



ADVENTIST Review

**We Still Care,
Don't We?**

A special issue on Global Mission

Global Mission Is...

PAST OUR COMFORT ZONES

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded on mission, lives by mission, and must continue to be driven by mission. However, to be driven by mission goes against our sinful selfish natures. We prefer to take care of ourselves individually and collectively. And as groups (congregations, organizations, institutions) we can justify doing good things for ourselves even if the consequence is depriving others of hearing of the Lord's soon return. So a by-product of the Lord's mandate to take the gospel to the world is that it forces us to confront our own selfish natures and to submit our very beings, opinions, and resources in "total commitment to God."



We're not called merely to consolidate and maintain the status quo, to build bigger and nicer churches and institutions, for a church that looks only inward dies. Global Mission raises our sights. It forces us to look beyond our own wants and needs; it pushes past our comfort zones, past our established institutions and plans, and into unentered areas. It focuses our resources and energies on the most vital thing in all the world—reaching unreached people for Jesus. His love compels us to go into all the world, with His authority (Matt. 28:18-20). Nothing can stand in the way except us.

—Robert S. Folkenberg, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

HANGING IN THE IMBALANCE

Eighty-nine percent of Seventh-day Adventists live in countries with only 23 percent of the world's population. Eleven percent of Seventh-day Adventists live among the remaining 77 percent of the world's people and need our support to reach out to their largely Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and secular neighbors.

TELL ME MORE

If you would like to hear more about the challenges and successes of Global Mission's frontline work, make sure you receive regular Global Mission newsletters. Simply phone 1-800-648-5824 and leave your name and address. Or write to Global Mission, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.

KEEP IT BURNING

Mother Teresa has remarked, "Let us not love in words, but let us love until it hurts." Because He loves us, Jesus endured unimaginable pain as He was dying on the cross. Today it's our turn to love one another. We have each been given a lighted lamp, and it's for us to keep it burning with the oil of love, even if it means sacrifice. I'm proud to be part of a global mission that seeks to bring the light of God's love to places where there are no Adventists.



—Bernadine Delafield, donor response manager, Global Mission

GOD HAS A PLAN

The primary goal of Global Mission is to present Christ to people with no hope. Have you ever walked in the shadow of the massive cities of the world and asked God "Where is hope?" Be comforted. God has a plan to offer salvation to every person. He lets us decide whether we want to be part of His plan. Sharing Christ's love to a lost world must remain the central business of the church.

—Mike Ryan, director, Global Mission



NEW VISIONS

The Global Mission Pioneer program has helped my people see new visions and directions. People who were formerly nomads are now living in communities that enable them to work together. Most important, they now have the hope of the second coming of Jesus, which has transformed their lives.—Pastor Baxton Ri'imana (right), president of the Malaita Mission, Solomon Islands, where nearly 1,000 people have become Adventists through the work of Global Mission pioneers.

A DUAL CHALLENGE

There's a revitalization of evangelism in North America. I'm referring not only to NET '95 and NET '96, but also to local churches taking seriously the gospel commission to share the message that Jesus is coming soon.



Christ issued a dual challenge to His church—to reach the world and to reach our own neighborhoods (Acts 1:8). As we become involved around the world, we also become energized to meet the challenge of our own neighborhood and community. Ellen White calls it “reflex” action. It has happened repeatedly. As churches and conferences engage in evangelism in Russia, South Africa, and many other places, their vision for their own local evangelistic opportunities also expands.

Supporting Global Mission is supporting God's work. A clear vision of our mission includes work to share the gospel in our neighborhoods and throughout the world.

—Alfred C. McClure, president, North American Division

PROCLAIM HIM KING

We firmly believe God desires us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all people. So in our 80s we go—or rather, our resources go. It's a great privilege to proclaim Him king and have the world acknowledge Him.

—Ruth and Charles Towne, Ladysmith, Wisconsin



DIVINELY ORDAINED

“Looking into the faces of Global Mission pioneers in India last month, I wondered whether these young volunteers

(some of them just 18 years old), not very educated, could start a congregation in unentered areas. But when some of the veteran pioneers gave reports of their successful work, it became clear that God was using them in a mighty way. The Global Mission program is simple, economic, and highly successful. It must surely be divinely ordained.”

—Hephzi Ohal, Silver Spring, Maryland.



PEACE AND HOPE



Global Mission has a mission of peace, hope, and love for the hearts of thousands who are weary, troubled, and in despair. We can all contribute and

help someone believe in God through our love.

—Alicia Robertson, Maryland

Global Mission Isn't . . .

numbers, statistics, and baptismal totals. God's love compels Global Mission's wholistic, compassion-driven approach to give people hope, not only for the present, but for eternity. This special edition of the *Review* takes you to the heart of Global Mission: reaching the unreached with hope. You'll share the joy of thousands of lives being changed through your prayers, financial support, and personal involvement. You'll confront the many challenges that remain.

Contents

- 2 Global Mission Is . . .**
- 4 Seven Years of Plenty**
BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON
- 6 Challenged by Indifference**
BY PETER ROENNFELDT
- 10 What on Earth Are We Doing?**
BY BRONWYN REID
- 14 Going Against the Grain**
BY ANDY NASH
- 18 Pioneering the Gospel**
BY JACKIE ORDELHEIDE SMITH
- 20 The Reluctant Missionary**
BY PAT GUSTIN
- 22 Our World Is His Front Line**
BY FERN BABCOCK
- 25 Confessions of an Almost-Congregationalist**
BY JAMES COFFIN
- 28 A Day in the Life of a Young Pioneer**
BY JACKIE ORDELHEIDE SMITH
- 30 Absolute Essentials**
BY MICHAEL L. RYAN

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Seven Years of Plenty

What began as a dream has become a blueprint for accomplishing the gospel commission.

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

OCTOBER 14, 1986, RIO DE JANEIRO. More than 200 delegates to the church's first-ever Annual Council in South America have completed eight days of business for the world Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now General Conference president Neal C. Wilson comes to the podium to give the final challenge to the council.

"I call upon the church to develop a global strategy for our mission," says Wilson. His words, which come without prior consultation, galvanize the delegates.

"We've only begun to witness what God wants us to do," Wilson continues. "I'm convinced that God wants us to do amazing things. We've got to believe in a finished work. God lays plans for the whole world, and so should we."

He goes on: "We're told that 2.5 billion people have not heard the name of Christ. We have identified approximately 25,000 people groups in the world. Of those, 15,000 groups have never been touched.

"If you were to ask me to show you a strategy for reaching these groups, I couldn't. I'm grateful for the initiative by the

churches. But that's not a global strategy."

Wilson's words cut to the root of Adventism. We are a people of mission, with the entire world our field. From our inception we have been captured, motivated, and energized by the vision of Revelation 14:6, 7—the everlasting gospel going to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people to prepare a people for the second coming of Jesus.

But over the years, as the church spread and grew, we began to lose some of the excitement of the early years. We had more and more institutions to care for, maintenance of the work we had built up. Structures multiplied; bureaucracy increased.

Now, in Rio the church heard a call to return to what we are *really* about—to give mission, especially cutting-edge mission, priority. Instead of being satisfied with an Adventist presence in a city or country, we should think of the diverse cultural and ethnic groups and seek to evangelize them. Instead of focusing on people who are already Christians in countries such as India, we should try to reach Hindus and Muslims. And we should study and pray and work to find ways to bring the good news to the vast populations where Christianity of any stripe so far has hardly made a dent—China, the lands of the Middle East, and secular men and women of the West.

The wheels of the church grind slowly. The challenge from Rio called for a reordering of priorities that would impact lives and budgets. If taken seriously, it would turn the church from doing what is easiest to doing what is hardest.

A think tank set to work. That led to a major meeting,

held at the Cohutta Springs retreat center in Georgia, with international representation. By Annual Council 1989 a well-thought-out plan was ready for a vote. Approved by the council, the plan called for a kickoff following the General Conference session in June of the next year. At that gathering, the world church was asked to buy in through video and print presentations.

Leadership of the world church changed hands during that session: delegates elected Robert S. Folkenberg, a local conference president (Carolina). But Folkenberg had been involved in thinking and planning for Global Strategy all along, and his election diminished the initiative not one whit.

Something else changed in Indianapolis—Global Strategy became Global Mission. During the months leading up to the session, concern had grown that “strategy” suggested too much of a corporation or military approach, whereas “mission” has biblical roots.

So Global Mission began to take shape, first at General Conference headquarters, then around the world. From the outset Folkenberg insisted on structural arrangements that would prevent the new office from becoming absorbed in bureaucracy:

- Global Mission would be set up as a distinct entity. It wouldn't be one more department among many.

- Global Mission would have a service function, encouraging, initiating, and cooperating with other agencies, such as Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Adventist World Radio (AWR).

- Global Mission would have a separate budget, outside of the other departments and services of the General Conference complex.

- Global Mission would focus on new work—the areas of earth unreached by the gospel.

Although I am not directly involved in the work of Global Mission, as principally an enthusiastic



Neal C. Wilson

supporter my perception is that the Global Mission Office handles very carefully the funds it receives. As they receive requests from around the world for funding of new work, they check out projects carefully, allotting funds in portion rather than as block grants, and require careful monitoring.

Global Mission is now seven years along. These have been seven years of plenty. Blessings from the Lord in plenty. Breakthroughs in plenty. New ideas in plenty. Courage in plenty.

Because of these seven years of plenty, the number of unreached people groups of 1 million or more has declined from 2,300 in 1990 to about 1,700 today. More than 11,000 new congregations have been established. A phalanx of volunteers more than 19,000 strong—Global Mission Pioneers—has come into being. Centers for the study of mission to the cities, to Muslims, to Hindus, and to Buddhists have been organized and have developed new approaches.

