamant that her children be raised Adventist.²⁵

In her application for sustentation, Dr. Blake indicated the family had no home of their own. She declared: "My children are now with my parents, not Adventists. I hope to secure such help that I can have them under my supervision and yet be free to do enough medical work to support, as soon as possible."²⁶

In 1920, Dr. Blake returned to full-time medical practice in Charlestown, West Virginia, and remained there for five years. At the end of this period, she moved back to Columbus, where she reunited with her children and practiced medicine for 15 years.²⁷

Finally, Dr. Blake moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she practiced medicine from 1935 to 1957.²⁸ For a portion of that time, she partnered with Dr. Stark O. Cherry before his death in 1945.²⁹ She continued the practice alone and specialized in women's and children's medicine. However, she is acclaimed in the medical world for her discovery of a cure for "Smokey City" pneumonia, a serious

respiratory illness caused by the polluted air that was characteristic of Pittsburgh and other large cities at that time.³⁰

Retirement and final years

Dr. Blake retired at the age of 81 and was honored by the American Medical Association for more than 50 years of medical practice.³¹ Throughout her lifetime of professional service, she maintained faithful service to the local church as choir director, treasurer, and Sabbath School teacher. She continued her ministry even in her retirement years by giving Bible studies and distributing religious literature. Toward the end of her life, she settled with her daughter Alice Evelyn Blake Brantley in Huntsville, Alabama, and died there on November 16, 1976, at the age of 100.³²

Legacy

Dr. Charlotte Isbell Blake left a legacy of faith, loyalty, stamina, professionalism, intellectual prowess, and humility to her church and her family. Her legacy is evidenced through her many relatives and mentees who were inspired by her service and have themselves given their gifts and talents to the church as medical professionals, missionaries, educators, and church leaders.

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MAURITANIA



The Water Bottle House



Kimi-Roux James is the media relations manager for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

Sweat trickled down the builders' faces as they dug their shovels into the wheelbarrow. Most days it rained, but that particular day was dry and stifling.

They were mixing cement, sand, and seashells to form a concrete-like substance to build a house. The main ingredient would be plastic water bottles.

No one was more excited to live in the house than Abdallahi, a man affected by leprosy, who would be its first occupant, along with his family.

"I live in a shanty with my wife and daughters built from bits of tin roofing I found on the street," said Abdallahi as he watched the men work. "We have a latrine that's a hole in the ground with an old tire on the edge. We have very little privacy, and my wife hangs pieces of cloth to cover the open spaces."

Abdallahi's face beamed with excitement as he envisioned what his life would be like living in a new house with a roof.

Economic Hardship

Decent housing is hard to find for anyone living in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, which is located on the coast of West Africa. Once a small fishing village in the 1950s, Nouakchott blossomed over decades, establishing itself with mosques, government buildings, and street markets. Severe

drought since the 1970s, however, increased desertification and displaced a vast number of Mauritians.

Among the displaced are people affected by leprosy, who are among the very poor; many can be spotted hiding in street corners covering their faces. A number of them aren't able to use their hands or have had their legs amputated.

Nouakchott, which has mostly an Arabic-dominated culture that believes in helping those less fortunate, allows the poor and those who are disabled and can't work to support their families by begging on the streets.

"Most people affected by leprosy and their families sleep in their clothes, often wearing those same clothes for weeks," said Dr. Bonnie Head, programs director for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Mauritania. "A majority of those affected by leprosy live in a wooden building called a *brag* made of boards. It's small enough to fit up to six people and has a door. Others live in an *umbar*, or a low tent-roofed covering with woven wire sides."

Dr. Head added that though these makeshift shelters provide some relief, the best solution is a one-room concrete structure attached to an *umbar* to protect against thieves, rain, the hot sun, and cold nights.

Building a Foundation

"ADRA wanted to build houses that gave people like Abdallahi a roof over their heads and not only build houses, but ones that were environmentally friendly," said Dr. Head.

Abdallahi was a member of the Mauritanian Association for the Aid of Persons Handicapped by Leprosy and introduced ADRA to Bacar, the association's president.

"I had difficulty obtaining work because of my leg," Abdallahi recalled. "For years, I couldn't feel my leg. I went to doctors, but no one could help me. In 2006, Bacar found me and helped me get treatment."



In 2018, with Bacar's help, ADRA received a grant to build one-room houses for three families. ADRA began operations on the pilot project to build the first house, but plastic water bottles were needed.

Winning Them Over

ADRA held programs at schools in upscale areas of town to sensitize the community to the detrimental effects of plastic waste in the environment. There was a growing trash problem covering acres of land.

