

# mission

PRODUCED BY  
THE OFFICE OF  
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**VOLUME 9**  
**NUMBER 3**



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## EDITORIAL

In Australia, where I come from, we don't celebrate Thanksgiving, but after observing the holiday in the United States for many years, I've become one of its biggest fans. For those who aren't familiar with Thanksgiving, it's a day to come together with friends and family, share a delicious meal, and thank God for His many blessings.

Although Thanksgiving is several weeks away, the sight of Maryland farmers harvesting their crops stirs my heart with a sense of gratitude for God's sustaining gifts.

Jesus, family, friends, and health always top my list. But there are blessings I'm thankful for in Adventist Mission too:

- A ministry that focuses on starting new groups of believers and sharing the good news with people who don't know Jesus.
- Global Mission pioneers who sacrificially plant new churches.
- The example of Jesus and His method of ministry, which serves as the blueprint for Global Mission's wholistic mission approach.
- Our Global Mission Centers and the creative, dedicated colleagues who keep them focused on reaching the unreached.
- Urban centers of influence that serve as platforms for putting Christ's method of ministry into practice in our most challenging mission field—the cities.
- Tentmakers who are dedicating their lives and God-given gifts to minister in some of the world's most difficult areas.
- Church members who sacrifice to financially support Global Mission and faithfully give their mission offerings each week.

As you read the stories in this issue of *Mission 360°*, you'll discover how your prayers and donations are helping unreached people all around the world come to know Jesus. I want to take this opportunity to thank you. Because of your caring generosity, they too are experiencing many blessings—blessings for which they and I will be eternally grateful.

**Gary Krause**  
Adventist Mission  
Director



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## ABOUT OUR COVER PHOTO . . .

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NETTEBURG FAMILY

In 2020, the Netteburgs, long-time missionaries to Chad, Africa, hiked the 2,193 miles of the Appalachian Trail, the longest hiking-only footpath in the world, ranging from Maine to Georgia in the United States. From left: Olen, Juniper, Danae, Addison, Lyol, and Zane.

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## Help in Ho Chi Minh



**Joshua Segala**, Office of Adventist Mission

Several years ago, Ho Chi Minh, the capital city of Vietnam, experienced a financial crisis. Tran Quoc Khoi, the country's Adventist Mission director, recalls how a young woman in his church suggested that the members provide a meal for the public every Thursday during that challenging time. "At first, we prepared [meals] for only 50 people," said Tran Quoc Khoi. "We put our money together and prepared something simple but delicious and healthy."

The church members worked together to serve a home-cooked meal to a full crowd of children,

students, retirees, and people seeking employment. They saw it as a way of doing a simple act of kindness to people living in their city.

This first lunch outreach event went so well that the church members are now preparing for more than 200 people each week. In total, the meals cost about 4 million Vietnamese dong, or US\$180. The menu consists of rice, tofu, beans, pumpkin soup, tomatoes, and bananas: a perfect combination to fill an empty stomach!

As the size of the hungry crowd increases, maintaining this project has been a challenging task. "More and more people were coming," said Tran Quoc Khoi, "and sometimes we even thought we should stop because if we didn't have enough funds, we would have a big problem."

But the program has gained recognition and financial support from the community. Local leaders from other religions and even local shops and individuals have joined in to keep it going.

"People who sell vegetables at the market ask, 'Why do you buy so much?'" Tran Quoc Khoi said. "We tell them about our lunches, and they say, 'OK, take this; this week it's free.' Each week that we haven't had enough money, we've received free rice and vegetables from the vendors. We've never had to stop because of not having enough money."

Local authorities have also expressed gratitude for the positive impact the charity meals create in the community. But perhaps the most grateful are the ones who come to eat.

"I walked past this building one afternoon, and I saw this advertisement for the charity meal program," said Goi.\* That is why I came here. Because of this program, I feel God loves me."



