

GLOBAL MISSION

Frontline

STORIES AND NEWS FROM OUR PIONEERS | VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 1

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changing lives!**



OC Boston teams up with Community Servings to prepare meals for critically and chronically ill people in the Boston area.



Cover: Pastors Endri Misho, right, and Sergio Quevedo DeJesus baptize Luis Alicea at One Connection's Haverhill location.

One of the things I enjoy about my job is visiting church plants that you've helped start with your donations and sharing how they're making a difference in people's lives and their communities.

A couple months ago, I learned about a church plant run by a team of young professionals in Boston, Massachusetts, United States. Called One Connection Boston (OC Boston), it was started by pastors Sergio Quevedo DeJesus and Endri Misho who had earlier planted a One Connection church in

Haverhill, Massachusetts. They started OC Boston in 2017 to reach out to the secular people of the city, which currently ranks fourth highest for unchurched people in the United States.*

I wanted to learn more about OC Boston's mission, so I called Pastor Endri who oversees the church plant.

"Our mission is simple but challenging," Pastor Endri told me. "We aim to live like Jesus (be disciples) and empower others to live like Him (make disciples). A close connection

OC Boston members meet at each other's homes for worship and fellowship.



Friendly church gatherings create spaces where people can connect meaningfully with God and one another.



with God helps us build a community centered on Jesus, focused on building genuine and caring relationships, and serving others.”

Everything OC Boston does nurtures meaningful relationships with God, its members, and the community. The group meets either in a church building or in each other’s homes for praise, prayer, interactive study of God’s Word, food, and fellowship. Then they engage in loving service to their community.

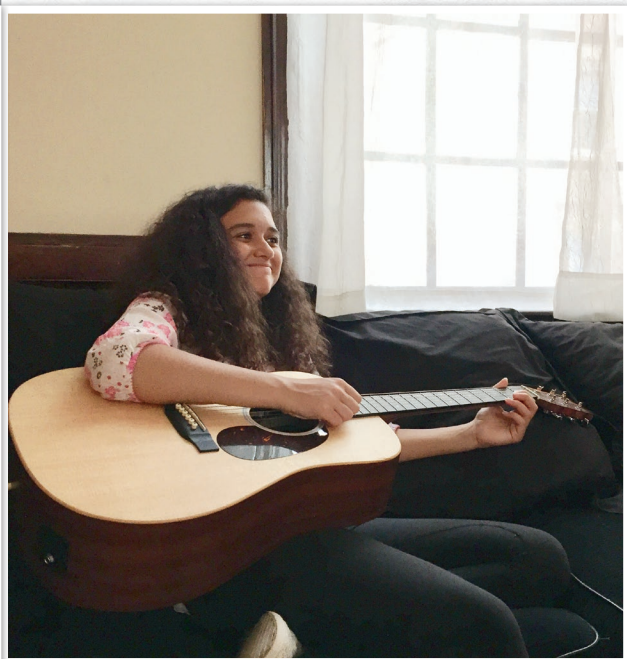
One of the ways OC Boston does this is by working with local organizations that serve

communities in and around the city, including Community Servings, the American Red Cross, and Project Bread. They have helped to prepare medically tailored meals for chronically and critically ill people, raised money for and participated in walks to combat hunger, assisted survivors of torture, and served families in need at food pantries.

I was excited to learn that people who aren’t part of a church community and who are skeptical of organized religion appreciate a church that is actively involved in the life of

the city. Some of them have participated in OC Boston’s work in the community. “Serving in their communities is important to Bostonians,” Pastor Endri said. “They value a church that contributes to the well-being of the city. Community-focused events give us an opportunity to make new friends and create meaningful relationships.”





OC Boston also values personal ministry, following Jesus' model of discipleship. Recently, the team met a mother and her daughter who were going through a difficult time. The daughter was pregnant, unmarried, and unemployed. OC Boston members visited them at home, shared meals and conversations with them, invited them to participate in church activities, and hosted a baby shower for the family. "Both women came and worshiped with us," said Maria

Infante, a team leader. "Like a number of people who meet with us regularly, they don't call themselves Seventh-day Adventist, but they're very much part of the church. They're part of us."

Maria was drawn to OC Boston because they were doing good things for people without an agenda. "I saw them showing a deep level of interest in people they had never met, people who hadn't expressed an interest in Bible studies or church. There were no strings attached, and I wanted to be part of that."

Another person OC Boston reached out to is Ina Mehmeti. "Before Endri's wife, Eva, invited me to OC, I wasn't a religious person at all, and going to church had never been my thing," she shared. "But when Endri preached, I felt every word he spoke about God. I was in tears because I felt God's presence. I was drawn to OC because of how they treated each other, their focus on the Bible, and the fact that they were making a difference in people's lives through community involvement. I found church compelling, and it made me want to be with my church family as much as I could be. OC Boston has helped me have a relationship with God and



OC Boston volunteers help distribute groceries to more than 500 families in need at the American Red Cross Food and Nutrition Program in Boston.

Ina, second from left, with OC members from Boston and Haverhill participating in Project Bread's Walk for Hunger.



His Word, and that's very special to me."

Serving others on the Sabbath is having a profound effect on the lives of OC Boston's team leaders as well. Erica Vieira Ventura, who spent many hours befriending and helping a woman who recently passed away, said, "For the first time in my life, I'm beginning to understand what it really means to keep the Sabbath. It's not just about going to church. It's about helping others."

The journey of discipleship takes time for people who haven't been part of a church community, but Pastor Endri said that he could already see transformations taking place in those who participate in the life of the church. "It's such a privilege to see people experiencing the love of God for the first

time and the salvation that comes through that love."

Pastors Endri and Sergio value training and empowering leaders to do what they do so that more churches can be planted throughout Massachusetts. "I believe God has big plans not only for Boston but for the

entire state," Pastor Endri said. "Our vision is to make disciples in every city and town in Massachusetts." Please pray for all the One Connection leaders and church plants, the people of Massachusetts, and all our church planters and Global Mission pioneers sharing the love of Jesus in the large cities of the world.

* "Church Attendance Trends Around the Country," *Barna*, last modified May 26, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/church-attendance-trends-around-country/>.



Laurie Falvo

Laurie Falvo

Office of Adventist Mission

Like Boston, many of the large cities of the world are highly secular, filled with millions of people who don't know Jesus. Your donations to Global Mission help support church planters and Global Mission pioneers in reaching urban people with God's love. But they need your help. Please support them by visiting **Global-Mission.org/giving**.



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