"Water bottles are a large contributor to the volume of trash we have in Mauritania," said Dr. Head. "The bottles create space for pockets of water from rain or condensation, especially in the rainy season, forming an environment for mosquitoes to grow, which can spur an infestation of malaria and dengue diseases. Additionally, studies show that there is an ongoing danger of microplastics in the food that come from plastic breakdown in the soil."

With support from the local schools, ADRA collected more than 8,000 water bottles, most of which were purchased from businesses that collect, wash, and dry them. ADRA eventually gathered enough bottles to start construction.

The Work Begins

"We didn't have anyone on our team who built homes and decided to hire a consultant named Tateh," Dr. Head said. "He was known for building plastic bottle houses in a neighboring country."

Tateh spent days at ADRA's main office teaching the team about home construction and trained the builders assigned to the house project.

The builders filled each water bottle with sand. They then carefully aligned each water bottle next to another until the bottles completely covered the room. Lastly, they smeared the bottles with concrete to seal them in place.

"The final appearance of the house is the same as houses built with concrete blocks, an important factor in community acceptance," said Dr. Head.

Within a month, the first house was complete, and Abdallahi and his family moved into their new home.

A Fresh Start

Abdallahi and his wife looked on as their three girls, Hindu, Minetou, and Maimouna, played with each other.

"Who would have known we would be here today?" Abdallahi said. "I never thought I'd see this day."

The family also has three additional girls, who belong to relatives, living with them. The new home has enough space to accommodate the entire household.

Electricity was added to Abdallahi's home for telephone charging and to watch television. He even boasts about the latrine that was installed.



The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is the global humanitarian organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through an international network, ADRA delivers relief and development assistance to individuals in more than 118 countries. To learn more about ADRA, visit ADRA.org.

To watch ADRA mission stories, visit m360.tv/adra.

Thank you for supporting ADRA through your weekly mission offering given during Sabbath School or online at giving.AdventistMission.org!



"The latrine is easy to keep clean, has a tile floor, and doesn't smell. Thanks to the generosity of ADRA, we now have a solidly constructed home, safe from the elements," Abdallahi said as he held back tears. "I now have the same dignity as even the president."

- 1 Abdallahi points to a section of exposed plastic bottles that were used to create his home
- 2 Progress is made on the foundation of a house while neighborhood children and ADRA's country director, Andre Saenz, wearing a white T-shirt, showcase the water bottles being used
- 3 Packed bags of water bottles ready to be placed in a house
- 4 Masons learn techniques for building with water bottles



Surprise Gifts Over the Fence



Story by
Andrew McChesney,
Office of
Adventist
Mission



Animation by
Diogo Godoy

One day, 13-year-old Jared read about a boy named Wilford who liked to surprise people with gifts. He wrapped up gifts, tied them to a rope, and lowered them over people's walls. Then he ran and hid.

Jared thought it would be fun to do the same thing in his city, Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. He asked his mom for permission to put gifts in old tissue boxes.

"What kind of gifts?" she asked.

"Some toys and whatever else I can find,"

Jared said.

His mom liked the idea. Jared and his younger brother, Sam, had toy cars and Legos that they had brought along when their family moved from Argentina to serve as volunteers in Kyrgyzstan. Many neighborhood boys were poor and didn't have toys.

Jared told a school friend Kamil about the plan. "Let's put some toys in boxes and throw them over walls," he said.

Kamil grinned in excitement. He thought it was a great idea, and he wanted to help, even though he didn't have any toys to give away.

The boys took two tissue boxes and filled them with Legos, toy cars, scarves, and bars of soap. Getting on their bikes, they rode to Kamil's

neighborhood and chose two houses at random. Jared hurled the first box over one fence, and Kamil threw his over the other fence. Quickly, the boys pedaled away. At Jared's house, they laughed as they imagined the surprise of the children who had received the gifts.

Sam, Jared's brother, overheard the laughter. "Can I join you next time?" he asked.

A few days later, the three boys got together to prepare more gifts. They invited another boy from school, Kozimbek, to join them. The boys filled two shoeboxes, two empty tissue boxes, and two plastic bags with a variety of toys, scarves, and soap. Loading the boxes on their bikes, they set off in search of unsuspecting homes. After a few minutes, Jared saw a house surrounded by a fence. The yard was filled with trees. "Sam," he said, "throw your bag into that yard."

Sam tossed the bag over the fence, and it landed in the lower branches of a tree.

"Quick, do something!" Sam squealed.

Kamil was the tallest, so he leaped over the fence. Reaching up into the branches, he grabbed the bag and dropped it on the grass. "Let's go before anyone sees us!" he shouted.