2



Aside from the meals, everyone is invited to join other church programs. Three people have accepted Christ into their hearts.

“Don’t wait until you have all the funds or facilities you think you need,” encouraged Tran Quoc Khoi. “Do whatever you can with whatever means you have. There are many programs you can do without money. Think of something that’s within your reach. God will bless it, and people will support it!”

Please pray for our church members in Ho Chi Minh and this special project so that more people will learn about the blessed hope.

\*Name has been changed.

- 1 Guests enjoy a nutritious meal
- 2 Adventist church members serve plates of healthful food to the hungry
- 3 Tran Quoc Khoi welcomes Goi to a charity lunch event
- 4 Local vendors at the market frequently donate food for the charity lunches
- 5 Church members pray with their lunch guests

3



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5



## MISSION to the CITIES

Mission to the Cities is part of the “I Will Go” 2020–2025 strategic focus voted by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Global Mission supports Mission to the Cities by making disciples among urban, unreached people groups. Through your sacrificial giving, funding is available to support pioneers and urban centers of influence in starting new groups of believers.

- To learn more, visit [MissiontotheCities.org](https://MissiontotheCities.org).
- To donate, visit [Global-Mission.org/giving](https://Global-Mission.org/giving).



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LEBANON

# Three Circles

The following story was written by a Global Mission pioneer who ministered to refugee women in Lebanon.



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**T**he Syrian family of seven stood tensely in suspense. They were awaiting approval to leave Lebanon and start their lives over again in a new country. The ambassador spoke for a long time with Rima,\* their eldest teenage daughter, but since he was speaking in English, the parents couldn't understand. *What is he speaking about for so long?* the father wondered.

For five long years, they had waited to be summoned by the United Nations, and finally, they huddled in the ambassador's office, hoping to say all the right things. But something seemed to be wrong. The imposing man continued speaking with Rima for more than half an hour. The father could barely keep still when he saw the ambassador begin writing a list of English words and numbers for her. Then, he drew three circles, interlocking with each other. *What could this mean?*

As soon as the family left the interview at the embassy, the parents peppered Rima with questions. "What was he talking with you about for so long? Was it about the new country? About our family?"

"No," Rima replied. "We were talking about religion." It all started when the ambassador asked what she had been doing for the past five years. She told him that she had studied at a refugee center operated by Christians, where she studied math, English, and Bible. When she mentioned the Bible, the ambassador, who himself was a Christian, became intrigued. How could it be that this girl wearing a hijab was studying the Bible? Just to make sure she wasn't lying, he asked her to explain what she had learned.

"Well, a lot of things," Rima replied. "It depends on my questions. I have a friend who studies the Bible with me, and she teaches me about whatever I ask her."

"What kinds of questions do you ask?" the ambassador prodded.

Rima explained that lately she had been studying the Trinity and shared with him some of the questions she had raised. The man, seeming impressed by her sharp mind and honest questions, forgot the other families waiting to see him and took half an hour to discuss the topic and wrote a list of Bible verses for Rima to consider. As they spoke about the Trinity, he drew the three interlocking circles often used to explain the concept of the three-in-one Godhead. When they finished, the stone-faced ambassador smiled—for the first time during their meeting—and told her that *if* she and her family moved to his country, she should teach her parents about what she was learning.

Rima's parents were relieved to learn how favorable the conversation had been. They had noticed a more positive tone during this part of the grueling interview. Reassured, they began joking that if they were accepted to immigrate, it would be because of Rima's love for the Bible.

I continued Bible studies with Rima while she and her family anxiously awaited the decision about their future. Finally, the good news came. I was overjoyed for Rima. I also felt convicted to invite her to accept Jesus as her Savior before she left.

"Have you understood everything we've talked about?" I asked.

"Yes," Rima said.

"If these things are true, if Jesus really is divine, what should our response be?"

"We should worship Him," she replied.

"Would you like to make a decision to worship Him as your divine Lord?" I ventured.