And beyond the far-off lands—Cambodia and Mongolia and China and Somalia—the church at home has been revitalized. Mission stories are

headline news again. Adventists are thinking mission. The angel of Revelation 14:6, 7 flies high today.

I am proud of Adventist young people like Brad and Cathy Jolly, who five years ago left home to pioneer work in Mongolia. Brad and Cathy went out under the auspices of Adventist Frontier Missions, which works closely with Global Mission. During those years accessions were few, and Brad felt a total failure. But they planted seeds, and two months ago Munkjagel, a well-educated journalist who translated for the Jollys, was baptized. Munkjagel is now studying for the ministry at Andrews University.

Brad today suffers from a potentially fatal disease. But at Munkjagel's baptism he noted that “failure” seems to be the raw material from which God molds victory.

Visit the Global Mission office at the General Conference, and you'll meet a focused, intent group of people. Mike Ryan, the director—if he isn't away on assignment in some remote corner of the earth. Jackie Ordelleide Smith, who used to be part of the *Review* team, but who has gone on to do wonderful things as director of the Global Mission Pioneers program. Gary Krause, recently arrived from Australia to direct communications. A gifted writer, he planned this special issue.

And you will meet Charles Taylor and Don Yost. They retired years ago from leadership posts in the General Conference, but Global Mission is in their blood.

There are others, all part of an effort that the Lord is using for great good. Am I proud of them? You'd better believe it.

Seven years of plenty. In ancient Egypt seven years of famine followed. But not with Global Mission—the best is yet to be. ■

William G. Johnsson is editor of the *Adventist Review*.



Challenged by Indifference

Taking the gospel to a secular society is a challenge we can't ignore.

BY PETER ROENNfeldt

I WAS ARRANGING FOR A CHECK TO BE paid to the Bible society when the young teller behind the counter asked, "How do you spell Bible? B-i-b-a-l?"

"No," I replied, "B-i-b-l-e."

"What's a Bible?"

"It's a book about Jesus Christ," I responded.

"I've heard of him," replied the young woman. "Did he live before or after World War II?"

She had a straight face. It was an honest inquiry. Today a whole generation in the West knows little, if anything, about the Bible or Christianity. As Michael Green and Alister McGrath write, the majority of people in the West are "extraordinarily ignorant of the barest outlines of what Christianity is."¹ These people remain one of the greatest challenges for Global Mission.

Let's face it. The terrible truth is that in the West the church is aging, and more than 90 percent of Westerners are alienated from the church and indifferent to the gospel. If we refuse or neglect to use different styles of witness, the church will be further marginalized in secular societies.

But it's much more than style. It seems that much of what passes for Christianity today is hardly Christian. Too often the church "has been seen to set its face against the causes of freedom, justice, inquiry, and progress."² Traditional forms of the church are increasingly incomprehensible, and Christians aren't seen to be acting Christianly.

Of course, most secular people don't think about Christianity at all. Michael Green puts it bluntly: "It doesn't enter their minds."³ They don't see how it can have anything to do with relationships, the marketplace, or anything that's important in their day-to-day lives.

In Western society the Christian church has become a graveled back road along which fewer are choosing to travel.⁴ However, the processes of secularization haven't erased the need for "something more." Dissatisfied, disillusioned, or unaware of what traditional churches offer, many are turning to New Age and neopagan spiritualities.

Most acknowledge a belief in God, although their understandings are rarely shaped by biblical concepts. Sayings of psychics and prophets preface the chapters of best-selling books. Themes of redemption frame Hollywood movies. God, church, religion, tragedy and suffering, forgiveness, retribution, prophecy, and destiny—in fact, a whole range of spiritual issues and experiences—consume readers and viewers. The gospel of Jesus Christ isn't going out of date—but some forms of the Western church are long past their "sell by" date. For the sake of lost secular people, the church urgently



PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER

needs to learn to share the story of Jesus Christ in language they understand.

Experienced travelers know that simply speaking slowly and shouting louder won't make someone understand English. It's far more productive to learn something of the culture and language (even if only a few words), and then to speak quietly, respectfully, and sensitively.

Christianity as a Second Language

Identifying with the culture and learning the language of our secular society aren't easy. But they are consistent with the incarnational approach of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Adventist Churches for the Unchurched is just one initiative in the highly secularized societies of both the South Pacific and Trans-European divisions that's committed to refocusing existing congregations and planting

new churches using methods of witness and worship that are both biblical and understandable to secular people.

From experience and research with Adventists Churches for the Unchurched, here are six suggestions for what secular people understand.

1. An Embodied Apologetic

The issue isn't "Can Christians *prove* what they believe?" but rather "Can Christians *live* what they believe?" In

Thank God for the Stumblers' Church

BY LEE SYKES

When I think of Southside community church in Brisbane, I feel warm. So much of my life has taken place there—all in the space of two years. It's now my home church. It's the place where I was introduced to God and first felt the closeness of His touch. It was the first place where I was accepted for who I was, where I initiated the most major change in my life.

Coming from a background where the word "church" alluded to stuffy halls and stuffy people, Southside was the perfect tool for showing me the truth and giving my life purpose. I'd been used to wandering aimlessly, and now I had a task. A small task but a worthwhile one. I became part of something big, and for the first time I felt a small bit of pride in myself.

Through the love shown to me, I saw Jesus as a real person rather than this "superhero" that weirdos told me about.

I was shocked to be included in so many facets of this church. Wasn't I a loser? Wasn't I an outsider? They let me into their circle of love and gave me a new direction. Their approach was different. Southside makes the message

easier to communicate and grasp. I attended without fear of being ridiculed by my friends for "going all mushy and holy" on them, because it had such a different atmosphere and fresh approach.

Through Bible study with Pastor Ken, I caught glimpses of God at a more intimate level. These studies awakened a burning passion within me, making me want to help people—like me—come to Jesus. Knowing Him has made my life so unbelievably rich. I want everyone to know that.

This year I came to Avondale College to broaden my knowledge and understanding. I hope that when I graduate God can use me for His work.

I have a group of wonderful, caring people rooting for me in my home church. That's where a piece of my heart will always be, because that's where I first saw God's face. Southside is truly a "stumblers'" church. It's where those who stumble feel comfortable about being helped to stand.



FELLOW TRAVELERS: Lee Sykes (left) and Pastor Ken Houliston share a moment together before Lee's baptism.

Lee Sykes is studying theology at Avondale College, Cooranbong, Australia. An "unchurched" 19-year-old "living a very rough life," he became a Christian through the ministry of the Southside community church in Brisbane, Australia. This church was planted in an area with no Adventist congregation, and has been supported with Global Mission funds.

the past apologists primarily addressed intellectual barriers to conversion. Today we need an embodied apologetic, a flesh-and-blood, living, breathing argument for God.

Secular people can understand Christianity when they see a faith that works—touching the issues of racial injustice, poverty, hopelessness, addiction, exploitation, and abuse.⁵ The Campbells Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church in Victoria, Australia, supports CHAIRS—a service for people with AIDS. Their small church plant in a rural town is known as a safe place for sufferers.

Christianity that changes lives—and society—is believable to secular people.

2. Authentic Friendship

Welcome Home and Pastor Ken are two of a variety of ministries at

Southside Community Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brisbane, Australia, that cultivate authentic friendships in their communities. Sponsored by local businesses, the city council, and food outlets, Welcome Home has representatives who welcome new residents and provide them with information on the services of the city. The pastor, Ken Houliston, is becoming widely recognized as "the pastor you have when you don't have a pastor"—conducting weddings, namings, and funerals for the unchurched. (See sidebar "Thank God for the Stumblers' Church.")

The newly renovated Leamington Spa mission in England, with its high balcony, provided the perfect venue for a full production of T. S. Eliot's story of Thomas à Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral*. It was a brilliant, nonthreatening new approach to

preevangelistic work, and it provided wonderful opportunities to build friendships in the community. Secular people understand the language of authentic friendship.

3. Narrative Evangelism

Tim Celek writes, "The more we can get back to storytelling as a form of Christian communication, the more effective we're going to become as we go back to being like Jesus, who told stories and asked questions."

People love hearing stories. The early Christians told and retold the story of Jesus Christ and the impact of His life, death, and resurrection upon their lives. Narrative evangelism focuses on a "collision of stories." It's God's story colliding with our story—calling into question our story and the course of our lives.

His story challenges us to consider a new worldview in which Christ is at the center.⁶ As authentic friendships between secular people and Christians develop, opportunities will come for Christians to tell the story of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Anthony Kent, working in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, led in planting a new Seventh-day Adventist church—the Werribee community church. On the first anniversary of the beginning of this Adventist church for the unchurched in July 1996, more than 100 people attended. This church was planted on developing authentic relationships with people and looking for every opportunity to tell the biblical story of Jesus Christ. The story was told in homes and workplaces, on social occasions, in small groups and Bible classes, and in public meetings and seminars.

4. Experience and Involvement

Standing in the church foyer, Mark commented, “You really believe this, don’t you?”

I asked what he meant. “Well,” he responded, “I’ve been coming here for about five weeks, and I can tell that when you people sing or pray, you really believe it. You really believe that there’s a God. I’ve been an atheist all my life, but when I come here I find that I can believe as well. In fact, I am finding that I can believe from Saturday to Wednesday—and then I become an atheist again!”

I suggested that Mark and his wife might like to join with friends from the church to talk about spiritual ideas each Tuesday evening, because then he might find he could believe all week.

In “process evangelism,”⁷ conversion takes place over a longer period. Secular people are convinced by the daily, consistent, transparent demonstration that Christianity works in the lives of people. Seeing and experiencing the transcendence and reality of God’s love, evident in the lives and worship of God’s people, is understandable and persuasive language.