The boys raced away on their bikes.

After throwing four more gifts over fences, the boys had one box left. Jared spotted a house with a large metal gate. "Quick, push the gift under the gate," he told Kozimbek.

As soon as Kozimbek pushed the box under the gate, someone yelled, "Why are you putting garbage in my yard?"





3



4



5



6

As the boys quickly rode away, they heard the voice suddenly exclaim from behind the gate, "This isn't garbage. It's a gift!"

During family worship that evening, Jared and Sam excitedly told their parents about what had happened. Their dad was pleased. He led the family in prayer for all the people who had received the gifts.

Jared and Sam are still throwing surprise boxes over people's fences. No one knows that they are responsible, and that's how they want it!

Part of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2017 helped construct a gymnasium at Jared and Sam's school in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. Thank you for supporting Adventist education through your mission offerings collected during Sabbath School or given online at giving.AdventistMission.org.

- 1 Jared hurls a box over a fence
- 2 Jared and Kamil laugh as they imagine the surprise of the children who had received the gifts

- 3 Kamil, Jared, Sam, and Kozimbek prepare more gifts
- 4 The boys set off in search of unsuspecting homes
- 5 During family worship, Jared and Sam tell their parents about their adventure
- 6 Jared, right, and Sam prepare surprise gifts in their home in Kyrgyzstan

More Children's Mission Stories

This story and others like it can be found in the *Children's Mission* quarterly for second quarter 2021 at adventistmission.org/mq-children.



Watch this story at [m360.tv/s2118!](http://m360.tv/s2118)



Not Here Just to Teach

The following story was written by a volunteer working in the Middle East North Africa region. We've withheld her identity to protect her ministry and the Adventist work there.

My calling to the mission field was a little bit crazy! I had a career in marketing and only a little experience in childhood education. Yet God led me from Brazil to work as a preschool teacher in one of the largest, most crowded, ancient cities in the Arabic world.

It started when I noticed a job posting on Facebook for an English-speaking person to work at a preschool in the Middle East. I had been wanting to do mission service, and although I'd never considered working in that part of the world, I began to get excited.

Once I arrived, it didn't take me long to realize that I loved everything about the place. There's always something interesting to see—structures that are thousands of years old, beautiful beaches, and some of the best museums in the world. Even the food is amazing!

We started the preschool with only three children, but as time went by, we grew and grew.

One day as I was leaving for an appointment, a woman stopped me on the street and asked in English, "Do you know if there's a preschool around here?" I always needed a translator when I talked to the parents, so I was thrilled to hear her speak English.

"God has directed you to the right person!" I told her. I invited her to visit our preschool, and she eagerly accepted my invitation. Like many parents,

she was pleased with what she saw and immediately enrolled her son. He proved to be such a blessing to us. And so did she. She encouraged me in my work and always gave me nice compliments.

We always started each day at the preschool by asking the children, "Who's happy today? Who loves the preschool? Who loves God?" After a resounding "Me! Me!" we prayed together, inviting God to be with us throughout the day. We also shared stories that helped the children understand that God can listen to them and answer their prayers.

One thing I've found very interesting while serving at the preschool is that several people have told me that I wasn't there just to teach. Well, I didn't think I'd come just to teach. I appreciated the opportunity to improve my English and social skills and learn how to help children grasp new concepts. But as time went on, I began to believe there was something to what these people were saying. God has opened opportunities for me to share His love in multiple ways outside the classroom. For example, I've met women who were in abusive relationships, and I was the only one in their lives who could offer help.

Unfortunately, after such a meaningful start to the school year, we had to shut down most of our operations due to the coronavirus. Our students had to stay home with their families to be safe. I hated being separated from them. I would call them on the phone to try to help them with their studies and assure them that I was still there to support them. As I heard their little voices saying how much they missed the preschool and me, it broke my heart. We immediately began searching for online resources we could use so they could see us again and be connected with us. And it happened! Four-year-olds also had Zoom meetings!

Looking for an alternative way to teach them, we worked with other preschools to find easy-to-use online programs. While it was difficult for many teachers to record and edit videos, my marketing skills proved useful to me in using online platforms to teach. I developed new abilities as well and was very grateful for these experiences.

We had opened the preschool, established an effective learning program, and built relationships with the parents and connected them with services to help them in times of need. I'm really thankful to God for bringing me here to do more than just teach!



If you're interested in being a volunteer, visit AdventistVolunteers.org.



Watch video stories about Adventist Volunteer Service missionaries at m360.tv/avs.



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