Rima looked away, and the room filled with silence.

"I can't," she said finally.

For the next two hours, Rima cried while she explained why becoming a follower of Jesus was impossible for her. We both cried.

Some days later, Rima abruptly ended our long, close friendship. I tried to repair the breach between us, but she made it clear she was through with me. I was devastated, but I praised God that He wasn't through with Rima.

My missionary heart longed to experience the joy of both sowing and reaping with Rima. But God has taught me to faithfully share His Word and to trust Him with the outcome.

Please join me in praying that Rima and thousands of other displaced people in Lebanon will find refuge, before it's too late, in the embrace of the Three Circles who love them so.

\*Name has been changed.

Global Mission supports thousands of local church planters, called pioneers, in starting new groups of believers in areas of the 10/40 Window where there is no Adventist presence.

But they need our help. Please support their ministry with your prayers and donations at [Global-Mission.org/giving](http://Global-Mission.org/giving).



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





# A Day in the Life of a Missionary



**Hannah Mbungu** is a volunteer chaplain and Bible teacher for grades 9 to 12 at Palau Mission Academy. Originally from Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, she graduated from Andrews University in 2017 with a degree in nutrition and dietetics.

**M**y name is Hannah. I left home four years ago to become a missionary in Palau, a tiny island country in the western Pacific Ocean, and I've been here ever since.

It's an awesome opportunity. Every day, I get to go to the school to interact with these kids and show them more about God. That's my biggest goal here.

The thought of being a missionary might seem scary, but honestly, being on the front lines for God is so awesome!

Here's what an average day looks like for me. I wake up and eat breakfast, then go to staff worship, which is really important because if I don't center myself in God every day, I can't help my students properly. After worship, I go to my classroom and meet with my kids. Every class starts with worship, and then we get into the subject material. Some days are tougher than others—Mondays tend to be pretty hard because the kids are tired, but as the week progresses, things get easier.

I teach my kids in the classroom and then interact with them in the hallways, where I talk with them, hug them, high-five them, and check up on them. They make me laugh, and I make them laugh. Then the school day ends, and I grade their

classwork pretty much all evening. Despite feeling tired, I make sure to spend time with my housemates and the other missionaries. Sometimes we share our experiences, and it's really cool because we understand what the others are going through and can offer one another support. Then it's off to bed to start all over again the next day.

What's awesome about teaching in the mission field is that every day brings a new experience. I might be going to the same job, but I never know what I'll encounter that day. So, I have to stay grounded in God for help. Also, aside from teaching, there are plenty of opportunities to join the kids in extracurricular activities or get involved with the community. There's never a dull moment here in Palau!

It may not sound fulfilling, but it's the most fulfilling thing I've done in my life! Before coming to Palau, I wasn't trained as a teacher. I had no idea what I was doing coming out here. But you don't have to be an education major to do this. It helps, but if you answer God's call, He'll equip you.

I definitely recommend volunteer mission service; there are so many places that need your help. If you feel that God is calling you to serve but feel a little nervous about doing so, remember, you won't be doing it on your own. He will be with you every moment, and He's going to help you through everything you encounter. Just trust Him. He's got you!

Adapted with permission, this story is part of Guam-Micronesia Mission's "Interviews With Missionaries" series.



- 1 Hannah, center, with missionary volunteers at a school banquet
- 2 Hannah, center, enjoying the last day of school with a picnic for students and staff
- 3 Palau Mission Academy staff at the annual Thanksgiving Family Feast
- 4 Hannah, left, with the graduating class of 2021, after the commencement ceremony



2

## Want to help Palau Mission academy?

### Serve!

Every year, the operation of Guam-Micronesia Mission schools depends heavily on volunteers. To help them continue their mission, please prayerfully consider how God may be calling you to serve. Visit [gmmsda.org/missions/open-positions](https://gmmsda.org/missions/open-positions) for current needs, and check back regularly for future positions.

