

mission360

The official mission magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist® Church VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 1

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Editorial

Researchers at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary recently released their report for 2013. One key finding of the report is that, contrary to conventional thinking, the world is becoming increasingly religious. In 1970, almost 80 percent of the world's population considered themselves to be religious. That percentage increased to 88 percent in 2010.

The upsurge in religiosity is due in great measure to the resurgence of Buddhism and Christianity in China and eastern Europe. If the trend continues, the researchers believe that atheism and agnosticism will continue to decline from 11.8 percent in 2010 to a projected 10.7 percent in 2020.

Will religion ever disappear? This debate has raged for decades. Granted, organized religions in Western democracies have been on the decline while people who consider themselves "unaffiliated" have been on the increase. In fact, "unaffiliated" is the fastest growing group in these countries.

But these people are not necessarily atheists. Many of them are religious on their own terms, choosing to not be associated with any particular religion.

If the conclusion of the study is correct, it stands to reason that religion will not be driven to extinction anytime soon. Religion, per se, will not meet its demise but will continue to thrive in various expressions and forms.

People's need for a divine deity has never diminished. In fact, it is only intensifying as we draw closer to the end of time. Humans will continue to reach out to Someone greater than themselves. This is good news for Adventist mission. We believe we have a special message that the world needs. People will continue to look for answers, and it is our privilege to share with them the good news of salvation.

In this issue of *Mission 360°*, you'll read many stories of Adventist

missionaries, Global Mission pioneers, and church planters who are sharing the hope of Jesus' love and soon return.

G. T. Ng

Executive Secretary, Secretariat,
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



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The Lohr family: Jason, Belen, Michaela (10), Joshua (9), Jonathan (3), and Michelle (18 months).



Our “Empty” Tank

It wasn't good news. We had just begun our medical missionary service at Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital in Nigeria when we learned that water would be released to our home only every few days due to a drought and electricity shortage.

We knew that our full tank of water needed to last as long as possible and started conserving in ways we'd never thought feasible. Showers became bucket baths—scooping water from a

bucket with a cup, pouring just enough on our bodies to get slightly wet, lathering quickly, and then barely rinsing. Dishwashing was done in a large bowl with



Above: The Lohrs' Nigerian home and water tank. Right: Checking a two-week-old baby delivered at Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital



Jason and Belen with Michaela (6) and Joshua (5).

soapy water that was then recycled to flush toilets that had more than a little in them. And the rinse water from a load of wash was drained into a plastic container to be used for the next load.

After several days, we became a little nervous about our situation. Most of our neighbors had empty tanks and were hauling water from some distance. But, amazingly, after ten days our tank continued to provide us with the precious liquid of life.

Then the morning came when water spewed from the pipe into our

tank, and we rejoiced. Water! I turned on the pump to fill our tank and ran to tell our neighbors not to miss this wonderful opportunity. Gail Giebel, seasoned missionary of ten years, met me at the door and echoed my excitement. We walked over to her tank but noticed that her pipe was not receiving any water.

“I’ll go talk to the maintenance department,” she said. “I hope this doesn’t mean one of the pipes is broken.”

I walked back home, hoping they could fix Gail’s problem quickly. A few minutes later, I was surprised to hear the sound of falling water. I ran outside to find that our tank was overflowing! I turned off the pump, startled by the record speed at which the tank had filled.

Your weekly mission offerings and world budget offerings help support more than 455 missionary families around the world. Thank you!

I looked up and saw Gail walking into our yard. “Belen, you are experiencing a miracle!” she said excitedly. “The maintenance department is not releasing water, and your house is the only one on the compound receiving it, even though all the pipes are connected.”

I felt a cold rush down my back and goose bumps on my skin as I pondered her words. I felt immense gratitude, though I couldn’t understand why we were the only ones to experience this. There were many times in our five years in Nigeria when our compound had a shortage of water and we ran out. But God knew that had we run out that first difficult month, with our two-year-old daughter and one-year-old son and far from family and friends, we may have felt overwhelmed and thought about going home.

In the Old Testament, people sometimes gave God a special name to remind them of His intervention in their lives. Hagar did so after being sent into the desert by Sarah. When she was visited by the Angel of the Lord, she called Him “The-God-Who-Sees” because He had seen her pain. Through our water miracle, we too would give God a name.

We called Him “The-God-Who-Fills-Our-Tank” because He provided for our every need. When things get difficult, we remember this amazing experience and are reminded that our Lord is an awesome, faithful, and all-knowing God who won’t let us be tempted beyond what we can endure.

Belen Lohr and her husband, Jason, graduated in 2001 from Loma Linda University Medical School in California and later specialized in family medicine. They served as medical missionaries for five years at Ile-Ife Adventist Hospital in Nigeria and two years at Valle De Angeles Adventist Hospital in Honduras.



Left: Belen leading African Kids 4 Christ, a choir consisting of more than 80 children. Right: Reading an X-ray.





Erica, second from left, with volunteer missionary friends at Helderberg College.



Where Are You From, Anyway?

This question has troubled me for years, and I suspect it's troubled other children of missionaries who were raised overseas. Frequently referred to as third-culture kids, we don't share the culture of the place we were born nor that of the place our parents left behind. We create our own culture. And we feel the greatest camaraderie when we're together because of what we do share—a strong sense of not belonging.

When I entered college, the dreaded question of where I was from came more frequently. For years, I had faced it with uncertainty. My most common answer through high school started with, "Uh," accompanied by a startled, deer-caught-in-the-headlights look. But in the past year or two, I've gotten creative. I've started replying, "Everywhere," or "Nowhere," or even,



Erica and Lyndon with their dad in the Congo.



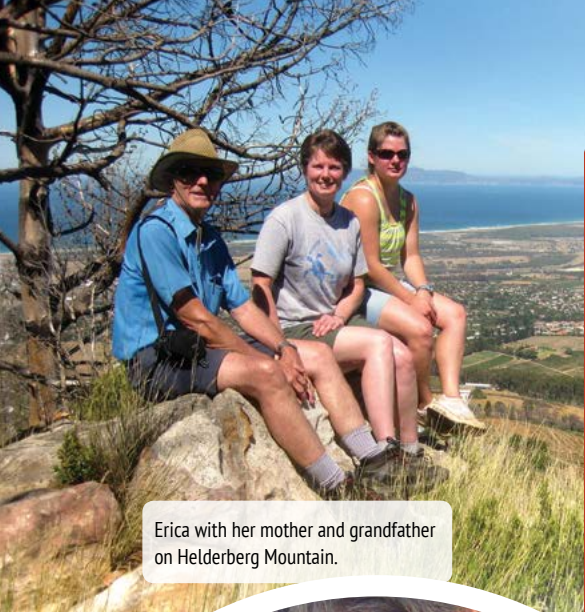
Erica and Lyndon on vacation in the Congo.

"That depends. What part of my life would you like to know about?"

Eventually, after some urging, I'll explain, "Well, I was born in South Africa, but I grew up in Zaire, which became The Democratic Republic of

Congo while I was there, but my permanent address is in the United States, so take your pick!"

As a student in the United States, I got used to my classmates saying "Erica, say that thing that you say funny." For the most part, I had learned to laugh off my differences. Yet, there were moments when I became



Erica with her mother and grandfather on Helderberg Mountain.



Erica and her mom in South Africa.



Meeting a cheetah in South Africa.

Adventist Volunteer Service

facilitates volunteer missionary service of church members around the world. Volunteers ages 18 to 80 may serve as pastors, teachers, medical professionals, computer technicians, orphanage workers, farmers, and more. To learn more, please visit www.AdventistVolunteers.org.



frustrated about not knowing the right word, about not being understood. Moments when I wanted to belong, when I wanted people to listen to *what* I was trying to say rather than *how* I was saying it.

In the States, when I encountered a situation where I didn't fit in, I could shrug and say, "Well, I'm a South African," and people would suddenly understand why what I had said or done seemed weird. I had always been proud of where I considered myself to be from. The problem started when I became a volunteer missionary.