5. Something New and Creative

The commitment of the North Shore Adventist Church in Auckland, New Zealand, attracts the attention of the most secularized observer. Architects, city planners, and legal people have commented on the vision of this small group of 40 to 50 people.

By building and selling houses they’ve raised enough funds to provide the community with a \$2.5 million sports center—with an indoor basketball court and exercise facility—attached to their 300-seat worship center and Bible classrooms. The concrete supplier and drain diggers were among the first seven men to be baptized from this bold initiative for God.

Newly planted churches find it easier to translate the gospel into language that secular people understand.

6. Christians Who Act Christianly

Many people today are deciding to try biblical Christianity. Weary of Christianity that isn’t Christian, they’re looking more closely at the Bible and the experience of the earliest Christians, where it’s obvious that Christianity really worked. There was unity in the midst of diversity. Their lives were changed.

Whereas miracles are a difficulty to some modern academics, the early Christians experienced miracles. They were confronted with the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many had actually seen Him crucified and had met Him after He had risen from the grave.

We must consider the educational, social, ethnic, cultural, and generational differences and relate to people at the point of their understanding and wants. Ellen White wrote, “The people of every country have their own peculiar, distinctive characteristics, and it’s necessary that men should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good. They must be able to understand and meet their wants.”⁸

Secular people need to come to know Jesus, but “we have failed in our calling if the pre-Christian ever thinks:

*I’m just a target, an evangelistic project for you. You don’t want to be my friend.”*⁹ We have failed if we convey the idea that people must become culturally like us to be saved by Jesus Christ. We will fail if we can’t acknowledge that God always speaks within the culture of the time.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will empower our witness (Acts 1:4-8). The apostle Paul challenged his readers with the concept of contextualization—being a Jew to win Jews and a Gentile to win Gentiles (1 Cor. 9:19-23). James instructed New Testament believers to deal gently with unchurched people who are turning to God (Acts 15:19). Ellen White told Adventists not to be “one-idea” people who are “stereotyped in [their] manner of working,” and “unable to see and sense that their words and their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people they are among, and the circumstances that they have to meet.”¹⁰

Uniformity has no appeal to modern people. It’s not reality. However, the Holy Spirit has demonstrated that it’s possible to be family and yet think, worship, and witness in a variety of ways. That makes sense to secular people as well. ■

¹ Michael Green and Alister McGrath, *How Shall We Reach Them?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴ Alan Roxburgh, *Reaching a New Generation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 45.

⁵ Kevin Ford, *Jesus for a New Generation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), pp. 178, 179.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 229, 230.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

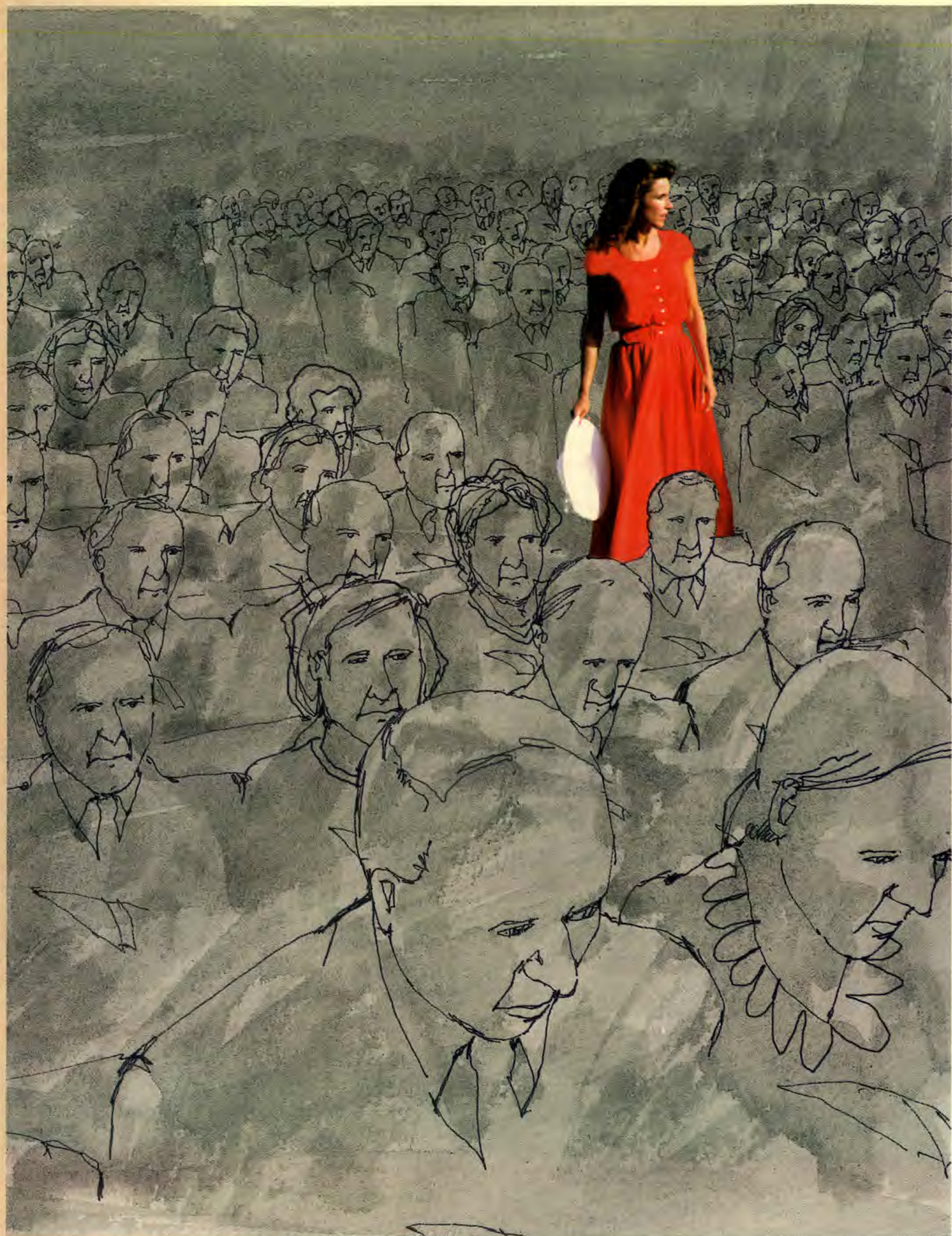
⁸ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 213.

⁹ Ford, p. 201.

¹⁰ *Evangelism*, p. 106.

Peter Roennfeldt is Global Mission coordinator and Ministerial Association secretary for the Trans-European Division. He has ministered to secular people as coordinator for Churches for the Unchurched in the South Pacific and Trans-European divisions.





What on Earth Are We Doing?

How to speak the language of the culture

BY BRONWYN REID

IN 1980 I WAS A RADICAL SOCIAL activist, living in a well-established inner-city settlement. (We “liberated” vacant government-owned buildings, paid no rent, and developed a loosely formed community.) Our alternative lifestyle attracted a multicultural group of artists, musicians, backpackers, hippies, and assorted fringe dwellers. I was a young idealist, immersed in the counterculture world of New Age philosophies, yet not really convinced that these “gurus” have the answers.

I’d grown up Catholic, but left the church in my teenage years. Now the Holy Spirit was impressing me to study the Bible for myself, as a part of my search for meaning. I chose to contact Adventists because I’d read about their commitment to a wholistic lifestyle, and, being a vegetarian, I felt a kindred spirit.

I vividly remember my first encounter with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. With a searching heart

and an open mind I nervously walked off the street and into my first Sabbath service. I sat at the back of the church, only to be informed by a somewhat intimidating woman that I was sitting in her reserved space. It was an interesting welcome.

We sang old hymns and listened to a sermon that consisted of words I’d never heard before, such as “the remnant,” “Spirit of Prophecy” and “the three angels’ messages.” Someone announced that there was to be a potluck the following week, and that a free record was available in the foyer. I could only guess at what a “pot” luck might be, but I was keen to hear what kind of music was on the Adventist record.

After church I asked for this “record,” and was directed to a “deaconess,” who stared me up and down. She then told me that since I wasn’t a church member, I wasn’t entitled to receive one. I went home wondering if being a Seventh-day Adventist meant having a charisma bypass. Weeks later (yes, I persevered) I realized the *Record* was actually a church news publication, and you didn’t smoke at potluck.

That first visit was a culture shock. I was obviously different and felt like an outsider who didn’t know the language and certainly didn’t look the part. I seriously doubted whether the Adventist Church was a good place for me to be, and only my inner hunger to find truth kept me from giving up.

I suspect that almost 20 years later there are still many churches with an “in-house” mentality that’s not particularly friendly to people who are “different” and are searching for truth. There are still many churches that have forgotten their mission to reach the unreached, not to be just a club for the saved. Maybe, as the years have rolled by, we’ve developed a type of

We Still Care, Don't We?

BY BRONWYN REID

Without a vision, the church can easily drift into maintenance mode, expending its energies on institutions and “in-house” programs, with little funding or priorities given to mission outreach and evangelism “to seek and save the lost.” Christians are allocating only 1.2 percent of mission funding and foreign missionaries to the 1.3 billion people who live in the least-evangelized world. In contrast, more than 90 percent of foreign missionaries, 87 percent of mission funding, and 97 percent of full-time Christian workers are directed toward countries in which 60 percent or more of the people identify themselves as Christian. Some 90 percent of the world’s ordained ministers work among the 9 percent who speak English. Only 2 percent of the world’s missionaries

work among 817 million Muslims.¹

I’d love to say that my Seventh-day Adventist Church’s priorities are different, but our church has had a steady decline in total tithes and offerings allocated to world mission. Between 1900 and 1950 an average 25.5 percent of tithes and offerings were given to world mission. Between 1950 and 1980 the allocation dropped to 15.7 percent. From 1986 to 1995 it declined to only 7.5 percent.² If this trend continues, our mission funding will be virtually rock-bottom by the year 2000.