### Give!

Volunteers at Palau Mission Academy live 20 minutes away from the school. This quarter, a portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build staff housing on campus. Please give generously during Sabbath School or online at [adventistmission.org/donate](https://adventistmission.org/donate).



3



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



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## SOUTH ASIA



Global Mission pioneer Balvindra Singh with his wife, Gurmeet, and son, Ajeet

# A Journey of Faith

*This story was written by a staff member of the Canadian Adventist Messenger: South Asian Edition.*

## My Journey to Jesus Christ

From childhood, I was taught the value of my religion. I developed an interest in attending religious prayers and enjoyed fellowship with the priests.

After college, I began working and then married a young woman named Gurmeet.\* We lived happily, and God blessed us with five children.

I had never thought about any religion besides mine. I didn't want to hear about another god. Then I found out that my wife and one daughter had secretly been going to Christian prayer meetings for a month. They were seeking peace and prosperity for our family, which had many troubles at the time.

I was furious with them. I accused my wife and daughter of destroying our family's peace and breaking the traditions and culture of our religion.

Sometime later, a friend invited me to a church on Christmas Day. I had many questions about Christianity, so I agreed to go. After the church service, the pastor shared his testimony with me and asked me to learn more about Jesus Christ—the Creator, Redeemer, and Savior of humankind.

Later, my friend asked me about my first experience at a church. I said that I didn't like the pastor's attitude because it seemed like he was trying to convert me to Christianity. Nevertheless, I agreed to attend church regularly with my family.





## GLOBAL MISSION

### My Journey With Jesus Christ

My finances were quite sound, but tension arose when our extended family members found out about our attending church. They stopped talking to us and became rude and critical. Finally, they chased us out of the house. We were devastated.

Our business also failed because I was overwhelmed and stressed, but we kept praying to Jesus Christ. We began looking for a house to rent with only 5,000 rupees in our pockets. My eldest daughter was the only working member of our family at the time. We were struggling greatly, yet faith helped us to keep going.

We soon found a house we really liked but couldn't afford. We shared our situation with some friends and prayed earnestly. How the finances were arranged, we will never know. We applied for a loan and were approved.

A few years ago, my wife experienced a brain hemorrhage and became paralyzed in the right half of her body. My family and I were scared and discouraged, yet we prayed sincerely to Jesus Christ, and He answered our prayers. Our faith in Him strengthened, and we praised and exalted God. We had truly seen a miracle and found the living God.

Sometime later, I met an Adventist pastor at a funeral. He told me something about the Word of God that was new to me. He was kind and loving and knew a lot about Scripture. I asked him to give me Bible studies, and he happily agreed. I was so eager to get answers to my questions. Through our Bible studies, I learned many truths, and I was inspired to read the Bible daily. I can now say that my faith in Jesus Christ is deeply rooted, and so can my family. We have become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have seen Him change our lives.

### My Journey in Jesus Christ

I have four daughters, and there was a time when my wife and I were concerned about getting one of them married. We didn't have much money for a wedding. However, God arranged the finances as He had done in the past. He does and can do anything for His children.

Looking at those who share the Word of God with others, I've felt a desire to do the same. I began praying about this immensely. After feeling a call from God, I surrendered myself to Him. By His grace, I became a Global Mission pioneer and have started three new groups of believers.

Please pray for my community and me.

\*Names have been changed.

Today, there are many Global Mission pioneers, such as Balvindra, who go house to house, village to village, city to city, fulfilling the call to bring hope and healing to millions of people around the world. They follow Christ's method of ministry by mingling, showing compassion, ministering to needs, and introducing people of other world religions to Jesus.

Please help sustain the work of Global Mission through your donations and prayers. To learn more, visit [global-mission.org](http://global-mission.org).

### Ways to Give

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Discover effective ways to introduce South Asians to Jesus by visiting the Global Mission Center for South Asian Religions at [csar.globalmissioncenters.org](http://csar.globalmissioncenters.org).