I went through a complicated process of choosing where I wanted to serve. First it was Tchad, then Poland, Denmark, England, or Israel. The last place on my list was South Africa. As much as I love South Africa, it seemed odd to go back to the place I was from to be a volunteer. Also, I wanted to be a dean or teacher or something more volunteerish than a secretary. But it turned out that being a secretary was exactly what God had in mind for me. And, surprisingly, the experience has become a blessing.

Here in South Africa, I get called "the American" or "the volunteer from the States," something that leaves me silently cringing. In my head I cry out, *I was born in Johannesburg; I'm from here!* But to South Africans, I'm American.

Being a third-culture kid can be painful sometimes, but I've come to realize that there is a blessing in not belonging. Though hidden, the blessing lies in the promise of a heavenly home, one that will be oh-so-sweet for those of us who have felt the despair of not belonging anywhere. In heaven, we will all fit in. We will be automatic citizens, never going through the rigmarole of filling out citizenship paperwork or explaining our dual-citizenship status.

While I love my culturally diverse background, there's a part of me that longs to belong. God has used this year of volunteering to turn my longing toward heaven and a life with Him. Like the hymn *I'm But a Stranger Here* says, "There at my Savior's side, Heav'n is my home. There are the good and blest, those I love most and best; and there I, too, shall rest, Heav'n is my home."

Born in South Africa, **Erica Bradfield** moved to the United States in 1998. She served as the secretary to the arts faculty at Helderberg College in South Africa.



Pioneer Postcards

“Dear church family,

Please pray for the work we’re doing in unentered areas all over the world. We need God to soften people’s hearts and to give us wisdom so that we can help hasten Jesus’ return. Thank you for supporting our ministry. We are reaching people for Jesus!”

1 Peter Joshua Solomon
Botswana

“When I see people come to Jesus, I feel so happy that I had a small part in it.”

2 Kebagogle Moyeyi
Botswana

Global Mission pioneers are local people who dedicate at least one year to starting new churches in areas or among people groups where there is little or no Adventist presence. Many are volunteers, living on small stipends. They work in challenging conditions and some are the only Seventh-day Adventists in an area of more than one million people.

Their ministry wouldn’t be possible without your support. Thank you!

To learn more about Global Mission pioneers, please visit www.global-mission.org.

“I love being a pioneer! It’s so rewarding to see people catch a glimpse of God’s love and acceptance. Please pray for me and the people I’m reaching out to.”

3 Phillip Makgatle
Botswana

“I love this ministry. I would love to march into heaven with everyone that God has created!”

4 Baitshoki Sebeetswekgomo
Botswana

“Some of us are working in areas where it’s very difficult to reach people for Jesus. Please pray that God will make us more effective.”

5 Mookodi Mokopotsa
Botswana

“It’s hard to share Jesus where I serve, but I’ve learned that one of the most effective ways is through children. I plan to start a child-to-child ministry and do everything I can to empower God’s little jewels to share the love story of Jesus with others. Please pray for my new ministry.”

6 Amos Mapharing
Botswana

“The first person I helped lead to Christ at my church plant was baptized last Sabbath. I’m excited that I have an opportunity to help bring people to God.”

7 Mijo Rakotomalala
Madagascar

“I’m responsible for 12 churches in an area where 80 percent of the people



practice traditional religion and are desperately poor. I give many of them Bible studies and minister to their needs. Despite many challenges, the Holy Spirit has blessed. We’ve started two branch Sabbath schools and a new church plant and have baptized 27 people.”

8 Joseph Patrick Rakotobe
Madagascar

“My goal as a pioneer is to share the everlasting gospel and to help people really understand what the Seventh-day Adventist Church stands for.”

9 Harsha Niaina Davidra
Madagascar

“Thank you very much for supporting our work. Your efforts are not in vain. You’re helping many to see the light.”

10 Rangarirayi Matache
South Africa





1

God's Angels

From the moment we became missionaries, it seemed like Satan tackled us on every side.



I was opening the gate to our home when the wind from an unexpected storm yanked it from my hand, knocking me on my face and gashing my ankle clean to the tendon. Six stitches and a pair of crutches later I was back home, ready to unpack and start my new life as a missionary. From that point on, it seemed that Satan tackled us at every side.

Our vehicle was broken into. Our groceries were stolen. I got bitten by a dog. Our baby got roseola. We were robbed. We had problems at work. But each time God performed some miracle—great or small—to confirm that He was with us.

2



4



Living in the tropical country of Papua New Guinea, we often faced health challenges. Many times, one of our kids would have a fever that wouldn't respond to medication. While they slept, I would pray and cry, asking God for help because I felt I couldn't take it anymore. Each time this happened, our child woke up well!

We had been in the country only a few weeks when our daughter's temperature soared to 107.5. We tried medicines, cold baths, charcoal—everything we could think of. As we prayed for guidance, I suddenly remembered meeting a young mother

at church who had given us her phone number. I called her, thinking she might be able to recommend a good hospital.

Imagine our relief when we learned that she was a pediatrician and her husband was a surgeon! The couple rushed over with their medical bags, examined our daughter, and made plans for her to be admitted to a hospital. They even took charge of supervising her treatment and arranged for us to stay with her.

To determine what was wrong, our daughter needed an X-ray. But here, as in many countries, there's often a

long wait to get one. To complicate matters, it was a national holiday. But, once again, God sent an angel. The only person trained to use the X-ray machine (he wasn't scheduled to work that day) just happened to walk down the hall. Our doctor friends asked him to do the X-ray on the spot. This gave us the diagnosis—pneumonia—and allowed immediate treatment. Within 24 hours her temperature was down enough for us to go home!

Security was a constant issue. One morning during worship with the children, we talked about God's protecting angels. Then I took my daughter to run

You must get out of here **now!**



3



5

- 1 The Kennedy family.
- 2 The villagers from MiMofu thanking us for visiting them.
- 3 The villagers love to watch the plane come and go.
- 4 Kyle delivering God Pods—a solar-powered, waterproof, unerasable iPod that has the Bible in Pidgin on it. Each of the more than 800 villages has its own language, but most villagers speak Pidgin, so this is a fabulous way to spread God's Word!
- 5 Once a year "Goroka Show" comes to our town, where many of the area villagers demonstrate their native garb and dance.

a few errands. We were in a store when I realized we were being watched by a group of men. I saw them split up and begin to surround us. One of them had what looked like a knife behind his back. I grabbed my daughter and ducked under the racks and ran for the guards. The young men weren't caught, but we were safe. Turning to me, my daughter exclaimed, "Mommy, Jesus sent His angels to protect us!" It was a wonderful lesson for her about God's protection.

Another time a construction worker told us that his wife had seen two questionable men come to our gate during the previous week. One stood guard while the other took out a key, opened our gate, and entered our yard. When the men saw the construction crew within view, they quickly left, no doubt intending to return later. As soon as our night guard arrived, I told him, so he could be on the lookout for these intruders. His response was chilling but humbling. "Several times during the past week, something told me to 'urgently go to your house!'" he said. I had been alone with the children all week, yet God had not left me undefended. He spoke to our guard—another of His angels.

One time I was out shopping with two friends and a guard. While the guard ran an errand for me, someone stole my purse. In it was a significant amount of money, my phone, my driver's license, and a bank card. After so many difficulties this seemed like the last straw!

I went home crying and claimed what was by now a very familiar verse: "I will contend with those who contend with you" (Isaiah: 49:25, NIV).

Amazingly, my husband called 30 minutes later, telling me that he had my phone, card, and driver's license. It turned out that another customer overheard me report the theft and took it upon himself to get my phone number and my husband's. He texted the thief and talked him into returning my things. He then called my husband with the news, apologizing for the behavior of his countryman. Another angel.

Every time we were overwhelmed with discouragement, God did something to remind us of His care. Several times we ran out of money, and our food was nearly gone. Suddenly every fruit tree in our yard produced fruit.

The climax of our experience came at the end. We are still trying to understand why God allowed things to happen as they did, but we do know that He displayed

His presence and protection to us in a mighty way. Our son had become critically ill. We had already flown him to a clinic twice, but the cause of his illness couldn't be found. The decision had been made to give him the strongest medicine available, and if that didn't work, he would be taken by medevac to Australia. The third time he became ill we were unable to fly, so we drove—something very difficult in a country where torrential rains wreak havoc with the roads and crime can create security issues.