If our eyes were truly open to the needs of the world around us, we would dig into the pockets of our humanity for something more than a little loose change.

¹ Bryant L. Myers, *The Changing Shape of World Mission* (MARC Publications, 1993).

² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *133rd Annual Statistical Report-1995*.

“spiritual amnesia,” unsure of who we really are, why we’re here, and what on earth we’re supposed to be doing.

Our Identity

First and foremost, God has called us to be missionaries. Wherever we are, whatever we’re doing, we’ve been commissioned to be ambassadors for God’s kingdom. God was the first global missionary, who began the work of mission even before He created the world (Rev. 13:8). To save this dying planet, Jesus left heaven and became one of us to break down our barriers of hatred and fear, and reveal God’s extravagant love and forgiveness. Jesus is our ultimate model of incarnational ministry.

After His resurrection Jesus commissioned us to continue His ministry by going into the world to preach His gospel to all people, and make disciples of all nations. This is our mandate, our *raison d’être*. As Emil Brunner said: “The church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning.”*

Mission Possible?

Within our church are promising signs of innovative mission developments, such as our Global Mission study centers—for urban ministry as well as the Buddhist,

Hindu, Islamic, and Jewish faiths—and Global Mission pioneers. Yet our mission is an awesome task. When we consider our calling to reach out to the millions in our world who haven’t heard the gospel it seems humanly impossible. Ultimately, the Lord will finish His work and “cut it short in righteousness” (Rom. 9:28), but we still need to commit ourselves personally to cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s leading.

One to One

Reaching the unreached can’t be left only to Global Mission pioneers or specialist centers. It’s a calling for the whole church, each local congregation, you and me. Our view of ministry shouldn’t be confined to pastors, evangelists, and administrators, for we uphold the “priesthood of all believers.” Therefore, we must empower our greatest resource—church members, of whom more than 50 percent are women. Each of us possesses a spiritual gift in a particular area of ministry. Our input does matter.

Statistics reveal that most people connect their initial interest in Christianity with a personal one-to-one contact with a Christian friend, or group of Christians, who developed a positive relationship and nurtured

their spiritual journey. These relationships require a personal investment that can’t be left to specialists or institutions.

The Seven Last Words of the Church

We can’t solve today’s Global Mission challenges using yesterday’s solutions. Some methods that worked in the past may have limited appeal today. As Emile Chartier once said: “Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it’s the only one we have.” I’ve known many creative, enthusiastic church friends who have sought to develop innovative outreach programs, only to be told, “We’ve never done it that way before.” These may be the seven last words of the church.

How is it that “the children of the world are considerably more shrewd in dealing with their contemporaries than the children of light” (Luke 16:8, Phillips)? Basic marketing strategies reveal that you can never reach a diverse kaleidoscope of social, linguistic, economic, and religious cultures without investing yourself outside your comfort zone, listening to your target group, and adapting

your approach to meet their needs.

We need to maintain an “other-centered” approach, which focuses on the receiver as well as the message. We need to ask difficult questions, such as “How did people of other religious faiths, or even atheists, respond to our program?”; “What were the barriers for those who didn’t come, and how can we move beyond them?”; “What type of person did we attract, and why?” We can’t write off all unresponsive people as apathetic or irreligious. Maybe they were interested, but our approach turned them off.

Recovering Our Prophetic Voice

We believe that our world is on the brink of a cosmic catastrophe and that we’ve been given a message that affects

the eternal destiny of every human being. As a church, God has commissioned us for this task at this time of earth’s history.

Are we prepared to invest ourselves in reaching out to others, adapting our outreach methods and the way we “do church”—“so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:22, NIV)? Are we catering primarily to ourselves, while a planet perishes for lack of gospel messengers who will meet them where they are, and speak in ways they can understand? How serious are we about our calling? Do we really have a passion for lost humanity that will harness our best resources for mission outreach to a world full of people without Christ?

Spiritual amnesia. It’s time to wake

up and remember why we’re here: “Because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11, NIV). ■

* Emil Brunner, *The World and the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1931).

Bronwyn Reid writes from Cooranbong, Australia. Bronwyn is married with three children and, after seven years in corporate marketing and public relations, is currently studying for an M.A. in theology at La Sierra University.



Why People Have Lost Faith

BY PETER ROENNFELD

Why are people secular? What has produced modern unbelief, apathy, even hostility, toward Christianity?

1. Today’s Climate

Five hundred years ago the Renaissance informed the masses that the church’s worldview wasn’t the only one, and sowed the seeds of pluralism and secularism. The Reformation then broke the ecclesiastical stranglehold of Christendom. People read the Bible and found that it discredited much church dogma. Nationalism tore Europe into pieces and further ripped apart the overarching umbrella of Christendom. The rise of science challenged Christendom’s prescientific assumptions of the universe. The climate was right for Enlightenment thinkers to elevate human reason and progress. The Industrial Revolution spawned urbanization—breaking family ties, challenging traditional values, and further alienating the masses from the values of the gospel. Given the secular climate produced by these factors, we shouldn’t be surprised that many today have strong intellectual objections to the Christian faith.

2. Yesterday’s Memories

A lot of people have painful stories of how the church failed them at their most vulnerable times. Whether real or imagined, many hurts and rebuffs

have come from church policies relating to relationships, pregnancies, baptisms, marriage, divorce and remarriage, illness, death and burial arrangements, etc. The sources of resentment seem endless. Some don’t like the way the church challenges sin in their lives. Others see the church as uncaring, arrogant, abusive, and hierarchical. Its rituals seem irrelevant and deady dull.

There’s also the perception that the church is divided against itself with so many denominations. The tragedy of sectarian violence has done nothing to commend Christianity as a faith that can heal hurting people. Given so many painful memories and negative perceptions, we shouldn’t be surprised to find strong emotional objections to the suggestion that Christianity is relevant to a healthy daily life.

3. Tomorrow’s Forces

The church, which is increasingly being led by baby boomers, is largely overlooking the new generation. Generation Xers are not younger versions of their parents. For this generation truth is relative, and diametrically opposed truths can coexist. Although the new generation knows that “image is everything,” they also know that you can’t trust image. They’ve grown with the world of cut and paste, computer-generated images and pictures, consumerism, and news shows competing for ratings and advertising dollars. They know the gloss is not reality. To a great extent they’re closed to old evangelistic methods. Simply speaking slower and louder is entirely futile.

Going Against the Grain

What Christians can learn from the National Football League

BY ANDY NASH

TUNE YOUR RADIO TO ANY American football game this fall, and you're sure to hear a dozen plays that sound something like this:

"Emmitt Smith takes the hand-off, shakes off a tackler, scampers to the sidelines, and steps out at the 22-yard line."

Or this:

"Jerry Rice catches a short pass at the 35 and immediately runs out of bounds."

But every now and then you'll hear something like this:

"Cris Carter takes the ball at midfield, fakes right, then veers left and out of bounds . . . No, wait! Carter *doesn't* go out of bounds! Instead he cuts back *against the grain*—sidestepping one tackler, stiff-arming another. Oh, Carter's in the clear now! He's at the 35, the 30, the 25, the 20 . . . Cris Carter's going to go all the way. Touchdown Minnesota!"

Now, as a diehard Vikings fan (there's no other kind), I

confess to some wishful thinking in this account. But the lesson stands: the greatest football players in history—the Walter Paytons, the Jim Browns, the O. J. Simpsons—were great because they weren't afraid to take risks. They weren't afraid to challenge 260-pound linebackers who ate whole herds of bison for breakfast. *They weren't afraid to go against the grain.*

Slip Into Something More Uncomfortable

For Christians it's not one ounce different. To be better than average witnesses for Jesus Christ, we have to be willing to go against the grain, to step out of the proverbial comfort zone—and then step out again. That's where the thrills set in. That's where the watching universe leaps to their feet.

Recently I had lunch with a family who had just returned from living and working in Russia. For three years this family mixed with unbelievers of all types—from searching civilians to Mafia members. In turn, the family's *own* belief in God was solidified. Adversity does that.

But when the family returned to the "easy life" in America, they fought depression. One of the teenage daughters (I'll call her Mindy) particularly felt the change. Back in an Adventist school, Mindy was disappointed to find a seemingly lax attitude toward God and church doctrine. One of her teachers had gotten especially cynical, questioning Creation and other fundamentals.

Mindy could have easily gone with the grain, sinking into the low-impact existence most of us settle for in our



teenage years. Instead, she went against it. She took it upon herself to challenge this teacher both in class and out of class—because she cared about his heart. A relationship formed, and the cynicism spiraled out of the teacher's classroom.

Touchdown Mindy.

But this young woman is the exception. I remember when I came back from the “mission field.” For one year in Thailand I had shared Jesus’ life and teachings with people predominantly Buddhist. With real tears I begged my teenage Thai students to give

God a chance, to try praying to Him for one week, to promise that they would meet me in heaven. They promised to consider it.¹

But when I got back, my fire flickered. Everyone at my Adventist college knew about God anyway, I reasoned. No longer did anyone depend on me to represent Him. Nothing I could say or do was unique. Just another Christian—that’s what I was.

My struggle had been noticed. Though he kept to himself most of the time, men’s dean Ron Qualley had a knack for entering people’s lives at just the right moment—for

lifting them when they were low. One Sunday night that semester, I returned from a weekend band trip to find on my bed a big colorful Southern College sweatshirt and a card signed by all the deans and resident assistants. “We need you here, Andy,” they wrote.

In a setting in which I had come to expect no surprises, Dean Qualley’s gesture touched me deeply and taught me a lot about working the missions closest to home.