1



Crystal Earnhardt is a writer for Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International.

## Jere Gettle and His Life-Saving Seeds

**“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”** —Matthew 13:23, NKJV

**J**ere Gettle stared at the seed catalog with the same growing excitement that he had felt as a kid when a catalog arrived in the middle of winter. Back then, he and his parents spent many a snowy day planning their summer gardens while dreaming of warm soil between their toes.

Gently, he began to turn the pages, stopping to marvel over the breath-taking photography. This catalog was different from any he had seen or created before. Not only was it more than 500 pages, but it also was bursting with a thousand varieties of heirloom seeds from around the globe

that he had acquired and chosen for the catalog.

This catalog was a celebration of 25 years of hard labor and sweat, travel, and trekking through the countryside of foreign lands, eating native food and listening to stories. Stories of seeds.

### Jere's Story

Gettle's dream since childhood was to have a hobby that would pay for itself and help a lot of people.

“Growing up, I always knew that someday I wanted to work in a seed company,” he reflected. “My parents allowed me a little plot of ground to plant. It was fascinating to watch the seeds pop up through the dirt and witness them turn into plants and then food. It just became my passion.”

At age 17, Gettle began saving, collecting, and trading seeds. His mother encouraged him to start small and send his homemade seed catalog to 500 friends and family members. With one hundred dollars and a tote full of seeds, he did just that. He published his first official catalog in 1998.

Today, more than a million people receive Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co. catalogs. The company has captured national recognition and the admiration of farmers around the world. What began as a hobby has turned into the largest heirloom seed company in North America with a branch in Petaluma, California.

### Preserving the Past, Sustaining the Future

Gettle is passionate about preserving the past. “Not only do old seeds tell a story,” he said, “they



are a living piece of the past. They connect people to their roots and different cultures.”

When asked what heirloom seeds are, Gettle explained, “They are seeds that are antiques. They are heritage passed down from generation to generation. They have not been controlled nor patented, and the varieties are phenomenal.”

In a way, unadulterated seeds are preserving the future, as well. They produce more nutritious vegetables that are pure and have no genetically modified organisms, thereby preserving the health of generations to come. It is an effort to put real food back on the table. But more importantly, profit from these seeds is saving lives.

## Seeds on a Mission

After hearing of the plight of the millions suffering from the coronavirus in India, Gettle was touched and wanted to help. The pandemic impacted businesses globally, but his heirloom seed company flourished. With a grateful heart, Gettle decided to support charities such as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

In four days, Gettle contributed US\$430,000 from his online seed sales to ADRA. With 22 Adventist hospitals in India, the funds helped provide life-saving oxygen and other essential medical supplies.

“I’ve known ADRA all my life,” Gettle said. “They do an amazing work. I am thankful that I can contribute to an organization that helps so many people. I encourage other companies to raise money. If we pool all our resources together, we can alleviate suffering.”

## Spiritual Lessons From Seeds

In the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of seeds as symbols of the Word of God. Like the Bible, seeds are the essential element of transmitting life. Paul wrote, “When you put a seed into the ground it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it ‘dies’ first” (1 Corinthians 15:36, TLB).

Just like plants that bloom and grow from a tiny seed, every person has been tasked with the responsibility to never stop growing and sharing. One tiny seed shared could result in a forest of new growth. That’s the message that Gettle and ADRA are hoping to share with the world.

[Photos courtesy of Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co./rareseeds.com.]