We had traveled for an hour when we came to a one-lane bridge. An oncoming bus pulled aside to allow us to pass first. The road was full of car-sized holes, and where the bridge reached land on the other side it was particularly bad, so we proceeded very slowly. Just as we were reaching the bad section on the other side next to the bus waiting its turn, another passenger bus came flying toward us. With an embankment on



6



10



9



11



We lay against the floorboards praying, my sick son screaming in pain and confusion as I held him down, not knowing what we might encounter in an area where people still use guns, bush knives, clubs, and spears to fight. When we got to the grass airstrip, the guards quickly got out, encircled us, and shuttled us onto the waiting plane, which immediately took off. Within a week we were advised by embassy and church officials that we should leave the country permanently for our own safety.

What a disappointment! This was certainly not how we dreamed that our mission service would end. However, looking back, it's humbling to see the many things that God did for us. He miraculously spared our lives multiple times, and although we were literally running for our lives in the end, no harm came to us. We learned that God is stronger than anything and that He never leaves His children. We saw Him work through many wonderful people. And someday, we will understand it all.

We're the Kennedy family from Tennessee—Shelley, Kyle, Nova (6), and Kameron (4). We served as missionaries in Papua New Guinea, where my husband maintained the mission planes for Adventist Aviation Services. We're now in Tennessee working on airplanes and raising our children, waiting to see where God leads us next! —Shelley Kennedy

God miraculously spared our lives.

one side and the waiting bus on the other, we were two seconds from a fatal head-on collision. Yet God created space and the bus crashed between us and the other bus. Our truck took most of the impact.

We knew that loss of life was likely and had been told that in situations like this, it's imperative to keep driving to a safe place. In shock we noted that we were all unharmed (although glass was everywhere, including in my mouth and in my children's ears). We quickly drove to a nearby store, reported the accident to the police, and called for an ambulance. We prayed for the people in the crashed bus and drove the remaining hour to the clinic to tend to our critically ill son.

Upon arriving at the clinic, we discovered that the impact had nearly torn the bed off our truck and had broken the leaf spring that holds on the axle. For a full hour, we had driven over huge potholes with only a little safety wire holding the axle together.

The staff rushed my son to the doctors while I told the story of

our accident. They decided that the treatment was working and could be continued in-country, but a new crisis developed. There was increasing concern for our safety as reports were coming in of deaths from the accident. (We later learned that the bus had gone over the bridge and 12 people had died.) When someone is killed, it's the custom of the village people to kill the person they hold responsible. Because we had been part of the crash scene, we became the recipients of their wrath.

The clinic's compound security guards came to tell us that angry villagers had come looking for us. The guards were able to turn them away, but they only left to round up more villagers before coming back after us. The clinic packed a bag with all the medicines my son would need for the next week, and the guards told us, "You must get out of here *now!*"

They had us lie down in a truck with guards in one truck in front of us and in another truck behind us. They urged us not to let anyone see us.

- 6** Our night guard cooked us dinner in village style over heated rocks. It's called a mu-mu, which is the word for "steam." You bury the food inside banana leaves, and when the steam escapes—it's done!
- 7** Posing with the Asaro Mud Men.
- 8** Since cannibalism is in the not-too distant past here, we call this photo, "You wouldn't like us, we're vegetarians!"
- 9** Walking to church on Sabbath.
- 10** Our children with their angels.
- 11** Inside a village church.





Home, a World Away



The crew of music enthusiasts ambles onstage, picks up instruments and microphones, and begins a sort of Adventist karaoke session. It's Friday evening after vespers, and I'm listening from the back of the auditorium at Middle East University, where I serve as a missionary volunteer.

There's a man from Russia on the piano with his Latvian wife next to him holding a microphone, a Hungarian woman playing the cello, an Armenian teenager playing the guitar, a Turkish man sharing a microphone with the new couple



from Argentina, and a Lebanese man tapping softly on the drums while an American picks up the bass to join in.

They play and sing "I Can Only Imagine," and as the music begins to echo through the auditorium, I realize that I've started whispering the words along with them.

All around me I feel this wave of vibrant beauty at the incredible diversity playing out before me. Yes, the words of the song say, "I can only imagine . . ." but in a sense, I feel that I've already begun to see. For here on this





culture in which my regular associates represented countries from all over the world. Living in this environment facilitated travel opportunities that would have otherwise been difficult to find, such as studying on three continents and serving in Lebanon.

The rich diversity and unity of Adventism is, to me, one of the greatest achievements of our denomination, and I am fortunate to exist within this vibrancy.

Our early leaders understood the Great Commission early on, taking the gospel throughout the globe in just a few generations. Our church has established a presence in the world in an unprecedented way for such a young denomination. This factor, accompanied by the mission mentality of our faith, fosters global communities in every location where Adventists congregate.

campus, we aren't merely representatives of our various home nations. We're one people, one body: coworkers, students, and friends. I can't help thinking that maybe this is what heaven will be like.

I tried to come to Lebanon with an open mind and not limit my experience with preconceived expectations. But I definitely didn't expect to find the diverse community that I've become part of. It's amazing and it feels like *home*. It has *become* home.

Born in Berrien Springs, Michigan, I was immersed in a unique Adventist

Lebanon is no exception, and it's beautiful to be caught up in the great global web that connects all of us across oceans and continents. Often, when I sit in the auditorium after vespers, closing my eyes and listening to the music spiral outward and upward, I think how incredible it is to live in this place with these people, to have this experience while I'm still young.

And while I whisper the words to the songs, I also whisper a prayer of thanks for the amazing privilege of being a Seventh-day Adventist.

From the United States, **Jason Lemon** served in Lebanon as a journalist for the Office of Communication at Middle East University.

Clockwise from bottom left: Jason (purple shirt) with friends in the Lebanon mountains; Musicians play in the auditorium after Friday night vespers; Jason, right, on Middle East University campus with students from Egypt and South Sudan; Recruiting prospective students; At the Roman ruins of Baalbek; The university church band, representing eight nationalities, performs during a concert.



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



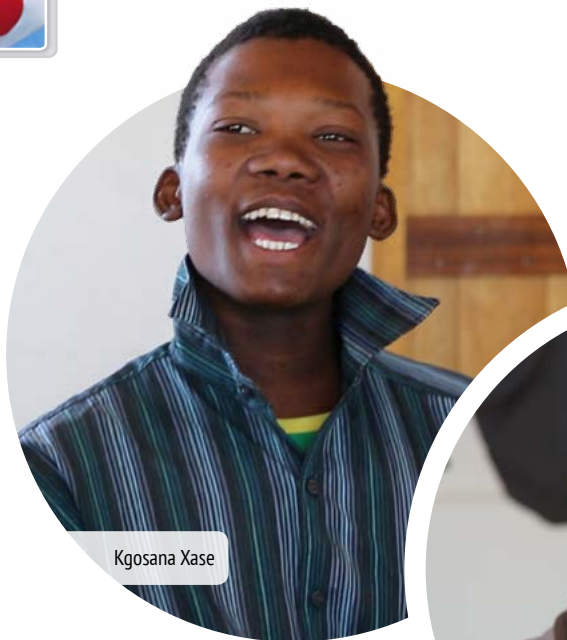
I'd Be Dead

“If it wasn't for our Global Mission pioneer, I'd be dead by now,” says Kgosana Xase, a recently baptized member of the Bere Adventist church plant in Botswana. His young face looks so sweet as he sings hymns, it's hard to imagine him brawling in a bar with men on the verge of stabbing each other. But this is the new Kgosana. The one who gave his heart to Jesus because a pioneer named Ishmael came to live and work in his village.

Sitting next to Kgosana in the sanctuary is his newly baptized friend Basimilwe. “My life changed dramatically when I became an Adventist,” he says, flashing a radiant smile. “I used to practice ancestor worship, and I was a serious robber. Wherever there was mischief going on, you could find me right in the middle of it!”

Basimilwe was arrested frequently, but his life began to change the day Ishmael knocked on his door to tell him about Jesus. “I gave myself to God and stopped drinking and stealing,” he says. “I'm a free man in Christ, and for the first time in my life I'm happy with who I am.”