Cursed Are the Unpersecuted

But make no mistake—it’s *hard* to catch fire in the cool comfort of our

homeland. Anyone who's ever gone to the "folks" for the holidays and felt like a child again knows what I'm talking about. Even Jesus recognized how hard it was to "stay inbounds" at home. "Only in his hometown," He said, "among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor."²

Feet kicked back, a bowl of cereal in our hands, we sit around and pray for those being persecuted in, say, southern Mexico, when in reality *they* should be praying for us. As their lives are ripped apart, the Mexicans have pulled it together. They've learned to rejoice—not for their trials, but *in* them. They're going against the grain . . . and God is using them mightily.³

Meanwhile, those of us whose biggest day-to-day frustrations include matching our socks and sloshing out of the shower to get soap—"Honey, where'd you say it was?"—barely notice the danger we face: losing our first love. *We're* the ones who need round-the-clock prayers. *We're* the ones just warm enough to not recognize how cold we really are.

What can we do? Two things.

First, we can turn off our televisions and computers and study what it really means to go against the grain. Jesus' teachings are *full* of such descriptions: love your enemy, turn the other cheek, wash each other's feet. His whole *life* went against the grain. When we imitate our Saviour, "uncomfortableness"—the good kind—is guaranteed.

Second, we can put ourselves in position to go against the grain. Some, like Mindy and Dean Qualley, are gifted at finding adversity in any location—no matter how comfortable. Put these people in Collegedale, College View, or College Place, and they'll *still* find plenty of ways to put their faith to work, to keep their spirituality razor-sharp. But most of us, by nature, need a climate more overtly challenging. And that's what Global Mission is all about—matching the right missionaries with the right

mission fields. If you don't feel well-matched where you are, if your gifts aren't being used, if you're losing touch with the "real world," then get out. Get back on the front lines. Get uncomfortable again.

An important qualifier. While "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"⁴ it's not our job to bring it on. "Let everyone bear in

Eternal life is no game.

mind," wrote Ellen White, "that we are in no case to invite persecution. We are not to use words that are harsh and cutting. Keep them out of every article written, drop them out of every address given. Let the Word of God do the cutting, the rebuking; let finite men hide and abide in Jesus Christ."⁵

The truth is, though we might be Christians, we're still a lot more like the world than like Christ. Only by pointing to Him will the "blessing" of persecution come. Getting persecuted for anything short of that is nothing more than Satan having a field day.

Pep Talk

Before any football game a coach will spend a good 10 minutes pumping his team to near-hysteria.

"Hit!" he'll scream, jerking hand to head.

"Hit!" his players will scream back.

"Hit!" he'll scream again, jerking his other hand to head.

"Hit!" his players will scream back.

"Are we gonna win?"

"Yeah!"

"Are we gonna win?"

"Yeah!"

That's football—a meaningless game.

Eternal life is no game. Step into the locker room of Jesus Christ, head coach of the redeemed, and you'll hear a pep talk every bit as exhilarating—and a lot more meaningful.

"I no longer call you servants. . . . Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. . . . I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last."⁶

"All men will hate you because of me."⁷

"They will lay hands on you and persecute you."⁸

"But he who stands to the end will be saved."⁹

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."¹⁰

"Do you truly love me? . . .

"Feed my lambs. . . .

"Take care of my sheep. . . .

"Feed my sheep. . . .

"Follow me!"¹¹ ■

¹ Look for a five-year update on these same students in a future issue of the *Adventist Review*.

² Mark 6:4. Texts in the article are from the New International Version.

³ To top off their amazing work for God amid persecution, Adventists in southern Mexico have made bold investments in their young members unheard of in North America. Members in their 20s and 30s dominate administrative posts. When they reach 40, they're moved back to the local pastorate (see William Johnson's "South Mexico: Baptisms and Bloodshed," *Adventist Review*, Mar. 13, 1997).

⁴ 2 Tim. 3:12.

⁵ *Evangelism*, p. 304.

⁶ John 15:15, 16.

⁷ Mark 13:13.

⁸ Luke 21:12.

⁹ Mark 13:13.

¹⁰ John 15:7.

¹¹ John 21:15-19.

Andy Nash is an assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*.





Heart surgeon John G. Jacobson, MD, assistant professor of surgery, assisted by a North Korean nurse, changes the dressing on a heart patient.



Heart team director Joan Coggin, MD, MPH, special assistant to the LLU president for international affairs, visits with a patient during the team's trip to Nepal.

Loma Linda University & Medical Center— global partners with the Church

Loma Linda University and Medical Center are in global partnership with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each year, several hundred students, faculty, and employees from Loma Linda University and Medical Center support the mission of the Church by participating in global outreach projects around the world.

One of our best-known global partners—the Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team—recently returned from North Korea where they were the first American health-care team ever invited to that country.

Over the past 30 years, the Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team—working in cooperation with the Church—has either initiated or enhanced open-heart surgery programs in Chile, Greece, Hong Kong, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.



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Pioneering the Gospel

Introducing Jesus to people who haven't heard of Him

BY JACKIE ORDELHEIDE SMITH

THIS YEAR MORE THAN 19,000 Adventists from around the world have responded to Christ's challenge to take the gospel to places it has never reached. They're called Global Mission pioneers. They serve for at least a year in areas within their own countries to start new work.

Starting new work is never easy, neither is it convenient, nor is it popular. It's not even lucrative (ask any pioneer). However, they can tell you about the benefits of seeing a hardened heart softened, a stubborn habit broken, or a Bible student baptized. God blesses those who put their trust in Him. You can read about some of these blessings on these pages.



Jaan Deep, Alihilasha Sandher, and their two sons are serving as pioneers, along with her parents, **Younus and Veena Francis.** Although nearby, the couples are serving at different targets in Haryana State, India.

K. Prabhakar has been a pioneer since 1991. He established one congregation in Aramthapur, India, and used money from his \$45 monthly living allowance to help pay the rent for the room in which they worshiped. Through his example of sacrifice and commitment, the new members are active in outreach and helping others. They have moved to a new location and have won two more people to Christ. Prabhakar assisted a pastor with meetings at a nearby church, which required him to travel by bus for several hours each night. As a result of those meetings, seven more people came to know Christ.



Samil Gurung is pioneering in a Buddhist country where proselytizing is illegal. Although there are about 24 Seventh-day Adventist believers, there is no organized work in that country. Gurung is working to open this unentered frontier to the gospel.



congregation in an unentered area with the help of a team from his church. He's currently serving in another unentered area, where he plans to establish a second congregation. He's conducting Bible studies and doing home evangelism in an effort to realize his goal.



Johanna Ileka gave up a job as a clerk at the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Services to serve as a pioneer in Namibia. This call, she writes, "came so clear to me that I have no doubt about it. I have been told what to do. And what makes it so sure is that there's even a cash buyer for my house! I have experienced so many things in these past four months when God has again proved to me that He has chosen me to do His will. To me it was wonderful to see that God wanted me for His work and that He is in control of everything."



PHOTO BY DAISY ORLON



Left to right: Binod Bhatti, Rupendra Budha Mager, and Binod Pokhard are pioneering the work in the Hindu country of Nepal. With only three

organized congregations in that country, these pioneers plan to double the number of churches within their term of service.

Kaleab Kidane serves in Eritrea, where he's working to establish a new congregation. Retirees such as Kidane are finding fulfillment working as pioneers during their retirement years.



Hassan Mweke is in Mombasa, Kenya, and has witnessed many traditional rain dancers crying for rain during this extreme drought. Mweke has offered to pray to the Creator of rain for rain. Since the water is unfit for consumption, many people are sick. Mweke has shown them how to reduce sickness by boiling their drinking and bathing water. He plans to start a primary school, where he will help teach. The small group of believers whom he has brought to the Lord has purchased a plot of land and hope to build a church on it soon. "I have found that right things done at the right time, the right way, and at the right place bring joy," he writes. "I am blessed with joy. Expect miracles!"



Freddy Hlongwane is working as a pioneer in South Africa. Although old in years, he says he's young in evangelistic zeal. He has already established one



Yuriy Golovyashkin reaped more than spiritual rewards as he worked as a pioneer in Socol, Russia. He began going door-to-door sharing books, and within six months three people were baptized—a young man, a grandma, and a young woman. The young woman, **Svetlana**,

became his wife. She now assists him in his work. Immediately they organized a home Bible study group, and three more people were baptized. The group has grown to more than 30 people and meets in this couple's apartment every Sabbath, since they don't have a church in which to worship. ■

For more information about how you can volunteer to serve as a Global Mission pioneer or how you can financially support this exciting mission outreach, call 1-800-648-5824.

Jackie Ordelheide Smith is coordinator of Global Mission Pioneers.



The Reluctant Missionary

And how Jonah is a lot like some people we know



BY PAT GUSTIN

FROM CHILDHOOD WE'VE BEEN acquainted with Jonah. Initially we were enthralled by the tale of his sojourn in the belly of the whale. Later we pondered the faith of the

heathen sailors, in contrast to Jonah's lack of concern.

It's a puzzling book. Jonah is a puzzling man. His story, though, has profound meaning for Adventists today.

Special People of God

Jonah was a product of his times. An Israelite from the northern kingdom, he had inherited the history, beliefs, customs, and prejudices of his people. For them, "prehistory" began with Abraham's call to leave Ur; "ancient" history could be traced to Moses' leading Israel out of Egypt; and "modern" history began with King David.

Israel was a special, "called out" people. Jonah and his people took pride that they were the chosen, the elect, the remnant of God. They regaled each other with recitals of God's preferential dealings with them throughout nearly 1,000 years of history. Jonah was proud to be an Israelite.

The Israelites had been called out from among the degenerate heathen nations around them. If the Israelites thought of those nations at all, it was with disdain. No, they, the Israelites, were different. They were special. Blessed. Confident. Sure.