As Chief Gorosho listens to the new members speak, a look of satisfaction crosses his weathered face. Since the former pioneer left several years ago, he's watched sadly as most of the congregation slipped away. “These new members



Kgosana Xase



Basimilwe

give me hope,” he says, patting Ishmael's shoulder. “In just one year, our pioneer has brought many members back and added eight new ones!”

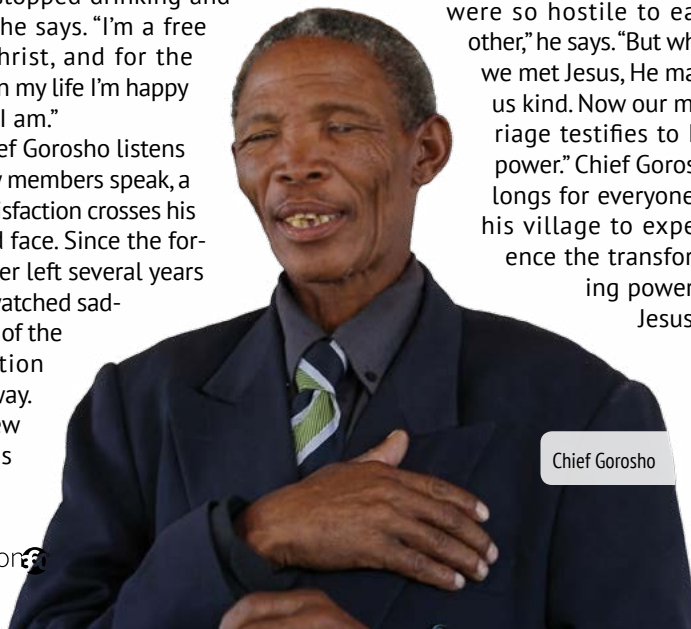
Chief Gorosho joined the Adventist church in 2000 when members of the Ghanzi* church held evangelistic meetings in Bere. He remembers worshiping under a tree while the Bere church was being built. “It's very hard to worship on the ground during rainy season,” he says with a laugh. “We missed the inspiration of worshiping together during those months. But with our own church, we can worship together all the time now.”

Chief Gorosho and his wife weren't Christians when they attended the evangelistic meetings. “We were so hostile to each other,” he says. “But when we met Jesus, He made us kind. Now our marriage testifies to His power.” Chief Gorosho longs for everyone in his village to experience the transforming power of Jesus.

Ishmael Rabatho is a seasoned pioneer who has worked many places where there was previously no Adventist presence. But he says serving the Basarwa or Bushmen people in Bere is the toughest challenge he's ever faced. “Poverty, disease, and despair are rampant here, but one of my greatest obstacles is the language barrier.” The Basarwa's language is very difficult to learn, and Ishmael has no translator or literature available in the villagers' dialect.[†] “I can only communicate with them because a few of them speak a little of my language,” he says.

Transportation is another challenge for Ishmael in this remote settlement. “His only mode of transport is a bicycle,” says Pastor Ramasankate, the Ghanzi district pastor who oversees his work. “And there's no riding a bike in the Kalahari sand!”

To buy food, Ishmael must catch a ride to Ghanzi, a distance of 150 kilometers one way. To catch that ride, he must walk 14 kilometers on a road where lions are sometimes spotted. But the lack of a vehicle isn't just an inconvenience to Ishmael. He longs to take the gospel to those



Chief Gorosho



Pastor Ishmael visits a neighbor.

Schoolchildren waiting for Pastor Ishmael to visit.



living outside the settlement—a desire held in check by long distances and dangerous animals.

But perhaps the greatest challenge Ishmael faces is reaching the Basarwa people spiritually. It has taken a year of gently trying to earn their trust, of attending their funerals, praying with the troubled, visiting the sick, and playing with their children.

“It’s very hard to share Jesus with my people,” says Chief Gorosho. “But since Pastor Ishmael came, I’ve noticed a gradual softening of their hearts. He’s reaching out to those who have never known God, and he’s doing a great work in them. I’ve seen a remarkable change in my community.”

Pastor Ramasankate is also thankful for Ishmael’s ministry. “If it weren’t for Ishmael,” he says, “there would be no Adventist work in Bere.” Pastor Ramasankate’s district covers some 119,000 square kilometers, and he can visit each church in it only once a year. “I have only three pioneers but we need many more for such a large territory.”

Despite the many challenges of working in Bere, Ishmael is optimistic. He loves being a Global

Mission pioneer and believes that God called him to this unique ministry.

But he requests the prayers of his church family.

“Please pray that God will enable me to share the gospel without any hindrance,” he asks, “so that the Basarwa can see a true picture of Jesus and understand God’s Word. And please pray that God’s Spirit will be

poured upon these people so they’ll be receptive to His love and ready for His soon return.”

- * Ghanzi is the capital of Kalahari.
- † There are more than 12 dialects of the Basarwa’s language. The New Testament has been translated into only one.

Laurie Falvo

Office of Adventist Mission



Botswana has a strong **Global Mission pioneer program**. From the union to the conference to the district pastor and local church, pioneers are supported with finances, resources, and prayer. But more pioneers are needed to reach the many unreached areas and people groups in Botswana. To learn more, please visit www.global-mission.org.



Pastor Ishmael sings and prays with the schoolchildren.



It was a week I'll never forget. It was supposed to be an ordinary visit to a large city. But this particular trip had me on the edge of my seat because in front of my eyes was one of the most passionate people I've ever met.

Asebi's Journey



Asebi* is an immigrant in one of the world's largest cities. Like other large cities, it's attracted people from many countries, cultures, and religious backgrounds. Some of these people groups have traditionally been very opposed to Christianity. The history of war, colonialism, and trade has made a significant impact on them, causing them to see Christians in a negative light.

When Asebi came to this city as a student, he was not a follower of Jesus. He had a good job and things were going well for him until immigration officials wrongly sent him to jail.

While in prison, Asebi began to experience God's love in a new way. Some fellow prisoners shared Christ with him, and he became a believer. In one of the books they gave him, he found a card for Discover Bible Lessons and began doing Bible studies through the mail. Asebi didn't understand everything he read, but the lessons raised a lot of questions for him, even about the religion he had grown up in. Within a few days those who were answering his questions called one of the pastors who works for a Global Mission Center that specializes in the religion of Asebi's birth.

To Asebi's surprise, he soon received a visit from an Adventist who knew more about his birth religion than he did. His new friend didn't take him immediately to the scripture, but patiently answered all his questions about his birth religion. Little by little, Asebi gained a deeper understanding of scripture, himself, and Jesus.

When Asebi was released from prison, he stepped out into a brand new life. He had experienced God's grace and wanted to share his discoveries with those who shared his religious background.

Asebi does his work, living on small assistance from the church and a lot of help from fellow Christians. His work is sacrificial, but he trusts God to provide for his every need.

During my week in the city, I spent hours visiting people in their homes and in prison, witnessing the remarkable change the gospel has brought to their lives. Not all of them

MISSION to the CITIES

Mission to the Cities is the Seventh-day Adventist Church's emphasis on sharing Jesus' love and the hope of His soon return with people in the world's largest cities. A vital part of that initiative is establishing Centers of Influence—wholistic ministry centers that put Christ's method of ministry into practice. These Life Hope Centers provide a springboard for starting new groups of believers through mingling, showing sympathy, ministering to needs, and leading people to Jesus. To learn more, visit www.MissiontotheCities.org.

shared the religion of Asebi's youth, but they all shared something else—the opportunity to have the gospel presented to them in a language and culture they can understand. It was the first time that Christ and the Bible truth had been presented to them without the garments of western culture that so often are confused with Christianity.

I was on the edge of my seat that week, watching the great controversy between Christ and Satan played out before my eyes, and—in spite of the news so often reported—Christ was winning in the lives of those we met.

People all over the world are looking for something more real, more profound, and more practical than what they currently know. They're looking for Christ, and many don't even know it.

One way you can help share the good news is to learn as much as you

can about the cultures and religions of the world, to study the ways of people, and to learn what Ellen White calls "the science of salvation."

The Office of Adventist Mission started the Global Mission Centers with you in mind, because it is you who presents the gospel to your coworkers and neighbors. The centers offer resources and training for churches and members around the world. If you'd like to know more about building bridges with people from other world religions or help people like Asebi in their work for the gospel, please visit www.AdventistMission.org.

* Not his real name.

Rick McEdward
Office of Adventist Mission





One Tough Assignment



With Srey Pit, the little sister of two of my students.

I could have never prepared myself enough for what I face each day in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Poverty lines the streets. Naked children play in piles of trash. Not a day goes by that I don't wish that Jesus would come to take all of this pain away.

I want to give and give to the people around me, and yet, finding the strength to even get up some mornings and face reality is a challenge. However, I've always believed that you should do things with passion or not at all. So I try to remain as passionate as I can about serving. I believe that the people of Cambodia deserve nothing less than passionate love.

Serving as a volunteer teacher in Cambodia has been one of the most challenging jobs of my life, but I'll be forever thankful for how much I've

grown since I've been here. Some days are wonderful, but others are painful and lonely. Sometimes, all you need is for someone to look you right in the eyes, straight down to your soul, and say that they truly believe in you. Today left me with a memory like that, one I'll always cherish.



With my students.

My students are learning the books of the Bible. Each week they memorize ten new books along with a memory verse. In order to shake up our somewhat monotonous routine, I decided today to write the names of the books on the whiteboard in cursive.

Every so often I have the students practice their handwriting, and they usually want to kill me for doing so; they think that writing anything in English is hard. Today I chose to answer their complaints by explaining that even though learning new things can be challenging, it's ultimately going to be good for them.

One of my fourth grade boys was almost in tears as he looked up at my



The boys in my ESL class.



With my 10th grade students on my last day of teaching in Cambodia.



My ESL class, grades 3 to 8.

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



cursive. "Teacher, it is easy for you and very difficult for me!" he yelled out in desperation, hoping that I would change my mind about the assignment. The little boy looked so hopeless that I couldn't help but chuckle to myself, knowing that he had some of the most beautiful handwriting in the class.

I knew that he would continue to complain if I ignored his appeals. So, I knelt in front of his desk and looked right into his teary brown eyes. I said, "You can do this! I know you can." He quickly pleaded, "No Cha,* I cannot at all!" I gave him a disbelieving look, and he understood that I was not going to change the assignment.

Still kneeling in front of him, I asked him to please try again. I

remained at his desk for a few minutes until he finally put his pencil to the paper and slowly wrote out E-s-t-h-e-r. In between each letter he would look up at me for support. He finished the last loop on the *r*, and I gave him the biggest smile I could and said, "Perfect!" All of a sudden, his eyes lit up with confidence, the trace of tears making them sparkle. "See! I knew you could do it!" I said. I returned to my desk and watched him quickly finish his assignment.

This was such a simple moment, yet it burned deep into my heart. I couldn't help but see myself in my student. So many times throughout the past five months I have found myself in tears, pleading for an easier assignment. I picture God up there, chuckling inside because He knows that I can do it.

It's hard being here. I struggle a lot, but today I felt like God looked right into my teary brown eyes, straight into my soul, and said that He truly believed in me. And I felt like that was enough to show me that God hasn't left me all alone in Cambodia. He is continually working on me, and in the end I will be thankful for my assignment because after all, learning and experiencing new things may be challenging, but it's good for me!

*A nickname for teacher that Cambodians use.

From the United States, **Amber AQUI** served as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at the Cambodia Adventist School.



With my students and Alexandria, a volunteer from Walla Walla University.

Mission Media

The Office of Adventist Mission produces two TV programs, *Mission 360°* on Hope Channel and *Global Mission Snapshots* on Three Angels' Broadcasting Network (3ABN).



The *Mission 360°* television program on Hope Channel treats you to uplifting stories of frontline mission workers and volunteers who have exchanged the comfort of home for the adventure of working for God in unfamiliar and challenging places. You'll be inspired by the tales of faith-building moments borne out of crisis and triumph.

Watch *Mission 360°* on Hope Channel at the following times in North America:

Airtimes (Eastern Time)

Fridays	11 P.M.
Sabbaths	8 A.M., 5 P.M., and 8 P.M.
Sundays	7 P.M.
Wednesday	8 P.M. and 11 P.M.

GLOBAL MISSION *Snapshots*

The *Global Mission Snapshots* television program on 3ABN offers inspiring stories about Global Mission pioneers and other church planters who work in challenging areas of the world. As you watch men and women around the world come to know a powerful and caring God, your heart will be touched.

Watch *Global Mission Snapshots* on 3ABN at the following times in North America:

Airtimes (Eastern Time)

Fridays	11 P.M.
Sundays	7:30 P.M.



Mission 360° DVD

Watch stories about real missionaries and hear life-changing testimonies from people who have met Jesus for the first time. A free copy of our *Mission 360°* DVD is sent to each Seventh-day Adventist church in the North American Division. You can watch these mission stories online, or you can order your own DVD subscription by visiting www.Adventist.Mission.org. Click the **Resources** tab, click **Mission DVD**, and then make your selection from the menu choices.



The **Angel** Car

We had driven 953 miles across Mozambique and were only 38 miles from our destination. The night had become very dark, and we were exhausted after 12 hours of travel.

I had been able to import, with great effort and cost, some Portuguese literature for an evangelistic campaign, and my wife and I were trying to get it to the meetings in time. Unfortunately, being new to this country, we didn't know it was flood season.

As we drove onto a bridge over a river, some boys began waving at us. We waved back and drove down off the bridge—into high water. The river had overflowed and water was lapping against our car windows. We knew the engine would stall any minute, and the literature in the trunk would be ruined. It was too dark to see how far the water extended, and too dangerous to back up.

The current was very strong. Our lives were in danger and I felt like despairing. I asked my wife to pray while I continued to drive, wondering

what to do. Suddenly a big car came rapidly from behind and passed us. "I'll follow in his wake," I thought.

For the next mile and a half we followed the bright taillights through the water, which was visibly lowered by the passage of the vehicle. Finally, the road emerged from the water. We were safe!

We looked all around, but the car we had followed was gone. It had disappeared! I stopped our car. My legs were shaking and my wife began to cry. We hugged each other and prayed in thanksgiving to God.

Soon we arrived at the hotel that was our destination. That night we gave thanks for two miracles: the angel car that had led us through the waters, and the angel hands that had sealed our trunk. Not a drop of water had entered it. The literature was completely dry!



The flooded road three days after our experience.

Your mission and world budget offerings help to make mission work possible. Thank you!

We will never forget the day God fulfilled His promise in Isaiah 43:2: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you" (NIV).

Originally from Brazil, **Dilson and Lea Bezerra** were missionaries in Africa for six years, the past three at the Mozambique Union where Dilson served as the ministerial secretary and vice president, and Lea was the office secretary. They now live in Texas, where Dilson pastors the San Antonio Highland Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church.

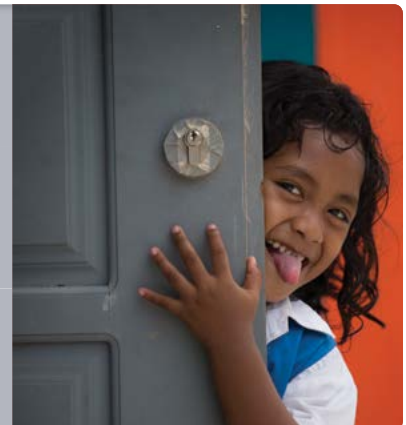


About our cover photo...

Photo by Ricky Oliveras

This happy little girl burst into giggles whenever she saw the camera of our photographer. In her homeland of West Papua, Indonesia, visitors bring their cameras in search of colorful parrots, exotic birds of paradise, and some of largest butterflies known to exist.

In this territory, the church was organized in 1950 as the Irian Jaya Mission, but since 1955 it has been known as the Papua Mission. Today there are 112 churches with a membership of more than 22,000.



How Are We Doing?