Thus the word of the Lord asking Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital city of the dreaded and despised Assyrian Empire, was not welcome. Possibly Jonah wasn't initially even sure it was the word of the Lord. After all, Israel was called out. Going back wasn't their *modus operandi*. And besides, the Assyrians had shown absolutely no indication they were reachable. Their cruelty and wickedness were legendary. Their disdain for the God of Israel was documented. Of all the "heathen" they were among the worst. No, this wasn't a place to waste the energy and resources of God's people. Nineveh was possibly beyond God's mercy—unreached and unreachable. Jonah had never heard of Global Mission.

But the word of the Lord told Jonah to go. So unbelievable. So impossible. Go to Nineveh? Leave the confines of Israel? For what purpose?

Ironically, even at the end of the book Jonah still doesn't understand. He went. He succeeded—the unreachable Ninevites responded to God's call through him—but he still didn't get it. His eyes remained closed to the message God was trying to give His people—a message with which, more than 2,000 years later, modern Israel still struggles.

To the Whole World

A little more than 150 years ago God again called out a people and gave them a special message, a special task, and special blessings. Like Israel of old, early Adventists understood the concept of being "the called out," "the chosen," "the remnant." And much like Israel, they didn't initially understand that they had a mission to the entire world.

Only during the last three decades of the nineteenth century did the church gradually come to realize its responsibility to go

to all the world. Finally, as the twentieth century dawned, Adventism's sense of mission to the entire world had intensified to the extent that during the first eight decades of this century the church's world work expanded in unprecedented proportions, and the Adventist Church was established in hundreds of countries worldwide.

The Fading Vision

Then the vision of a world mission seemed to falter. During the late seventies, the eighties, and the nineties, the church began to lose its emphasis on world mission. It began to look inward, focusing on special projects and local issues and needs more than the needs of the world. Mission giving fell. The number of missionaries being sent out decreased. Expansion of the world church into unentered areas slowed.

There were, of course, many factors for this change in operating. Economic and political changes were undoubtedly part of the cause. We've also been affected by the inadequacies of language. Throughout the Bible God's concern for

the peoples of the earth has frequently been translated into modern languages as His concern for the "nations." To most of us a nation is a geopolitical entity—Australia, Zimbabwe, France, Mexico. With an emphasis on "nations," the realization that we'd reached more than 90 percent of them caused us to feel confident and complacent.

But the word frequently translated "nations" in our Bible has little or nothing to do with geopolitical entities. It's actually the word from which we get the English word "ethnicity"—a word that deals with culture, language, and ethnic groups.

Rereading familiar "mission texts" with this in mind is revealing. Matthew 28:19, for instance, would read, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the people groups, baptizing them . . ." (See also Matt. 24:14; Rev. 14:6; etc.) Thus, going to every ethnic group or "people group" is a vastly different challenge from simply going to all the nations of the earth.

As a church we may be in more than 90 percent of the countries of the earth, but within each nation there are

hundreds or possibly thousands of "people groups"—each separate and distinct ethnically and linguistically. These people must be reached if we're to fulfill the task to which we, like Jonah, have been commissioned. This is the God-ordained goal of Global Mission.

We need to remember that we have a world mission task. All the peoples on earth are God's children. That's the focus of Global Mission. People.

As with Israel of old, God is calling us as a church to take up the commission He gave Jonah—to go to people who until now were totally untouched by the gospel. To people who seem an unpromising and unlikely field for evangelism, but who, as one of the unreached people groups, are a priority to God. Jonah was a reluctant Global Mission supporter. What about us? ■

Pat Gustin is director of the Institute of World Mission at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. She has served as a missionary for many years.



God's Chosen People—The World

Jonah and his compatriots forgot that though they were specially chosen, history didn't begin with the call of Abraham. The Bible record and history itself begin not with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, but with Genesis 1.

The first 11 chapters of Genesis establish the God of Israel as the God of the whole world. He's the Creator and the one in control when things go wrong (the Flood, the Tower of Babel, etc.). He's the Father of all the peoples of the earth—through Adam, and again through Noah. God creates them in Genesis 1 and 2, traces their growth in Genesis 3 to 5, and reluctantly intervenes with a flood in Genesis 6 to 9.

Then in Genesis 10 God again makes it clear that He knows all these nations and people. They are all His children. He knows them by name. He knows where they are and what they're doing. And then in Genesis 11 He once again intervenes at the Tower of Babel, like a parent who must sometimes separate unruly children who bring out the worst in each other. He confounds their languages so that in isolation they might hear His voice more clearly. He cares for them still. The Tower of Babel is God's attempt to save people from themselves—an act of mercy designed to preserve a knowledge of Him in the hearts and minds of all His children.

In Genesis 12 it appears that God may be abandoning the other nations and peoples with the call of Abraham and his descendants. But closer examination shows that God's purpose is clear. In verse 1 He first tells Abraham to "come out" of Babylon and leave his father's household behind. God then promises him fame, greatness, and blessings. Then God's ultimate purpose shines through: "And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (verse 3, NIV). All the peoples listed in Genesis 10; all the peoples He had scattered after the Tower of Babel—all these people and their descendants would be blessed through Abraham's descendants and the coming Messiah.

Through the centuries that followed, Israel forgot. Their election became a cover for bigotry. Their chosen status became an escape from service. Their calling became an excuse for self-serving. A few "outsiders" were reluctantly allowed to be touched by the blessings bestowed upon Israel—Naaman and Nebuchadnezzar, for instance. The occasional person from outside was reluctantly admitted into their society—Rahab, Ruth, etc. Poets and prophets, under inspiration, occasionally referred to the redemptive future of other peoples of the earth (see, for example, Ps. 22:27, 28; 117; Isa. 2:1-4; 60). But the collective mentality of Israel ignored these as insignificant.

Our World Is His Front Line

There's no shortage of exciting stories, because everywhere there's a God who transcends borders.

BY FERN BABCOCK

THE IRREGULAR SURGING OF OUR chartered helicopter rocked us forward and backward in broken seats. Noting the concerned faces of the other Maranatha group members, I concluded that they too wondered about the Russian vehicle's safety. After all, Castro's army had nearly worn it out before selling it to the charter company.

I said an extra prayer and tried to concentrate on the Cuban terrain 500 feet below. Occasionally I spotted a 1950s truck or car on the almost-empty roads. The U.S. embargo against Cuba had made any vehicle on the island precious. With gasoline at \$4 a gallon, however, few Cubans were driving.

I was in Cuba to prepare another Global Mission book—

Front Line Cuba—and was traveling with a group from Maranatha Volunteers International. Maranatha has done an incredible work in Cuba during the past few years. In May 1997, 1,000 people were baptized in Cuba. I was ready to collect stories of mission advance. I'd already heard one good story, but it didn't come from Cuba. One of our group, Ron Kelly, a pastor from Cicero, Indiana, told me how his members had built a church in Villa Garcia, Mexico, last March.

"It was a rather uneventful trip," Ron said, "except that we'd been planning to build on one site, but when we got there, they weren't ready for us, so we moved to Villa Garcia. It was in an extremely poor barrio—so poor that the church members couldn't feed or house the Mexican presite crew who laid foundations. So the workers pitched a tent and fended for themselves. Ten days after we arrived, Villa Garcia had a lovely little Adventist church—complete with pews. We felt as though we'd really accomplished something, but we didn't have any exciting experiences to relate."

But soon Ron received an E-mail message that updated the story. "Since they had a nice new church, the Adventists

MARANATHA TO CUBA

Recently Cuba has been opening up to Seventh-day Adventists, and thousands of Cubans have been discovering the freedom that hope in Jesus Christ brings. Thanks largely to the Global Mission efforts of Maranatha Volunteers International, more than 7,000 people have been baptized in Cuba in the past few years. Maranatha has built 65 churches, refurbished 80 more, established 50 evangelism teams, conducted more than 1,500 evangelistic campaigns, and printed more than 2.5 million pamphlets. It's also completing the third building of the new Adventist Seminary.



announced an evangelistic series," Ron said. "Word spread about the meetings, and the pastor of another church in the town decided to neutralize the possible effects of the effort by holding open-air meetings of his own on two empty lots beyond the new church. Renting a high-powered public-address system, he turned the volume up and blasted the Adventists with music. The Adventist Church members despaired, because they and their guests couldn't hear the preaching.

"Suddenly a heavy downpour began," he continued. "This was strange, because that area of Mexico has so little rainfall, and showers are usually light and short. The detractors scrambled for shelter with their rented public-address equipment while the Adventist meeting continued peacefully.

"The next night, sure that there couldn't be rain two days in a row, the opposition set up speakers again and began drowning out the Adventist preacher. Once again rain fell, this time harder than the night before, sending them running. On the third night they pitched a tent before turning on the loud music. Rain started immediately, this time accompanied by a strong wind that blew down the tent. Outside, people fled in all directions. Inside the new church the evangelist kept preaching.

"That night," recalled Ron, "the wife of the disruptive preacher dreamed that what her husband was doing wasn't right and that he should concentrate on giving the gospel rather than trying to interfere with others who were doing so. The next morning the woman found her son

sick. That night she attended the Adventist meetings, convinced there must be something to their message."

Ron wiped the sweat from his forehead and

stopped for a drink of bottled water. My notepad was filling fast, and I smiled as I saw where this story was headed. "While the woman continued to attend the Adventist meetings, her son's condition worsened. The effort ended with a health clinic run by Adventist doctors from Montemorelos. They visited the sick boy and prescribed treatment that resulted in his recovery."

Ron's eyes shone with excitement as he leaned toward me. "Now get this, Fern. Both the woman and her husband are joining the Adventist Church next week, and several of their church members are taking Bible studies. Isn't it great how the Lord knew where we needed to go? He had people ready to hear the message in that place, and He saw to it that we got there. Our Cicero group's most exciting experience happened after we left Mexico."