Historical and Recent Trends in Adventist Mission

Sometimes, as Seventh-day Adventists, we tend to focus on *success* stories of foreign mission—stories of lives transformed by the good news of a crucified and risen Savior and by Adventism’s distinctive wholistic health and educational slant on the gospel message. The problem is that if we concentrate too much on the success stories, we can gain a false impression. There are countries in the world in which 10 percent of the population are Seventh-day Adventists—an extraordinary success story, for which we praise God. Yet there are still billions of people, living in large parts of the world, who have never heard of Jesus or the three angels’ messages. There is still an enormous need for people to go as missionaries or to give to support missionaries. There is still a need for Seventh-day Adventist Christians to be willing to “Go into all the world” (Mark 16:15, NIV).

However, there is evidence that our collective willingness to go or to give is in decline, despite the need of the unreached billions of the largely non-Christian countries of the “10/40 window” and of the post-Christian millions of Europe.

Statistics on the total number of missionaries sent by the General



Conference and *in service* each year were not collected until 1979. Until then, the missionary statistics reported each year were the number of workers sent out to mission fields. Figure 1 shows the decade-by-decade totals of missionaries dispatched by the denomination starting with the 1870s, which gives a good indication of the total Adventist cross-cultural missionary effort.

The numbers of missionaries sent each year unsurprisingly dipped during the Great Depression and early part of World War II but then increased yearly for 30 years. The most missionaries sent out in any year were 473 in 1969, almost matched the following year by 470. The last time more than 400 missionaries were sent in a year was 1986. As figure 1 shows, the decade-by-decade trend peaked in the 1960s when 3,450 missionaries were sent, almost matched by 3,421 in the 1970s; but for the next 30 years there has been a steady decline.

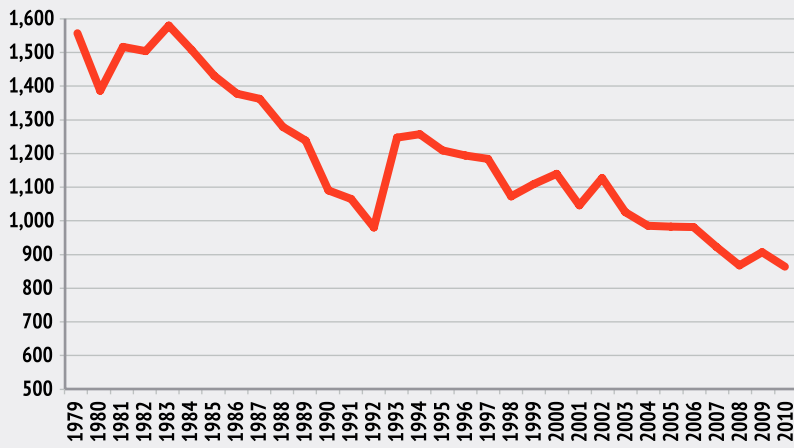
This decline is matched by a decline in the numbers of missionaries *in service* each year. As noted above, the first year for which we have these figures is 1979. Figure 2 shows total missionaries in the field from 1979 through 2010. The total number in service peaked in 1983,

How to give your mission offering:

- » During Sabbath School
- » Give online at <https://giving.AdventistMission.org>
- » In North America, mark a tithe envelope “World Mission Budget” at your local church or call 800-648-5824

FIGURE 2

Total number of IDEs in service, 1979–2010



when 1,584 long-term missionaries (now called interdivision employees or IDEs) were active; that number has been in decline ever since, with a partial recovery from the mid 1990s through the early 2000s, but a particularly marked decline starting in 2003.

Now, this is not the whole story, of course, for since 1993 the church has deployed thousands of Global Mission pioneers. They are national workers rather than traditional foreign missionaries, but they are taking the gospel to unreached people groups as missionaries once did. Also, in the past 30 years, a significant feature on the church's missionary landscape has been volunteers; in the past 20 years, in particular, the number of missionaries sent by Adventist Volunteer Service dramatically increased. The expansion in volunteering is illustrated in figure 3, which shows the number of volunteers sent each year from 1981 through 2010.

The willingness of hundreds of Adventists, young and old, to volunteer in foreign countries each year bears

witness to enduring interest in mission service among our members—Adventists are, it seems, still willing to “go.” However, it is important to note that volunteers are typically appointed to one-year terms of service, whereas traditional missionary “appointees” were and are appointed to five-year terms or longer. This means one might need to send out about 5,000 volunteers to equal the deployment of 1,000 IDEs. Thus, the numbers of volunteers going each year cannot make up for the fall in numbers of long-term missionaries sent out or

maintained in service.

Also disturbing is the decline in the willingness of our people to give to missions. Figure 4 shows the trend in Adventist mission offerings over the past hundred years. This is not total giving, but the amount given to the world mission offering, which was first introduced in 1912. There was a dip in the late 1970s and another in the early 1980s, then a period of virtual stagnation from 1991 through 2003, but sustained increase ever since. So far, so good—we might just say, “Praise the Lord” and think no more about it. Now, to be sure, the generosity of Seventh-day Adventists and their historical willingness to sacrifice for foreign missions is a large part of the reason for our history of sustained growth. But we know this is not the whole story.

First, while the volume of offerings has increased, so has the membership. We need, then, to look at the offering figures per capita. In 1932, at perhaps the height of the Great Depression, the average World Mission Offering per member was \$5.83, but in 2010 the average amount given per member was \$4.81. This is despite the fact that inflation means the value of the 2010 dollar was already less than the 1932 dollar. This brings us to the second point. Figure 5 shows offerings in actual dollar amounts. Yet we know that inflation has been very

FIGURE 3

Number of volunteers sent each year, 1981–2010

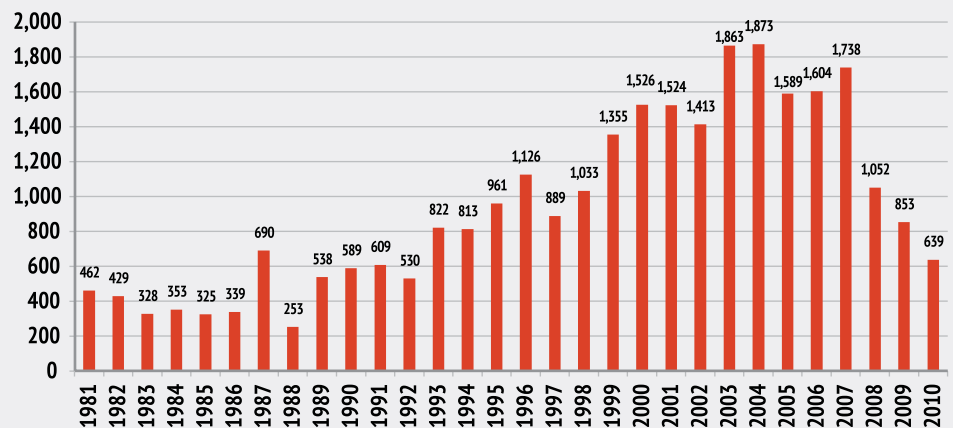
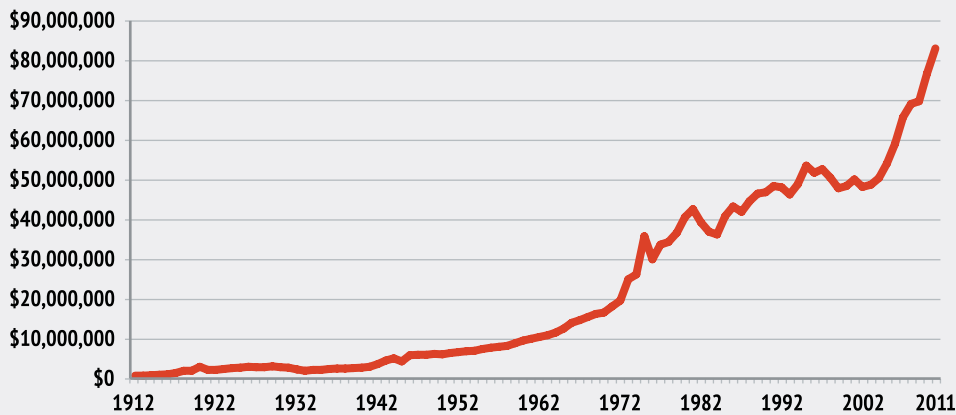


FIGURE 4

World Mission Offerings, 1912–2011



considerable over much of the 20th century. What, then, is the *real terms* value of mission offerings?

There are different indices one can use to convert historical dollars to present dollar values. The one that is most familiar is probably the Consumer Price Index, but economists and historians increasingly prefer the GDP per Capita Index, developed by economists at the University of Illinois, as a better indicator of wealth or income (as opposed to expenses).¹ Figure 5 shows World Missions Offerings over the century of its lifetime, converted to 2011 dollars, using both these indices. These show different peaks and troughs, but both show that, *in real terms*, the value of World Mission Offerings peaked in the mid to late 1970s, and then declined yearly for the next 29 years. The real value of the 2011 Mission Offering was, depending on the index used, either only 40 percent or 29 percent of the value in 1977. There are five other indicators that economists use in comparing the real value of money across time periods, and *all* of them show the same thing: other than a short period of decline during the Great Depression,

the value of Mission Offerings peaked in 1977.²

Now, as always with statistics of missionaries, this is not the whole story. Thirty-five years ago there was not the same number of supporting ministries engaged in mission and receiving donations from church members. Even so, the steep decline in giving to the church's official mission program ought to be a cause of concern, for it has been the major source of funding for Adventist mission.

Today, there are on average 2,500 Seventh-day Adventists for every million people in the world. But that is a global average. In the countries of the 10/40 window, the average is only

600 Adventists for every million people, whereas outside the 10/40 window, there are 6,530 per million. Five out of every six Adventists come from one-third of the world's population.

Those 600 Adventists per million need our help: there are too few of them, with too little financial resources, to take the gospel and the three angels' messages to the two-thirds of the world's population living around them. There is still a vital work for

Seventh-day Adventists to do "in all nations," whether by going or by giving. Not everyone is able to travel to foreign countries and serve people of different languages and cultures, but we can all support those who do, whether by our prayers or our offerings. We need to be about our Father's business.

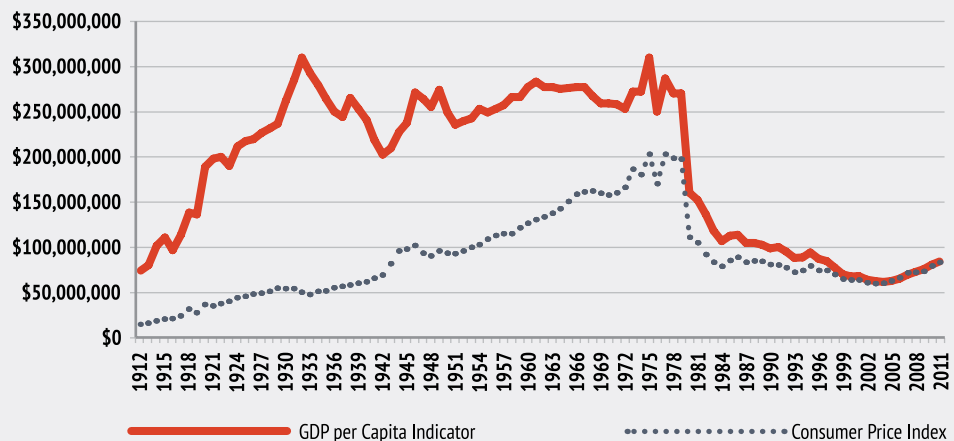
- 1 Details can be found at <http://www.measuringworth.com>.
- 2 All these indices are available from <http://www.measuringworth.com>.

Born to missionary parents in India, **David Trim** is the director of Archives, Statistics, and Research at the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters.



FIGURE 5

World Mission Offerings, 1912–2011, in 2011 dollars





Potato Pride!



Potatoes were well established in Peru and Bolivia before explorers and merchants introduced them to other regions of the globe. Europeans consume the most potatoes per capita, but China is now the world's largest potato-producing country.

These traditional potato dishes have been shared by gracious cooks who take pride in their family heritage.

South Africa Scalloped Butternut Squash and Potatoes *(Serves 6–8)*

This recipe is from Ros Landless.

INGREDIENTS

4 medium potatoes, peeled, sliced thin
4 cups butternut squash, peeled, sliced thin
1 large onion, sliced thin, optional
Flour (about 2–3 tablespoons between each layer)
Butter or margarine (about 2–3 tablespoons cut into small pieces between each layer)
Salt (sprinkled between each layer)
Paprika (sprinkled between each layer)
Nutmeg (a very light sprinkle between each layer)
1 cup cream or half-and-half
¼ cup milk
Parsley, optional

PREPARATION

- In a large casserole dish, layer the potatoes, butternut squash, onion, flour, butter or margarine, salt, paprika, and nutmeg. Repeat the layers, ending with the butternut squash on top. (The flour will help to thicken the cream and milk as it bakes.)
- Pour cream and milk over the vegetables. (Proportions of cream and milk may be adjusted as desired.) Add cream or milk as needed, up to two-thirds of the depth of the potatoes and squash.
- Dot the final layer with small pieces of butter or margarine. Bake, covered, at 375°F for 60–90 minutes, or until a fork can easily pierce the potatoes and squash.
- Garnish with parsley if desired.

Brazil

Potato Kale Soup *(Serves 4–6)*

This recipe is from Priscila Simon.

INGREDIENTS

5 cups water
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt to taste, optional
4 medium size potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
1/2 small onion, sliced thin
2 cloves of garlic, peeled
1 cup kale, sliced thin

PREPARATION

- Combine water, olive oil, salt (if using), potatoes, onion, and garlic. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are very soft.
- Transfer the soup to a blender; process until smooth. Return to the pan and bring mixture to a boil. Turn off the heat and stir in the kale.
- Before serving, drizzle lightly with olive oil and top with croutons.

Russia

Olivier Potato Salad *(Serves 6–8)*

This recipe is from Lyuda Kulakov.

INGREDIENTS

5 potatoes
3 carrots, peeled and diced into half-inch pieces
4 eggs, boiled
2–3 dill pickles, chopped
1 sweet onion, chopped
1 can green peas, drained
1 cup of mayonnaise
Salt to taste

PREPARATION

- Boil potatoes until tender; cool to room temperature. Peel and dice into half-inch pieces.
- Boil carrots just until tender to retain their bright color. Drain and cool.
- Peel the boiled eggs. Chop eggs, dill pickles, and onions into half-inch pieces.
- Add green peas and mayonnaise. Season with salt (if using) according to taste.
- Stir well. Refrigerate before serving.

Nancy Kyte
Office of Adventist Mission





Pink Butterfly

“Pink butterfly! Pink butterfly! Eat me! Eat me! Yum!” I chanted as I “flew” the spoonful of food to Niu’s now open mouth. She swallowed and giggled.

“Purple this time!” she would shout after she swallowed the bite. We would go through the whole rainbow several times before her plate was empty. We even made up some colors like “sparkly rainbow” and “shiny pink and purple glitter.”

The memories whirled through my mind as I sat, staring blankly at the white casket in front of me. All of a sudden life wasn’t making any sense.

“Daddy Greg!” I heard her cheerful six-year old voice ringing as I pictured her running into his arms. They would laugh and giggle together as he scooped her up and swung her around in a big circle. I pictured her throwing her head back in delight, relishing the love and attention she was getting, love and attention she never really got even before her father was shot and killed several years before. Grandma told her to call us Mom and Dad. We took that seriously. She was our daughter, at least on Sabbaths.

But now it was all gone. Our little Niu was lying lifeless in a white casket, wearing her favorite dress—the pink one we brought back from America on our last furlough.

I kept running the events of the past three days through my mind. The 6 A.M. phone call from a missionary friend telling us that Niu was in the hospital. Traveling to the hospital where she was in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU). The helpless look in her grandma’s eyes when we arrived. The lack of answers from the

doctor and nurses. Consulting with an Adventist doctor in the capital city eight hours away. Respectfully but firmly asking the attending doctor to transfer her to the teaching hospital two hours away only to see him shake his head and ask why we didn’t trust the care he was giving her. Speeding in the ambulance to the next big town and better hospital when the doctor finally told us we needed to transfer her. Watching the nurses perform CPR, unsuccessfully. Then the white casket.