I closed my notebook and grinned. That's what makes my Global Mission assignments worth the inconvenience, discomfort, and danger. Stories like this encourage other Adventists around the world, reminding them of God's overruling hand and mighty power.

Front Line Cuba is my fourth Global Mission book. Teachers have written to thank me for mission books they can use in their classrooms. Missionaries call to rejoice in the new emphasis on missions. *Front Line India*, *Front Line Cambodia*, and *Front Line Irian Jaya* have all been warmly received. Even stories of failure encourage those who feel they are the only ones who failed. Because of this, I try to write the truth as I see it, not just the truth that supports Global Mission.

I'm having a problem with these assignments, however. I find myself

still involved in every mission field I go to—long after I've left it. My Sabbath school class collected money to send back to India to help

support Ezekiel, the refugee from Rwanda who was nearly killed in that war-torn country. He was attending Spicer College and doing Global Mission pioneer work in an unentered village near the school. Recently I received a letter from him, thanking us for our help. He now has his master's degree and is returning to

Rwanda to join the staff at the Adventist university. I pray that he and his family will be safe.

After I left Cambodia two years ago, I began helping to support a young worker there. This year he's been put on regular salary. I rejoice that the work is growing enough to make that possible. In May I received word that one of the Cambodian Bible workers, Tat Chan, had been killed in a grenade attack on a place of business. My heart goes out to the faithful workers who spread the gospel in the "killing fields." Last year my Collegedale church sent a church-building group to Cambodia and came back full of enthusiasm.

Since last year's visit to Irian Jaya, I've regularly corresponded with Jan and Bob Roberts, the mission pilot family. Tension and excitement haven't abated on their campus. In fact, an angry mob attacked their home, broke down the door, and threatened their lives. The Lord



Mauritania



Costa Rica



Burkina Faso



Myanmar



Malaita, Solomon Islands

intervened, and they were saved. But as a result, security guards are now posted on the property.

In May Jan wrote that Bob and

Pastor Kamuh had gone to a Global Mission planning meeting 30 miles from home. Pastor Kamuh insisted that they take two security guards, as he'd heard there was political unrest in town. They had no trouble getting there, but as they rode home that night, their all-purpose vehicle was stopped by a crowd of demonstrators. In pouring rain the two guards got out and stood in front

of Bob's window and beside the left front headlight. Authoritatively they waved their weapons and ordered the marchers to move on. Although the vehicle received angry thumps and kicks, its occupants remained unharmed. After the crowd passed, Bob drove home quickly.

The next morning he learned that a truck following just minutes behind him had been attacked and turned over, and its contents wrecked.

Jan also told me that Johnny and Marcy Lensun, the newlywed Global Mission pioneers featured in the book



Senegal

Front Line Irian Jaya, had received a new bicycle thanks to a reader's donation. The young couple also have a new baby, she wrote. I pray that it stays healthy in

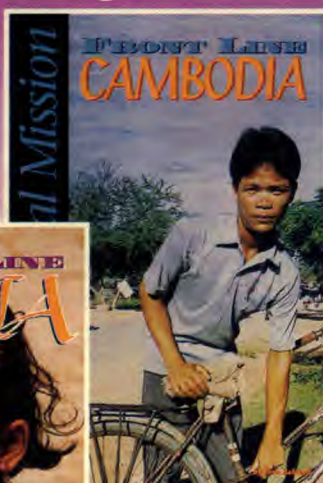
that basic migrant-camp home. Reading Jan's E-mail, I felt as though I'd just received family news. And this, I think, is what Global Mission is all about—feeling as though believers all over the world are part of your family, caring for what happens to them and their projects, and pitching in to support their efforts.

While those who read of Global Mission are blessed, I think I get the greatest blessing. As I see God at work and hear of His marvelous interventions, my heart can't help responding to His love. It's nice to know that our world is His front line. ■

Fern Babcock's fourth book in the *Global Mission Front Line* series will be released later this year.



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Confessions of an Almost-Congregationalist

We need to look after the local congregation—no matter where in the world it is.

BY JAMES COFFIN

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED A call from the church nominating committee and heard a slightly-too-enthusiastic voice tell you the committee feels you would be perfect for a certain church office? Have you ever been left wondering, *Why would they think I'd be good for that job?*

Well, that's sort of the way it was when I was invited to write an article about Global Mission. Don't they know that I'm a closet congregationalist? In fact, I don't even keep my feelings locked in the closet; I'm pretty outspoken about them. I believe that the local congregation is "where it's at."

People feel blessed or empty not so much on the basis of what the denomination does, but on what the local congregation does. When you're in the hospital, or you've lost a loved one, or you suddenly face a financial crisis, it's the local congregation—not the union, division, or General Conference—that provides the life-sustaining, soul-rejuvenating, faith-inspiring support you need.

People who serve on committees with me know where I stand: the local congregation is the most crucial unit of church structure and must be kept healthy at all costs. So if

it's a matter of allocating more resources to the local congregation or sending them *down* the line (you can see my thinking about which direction the hierarchy truly runs!), I'll invariably vote for the local congregation. And I'll be candid in saying that I don't think the local congregation has traditionally been appreciated adequately or given the resources it should have. That needs to change. And I'll do whatever I can to make it change.

So that more or less rules me out from saying anything good about Global Mission, doesn't it?

Maybe not.

You see, there's a major difference between believing that the local church is the most important unit of church structure and believing that the local church has an obligation *only* to itself and its own neighborhood. Note the following three points.

1. Christians have a worldwide gospel commission.

When Jesus gave the gospel commission, He said we were to "go and make disciples of *all nations*" (Matt. 28:19, NIV). In Acts 1:8 Jesus portrayed it as a sort of ripple effect. The Spirit-filled disciples were to minister first in Jerusalem (their immediate neighborhood). Then they were to share the good news throughout Judea (their general geographic region, and still within their ethnic and religious heritage). Then they were to work in Samaria (which involved reaching beyond the familiar both in terms of religious heritage and ethnic background). Having learned from their experiences at each of these ripples, they were to traverse

the globe, sending the ripples as far as they would go. And that's what Global Mission is all about.

Global Mission and the local congregation aren't at loggerheads. It isn't either/or. In fact, the purpose of Global Mission is to establish local congregations. That was the case in New Testament times, and that's the case now.

The apostle Paul, the early church's premier global missionary, didn't just preach and run. Paul established congregations wherever he went. And he didn't become so absorbed in itinerant evangelism that he ignored the ongoing spiritual needs of the congregations he established. Note

how much of the New Testament is comprised of letters of pastoral nurture.

If I accept the salvation freely offered by Jesus, I'm duty-bound and love-compelled to share that good news with others—globally—because He has asked me to do so. For this reason I support Global Mission. But that's not the only reason.

2. We need to witness.

If Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, as He taught, and if no one comes to the Father but by Him, then it's crucial that we share this knowledge with everyone everywhere. The world needs to hear the good news with which we've been entrusted. But there's

even more to it than that. We've been so spiritually blessed that we need to tell others about it. We remain silent to our own detriment.

Years ago I read that it's terrible to have someone to share with, yet nothing to share. It's even worse to have something to share, but no one to share it with. But the greatest tragedy is to have something to share and someone to share it with, but not share it. The bottom line is: Good news needs to be shared—not just for the benefit of the recipient, but for the benefit of those sharing as well.

I love the story of Peter and John standing before the Sanhedrin after being told to keep quiet about Jesus



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(Acts 4). Their response: "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (verse 20, NIV).

First John 1:4 reads: "These things write we unto you, that *your* joy may be full." That fits in with our understanding that the world needs to hear the message with which we've been entrusted. However, I like the way the New International Version translates the passage: "We write this to make *our* joy complete." This is a life principle that we get by giving. Proverbs 11:25 says, "He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (NIV). Sharing the good news of what Christ has done for us is something we need to do because we need the blessing that comes from sharing—without regard to the need of the hearer for what we have to say.

Ellen White makes a mind-boggling statement about what we will do in the new earth: "In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew 'the riches of the glory of this mystery,' 'which is Christ in you, the hope of glory'" (*Education*, p. 309).

So throughout eternity we'll be witnessing—because good news just can't be contained. And we have good news. Therefore, it needs to be shared—and not just with my next-door neighbors (which is important), but to the ends of the earth. Global Mission is a means of my doing just that.

3. A sense of ownership inspires us.

The bigger an organization becomes, the less each member feels a sense of ownership, and the less each person is

excited and inspired by what the organization is doing. The organization easily becomes viewed as just another bureaucracy in an assortment of competing bureaucracies.

But the early Christians never viewed the church as a bureaucracy. They were a fraternity, a family. They took personal interest not only in what

Early Christians took personal interest in their sister church communities.

was happening in their own community, but what was happening in their sister church communities as well.

Note how often the New Testament writers send greetings to the believers elsewhere and how they encourage and inquire after each other. There was a Christian bond that truly transcended culture. Global Mission seeks to bring to the Adventist Church's worldwide outreach a similar sense of intimacy and togetherness.

One of the great benefits of Global Mission is its willingness to match specific congregations with specific outreach projects. Members from a "home field" congregation can "adopt" a project and visit an unreached area being targeted for evangelism. They can speak with the indigenous missionaries who will do the evangelizing. They can look over the needs for themselves. They can help in outreach efforts. They can go home to share with their home church the vision they've gained. On an ongoing basis a local congregation can get firsthand reports of just what is being accomplished with their money and by their prayers. The enthusiasm such firsthand contact can produce is truly contagious.

In another sense, every local church must discover its own global mission right where it is. Are we keeping to ourselves, ministering only to those who are already part of our own community? Or are we trying to reach the unreached in our neighborhoods? Are there suburbs nearby where people are still waiting to hear the gospel?