We had met little Niu at church a few years earlier. Abandoned by her mother when she was just weeks old, Niu was being raised by her Adventist grandmother. She was constantly sick. So we helped sort out all the medical reports and found that she had thalassemia, a blood disorder common in Southeast Asia that requires blood transfusions.

We couldn’t be with Niu for her first transfusion, but the monthly ordeal never got any easier. She would cry and scream and beg Grandma to take her home. And it played on Grandma’s emotions. So either I or another missionary friend would accompany them to help calm



Top: Niu loved animals. Above left: Rainbow-colored cookies! Above: Niu “helping” Amy play the guitar. Below, left to right: Niu in the pediatric intensive care unit; Celebrating Niu’s short life; Niu’s aunt laying flowers on her casket.



Niu's home country is a "closed country," meaning that Christianity is unwelcome. While most Christians don't face open persecution, they suffer disconnection from their communities because their new belief system is so opposed to the national religion. The most effective way to reach them is to invest in their lives to the degree that you know where the pain and hurt is and then ask God to touch them there. When they experience His power in their lives, often through physical healing or freedom from spirit oppression, they become totally committed to God and often lead their family and friends to Christ.

Niu and to reassure Grandma that she was doing the right thing by giving her the transfusion.

We were encouraged. Even though we didn't like that she had to have blood transfusions, Niu was getting stronger. Her hair was beginning to grow and she had more energy. After a year of transfusions she was beginning to gain a little weight—a factor that determined whether or not she needed monthly transfusions or could receive them less frequently. Things were looking good. And then we moved away. We missed Niu but comforted ourselves that she was on the right track health wise.

And then we got the phone call. All Grandma knew was that Niu had had a cold and now the doctor was saying that it had infected her brain. They had transferred her to a better hospital in a neighboring country where she was in the PICU. Immediately we made plans to travel to where she was and arrived in time for evening visiting hours. It was heart wrenching to see our little "Sabbath daughter" intubated and hooked up to an IV and heart monitor. Her thin arms and legs were cold, and her neck was stiffened so her head turned to one side. As Greg held her hand and bent over to eye level, her

eyes focused on his and tears began to run down her cheek.

I wish that was our last memory because the ones that followed are too unpleasant to want to remember. We lost our little girl the next day. We were privileged to be with her and her grandmother when she died. A pastor helped transport her body back to her home country, and we all mourned together, remembering the special little girl Niu was.

That was only eight months ago. We just took a weeklong trip to Niu's country and visited Grandma while we were there. It was hard to go to church and not have Niu run to us. But good things are resulting from her death. Grandma has renewed her commitment to God. She travels with the pastor and elders to visit church groups all around the country and teaches the Bible. She has been convicted of the importance of the Sabbath and is doing what she can to share her new enthusiasm with her friends. She recently helped when a spirit-possessed young man was brought to the church as a last resort. She helped pray for him, and he is now free of the spirit and calls her Mom. The missionaries

who are

there are befriending Niu's runaway birth mother, who is currently incarcerated. There is some hope that she will be released early. And the Global Mission Center for East Asian Religions, where Greg serves as director, is focusing on addressing how to minister to those who are mourning.

We're sad that Niu is gone. But I'm looking forward to Jesus' soon return and chanting about butterflies and listening to Niu squeal as she runs to Greg's arms to be twirled in a giant circle. I know there will be more tears. But they will be tears of joy and thanks to the One whom we're living our lives for.

For ten years Greg and Amy Whitsett worked in a "closed country" where they established the first Seventh-day Adventist staffed language school that continues to serve the local community and Adventist church. While directing the school was a full-time job for Greg, their passion was to find effective means of sharing the gospel with the local Theravada Buddhist people. Carefully studying the cultural beliefs and worldview of the local people, they were in the process of preparing a Bible study curriculum when Greg was called to direct the Center for East Asian Religions. They now they live in Thailand with their two sons and a foster daughter. While they miss their "closed country" family and friends, they are thankful that they have the opportunity to help the world church develop Bible studies and training material that resonate with East Asians. Many of these resources are available online at www.AdventistMission.org.



Where Do My Mission Offerings Go ?



of various institutions, services, and agencies that serve the world church. They don't know they're helping the medical mission work of Loma Linda University in sharing God's love and compassion in many of the world's neediest areas. They don't know they help support the international humanitarian ministry of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

In recent years, millions of people from challenging areas of the world have found salvation in Jesus and have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thousands of new congregations have been established in new areas. After these new believers have been baptized, however, how are they nurtured? How do they receive resources, materials, and programs to strengthen their new faith? How do they receive ongoing pastoral care? Your mission offerings help sustain and grow new work throughout the world.

To keep in touch with the exciting story of Adventist mission around the world, please visit www.Adventist-Mission.org.

And thanks again for your prayers and financial support for Adventist mission around the world. You *do* make a difference.

Adventist church members often feel as if they're putting money into a "black hole" when they give their mission offerings. They don't really know where these offerings go, who they're supporting, or what they're achieving. They know it's for some sort of good mission cause, and so they faithfully give—although perhaps not as much, and not with the same enthusiasm they once did.

Many Adventists are surprised to learn, for example, that through their mission offerings they support about 1,000 missionaries around the world. In fact, 70 percent of mission offerings help support overseas missionaries and the international work of the church.

They don't realize that the remainder helps the mission

Gary Krause
Office of Adventist Mission



Photo: Mathew Karmel



Auntie Stella loves to wear fresh jasmine flowers in her hair!

CHILDREN'S STORY

The Jasmine Lady

Stella Thomas is a woman who lives to serve God every single day of her life. She praises God for His blessings, and she prays about everything—no matter how big or small. “Auntie Stella,” as she is fondly known to many people, has a missionary heart.

About 15 years ago, Auntie Stella made a startling discovery. She learned that God can use anything to help share His love with others, even a plant! It happened like this.

A relative gave her a small jasmine flower plant that had come from India. Auntie Stella took good care of this tropical plant because it was very special. When the weather was cool, she would keep her jasmine plant inside the house where it would be protected. When the weather was hot she would carefully move it outside into the bright sunshine. Then the jasmine would grow fresh new leaves and the branches would be covered with delicate white flowers for the rest of the summer season. This particular jasmine plant would usually have four or five double thick blossoms at the end of each branch and bloom all summer long.

But the most beautiful thing about jasmine is not how it looks, but how it smells. The sweet and exotic perfume of jasmine cannot be compared to any other flower. Both rich and poor people in many countries love to wear the flowers around their necks or in their hair so they can enjoy the scent all day. Even a few jasmine blooms can fill an entire room with their fragrance.

One day Auntie Stella was thinking about how she could raise money to build a church in India. She was praying about it when she suddenly got an idea. Since she always got compliments on her jasmine plant, what if she made cuttings and transplanted the pieces to grow many more jasmine plants? She could tell her friends about her plan to raise money for the church building project. If any of them wanted to make a donation, she would give them a small jasmine plant that they could raise and enjoy in their own gardens.

When she shared her idea, her friends were happy to help. So that spring she transplanted many healthy jasmine plants. Would you believe she eventually raised almost \$3,000? And today there is a church where people gather together to worship God. People began to think of Auntie Stella as the Jasmine Lady.

Auntie Stella praises God for giving her the idea to use her jasmine



Auntie Stella's jasmine plant.

as a missionary plant. Over the years she has continued to use her jasmine to raise money for mission projects. Auntie Stella, the Jasmine Lady, wants people to know that God can use anything, even a plant, to help spread His love to people who are waiting to hear about Him.

Nancy Kyte

Office of Adventist Mission



Remember when mission work was the most important thing we did as a church?

It still is.

Every day nearly 1,000 Adventist missionaries serve in more than 200 countries around the world. Some labor in remote villages while others share Jesus' love in the world's great cities.

Your prayers and support of the mission offering and World Mission Budget help give our missionaries the resources they need to reach millions of people who are still waiting to know Jesus.

How to give your mission offering:

- During Sabbath School
- Online at <https://giving.AdventistMission.org>
- In North America, mark a tithe envelope "World Mission Budget" at your local church or call 800-648-5824

ADVENTIST
MISSION

Thank you for being part of it!