These are but three of the reasons I as a pastor support Global Mission: Christ told me to, I need to for my own spiritual health, and firsthand contact with Global Mission inspires me.

In fact, few things can do as much for the local congregation as the sense of being part of the global mission of our church. And coming from a self-confessed almost-congregationalist, that's quite an admission! But that's what Global Mission is all about. ■

James Coffin is pastor of the Markham Woods church in Longwood, Florida.



A Day in the Life of a Young Pioneer

Long hours, loneliness—and large, lasting rewards

BY JACKIE ORDELHEIDE SMITH

MIGUEL TAPASCO, 19 years old, has been serving for the past year as a young pioneer (the North American equivalent of a Global

Mission pioneer) in Wickenburg, Arizona. He and his partner, Gabriel Ruiz, have been working since July 1996 to help build

the declining membership at the Seventh-day Adventist church. Because of health problems in his family, Gabriel returned home in February. I met with Miguel to experience what a day in the life of a young pioneer is really like.

7:32 a.m.

Miguel sits alone in a half-lit fellowship hall, eating a bowl of cereal at a table that stretches nearly the length

of the room. He shares this room and the kitchen designed for preparing fellowship meals, and sometimes after potluck, church members leave him food for the next week.

Miguel lives in an annexed building behind the sanctuary. His bedroom is surrounded by the church fellowship hall and two Sabbath school rooms. Often on Sabbath mornings his room is invaded as children mistakenly open the wrong door on their way to Sabbath school.

The phone rings, and Miguel runs to his room to answer it. His phone is connected to the church's line, and it can ring at any hour of the day. This time it's the pastor, wanting to discuss Miguel's plans for children's Sabbath school.

8:04 a.m.

Miguel drives down Main Street, Wickenburg, to the public high school. A crossroad between Phoenix and Las Vegas, Wickenburg is a quiet retirement community with one traffic light.

At Wickenburg High School Miguel assists the special education teacher in the classroom. "When we got here," Miguel explains, "Gabriel and I wanted to tutor students at the high school, so we came here and found out that they already had tutors. But the principal was kind enough to let us work with the special ed program, since those students didn't



have a male role model.”

Miguel greets some of the students with a hug, a pat on the back, or sign language. The students in the class have varying degrees of mental disability. He begins interacting with a severely disabled boy and lies on the floor next to him. He talks to him softly, in spite of the boy's loud cries. Miguel tries to quiet him and assure him, through sign language, that everything is OK.

9:55 a.m.

Miguel rushes to the Red Cross building, where he loads food into a van. The van driver tells me how much the elderly people enjoy Miguel. That's evident when he's detained for several minutes at each house as he delivers the meals.

Once back at the Red Cross building, Miguel talks with the women in the kitchen and assists them in cleaning up after the group of retirees who came for lunch. It seems that everybody in town knows Miguel—and likes him.

12:40 p.m.

“When I first got here,” he says over lunch, “it was kind of hard. I wasn't used to such a small-town setting. It's been difficult to reach the people. At first I was interested in numbers, but my goal has changed, and I just want people to know about Jesus Christ.

“I really need to know how people react to certain things,” he adds, “and when the right time is to speak to a person, and to just let the Holy Spirit lead me. I've had to depend on the Holy Spirit totally and know that the things being done in Wickenburg are not because of my own efforts, but the Lord's. My spiritual life has jumped from a little bit [Miguel motions with his arms] to a whole lot . . .

“I've had some discouragement here in Wickenburg, but the Lord always wants to work with me. He's never given up on me. There have been times I've felt like giving it up and going back home, but the Lord has kept me



MIGUEL TAPASCO: “If you have the desire to serve God, and if He's opening the doors for you to serve Him here in North America as a young pioneer, I'd say, go for it. There's really nothing that can prepare you for an experience like this one. You go through training, but the things you face out here are not anything you can learn in a classroom.”

here. And I'm grateful for that.”

2:00 p.m.

Back at the special ed class at the high school, Miguel introduces me to a girl who's in his Friday night Bible study group. He says her mother wants to know what's in the Bible and if it's really true.

4:07 p.m.

Miguel goes to Pastor Dennis Smith's house and uses his computer to prepare material for the children's bulletin and Sabbath school. Miguel tells me about the children's program at the Wickenburg church. “It's actually an extension of Vacation Bible School. We call it Bible Story Camp so it will appeal to the parents who are from other denominations. It was actually Gabriel's idea, but basically it's just Sabbath school. On average we have about 10 people coming. My goal is to try to make it so appealing to them that they would come every Sabbath whether their parents wanted them to come or not!”

7:38 p.m.

Miguel leads the singing and plays

his guitar at the Bible study. Another high school girl has joined us. The study takes on a different format tonight as the two girls drill Miguel with questions about the Bible and different religions. Miguel handles their questions and shows them text after text. His knowledge of the Bible, his patience, and his ability to talk to teenagers are impressive. He seems oblivious to my presence.

Earlier that day I had asked him what were the greatest challenges of being a young pioneer. “Accepting other people's opinions and ideas for what they are,” he replied. “I know sometimes I've offended people by saying certain things, but the Holy Spirit has led me to be kind to these people and really patient with them . . . to think that these people will come to know Christ in a fuller way—when He wants them to, not when I want them to.” ■

Jackie Ordeltide Smith is coordinator for Global Mission Pioneers.



Absolute Essentials

The importance of growing up in a home in which all of life's necessities were sifted

BY MICHAEL L. RYAN

WE WEREN'T POOR, BUT THERE WAS little extra beyond the absolute essentials. Mom and Dad were totally committed to the

church. Dad was a literature evangelist, and Mom ran the house, worked as much as possible, and had her own outreach.

I often wonder how Mom and Dad did it. All five of us children were attending church school (academy or college, depending on our ages at the time), there were medical bills, auto repairs, utilities, food, and all the usual expenses that go along with family life. We weren't disappointed if we got a shirt for Christmas. We knew it was given in love, and we knew that money was scarce. We lived in an older house, drove small cars, and had good-quality but few clothes.

Absolute essentials around our house first started with the church. We regarded the church with special respect—it was a divine institution with a special message and mission. Regardless of any financial crisis in the home, every one of us children knew that tithes and offerings were given before any other expenses were paid.

Mom saved money for all kinds of church programs. I remember the little jar marked for Investment that used to sit in the cupboard. I thought all Adventists received newsletters and envelopes from the Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, the Quiet Hour, It Is Written, Union

College, and many others. Mom and Dad always sent something. Everybody got at least \$1 a month. Over time Mom's list expanded to include ADRA, Global

Mission, Adventist World Radio, and others.

It seemed that Mom and Dad were always involved in a church planting project. They loved it. With others they worked to establish churches in Sunnymead, California; Independence and Gladstone, Missouri; and many towns scattered across Arkansas and Louisiana.

I remember one night a little church was trying to raise money to buy property. I was old enough to realize our family's financial situation, and Dad shocked me when he pledged \$500. I said nothing, but I watched Dad go to the bank the next day and borrow \$500. I also watched as he paid that loan month by month. I knew

these were dollars that the Lord was providing, as we didn't have extra money to pay bank loans. I've since preached in that church building.

How thankful I am that bringing hope to the unreached was one of the absolute essentials with which I was raised. ■



Michael L. Ryan is general field secretary for Global Mission.



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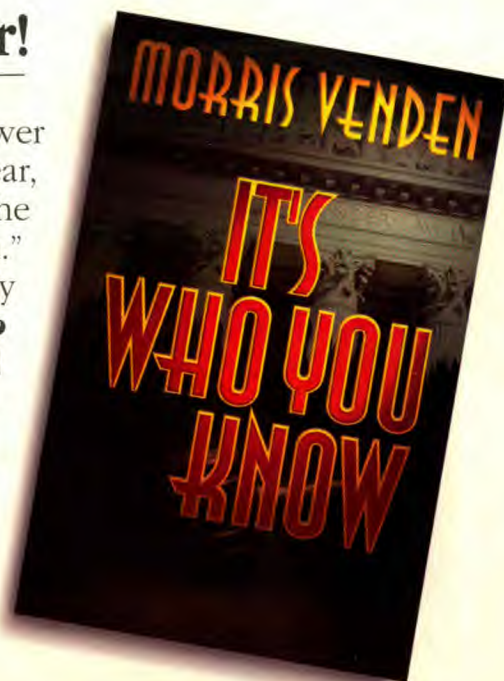
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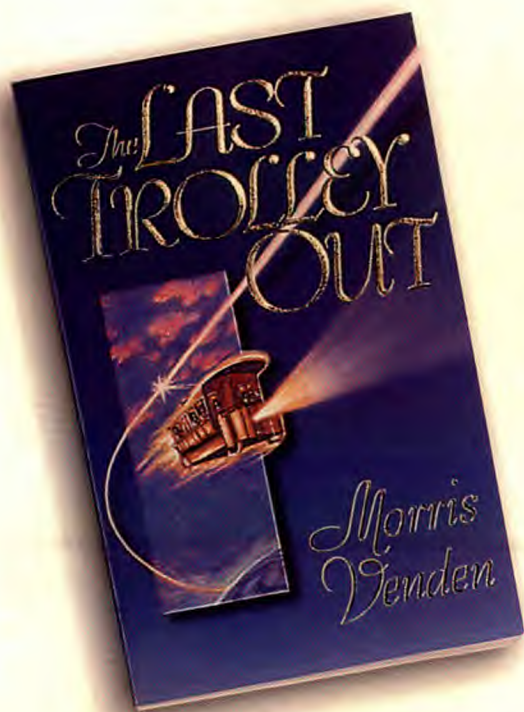


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