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ADRA

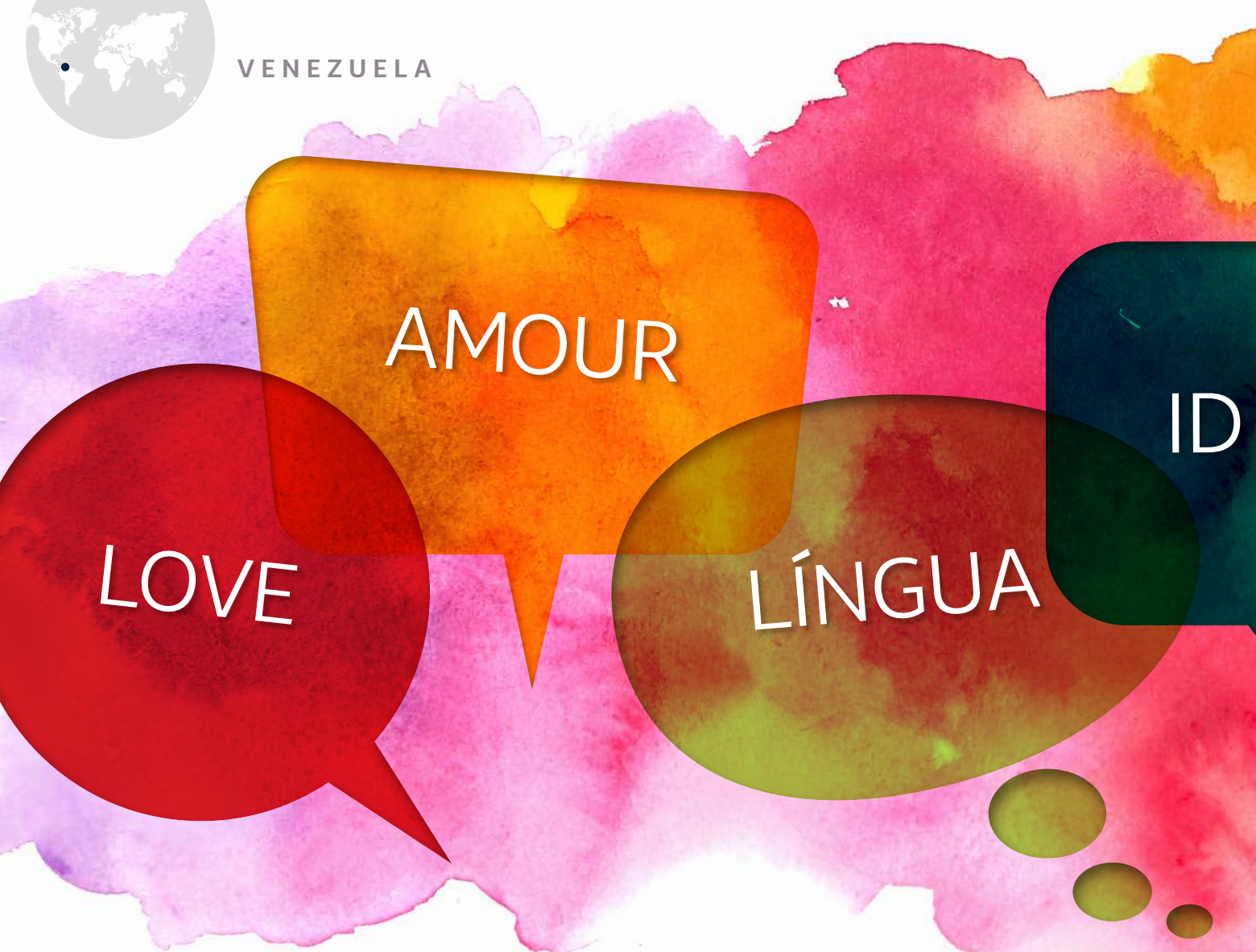
Learn how ADRA is responding during COVID-19 at [ADRA.org](https://www.adra.org).



Watch ADRA mission stories at [m360.tv/adra](https://www.m360.tv/adra).

**Thank you for supporting ADRA through your weekly mission offerings and, in North America, by giving to World Budget.**

- 1 Jere Gettle with giant leaf mustard
- 2 Springtime tulips at Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Store
- 3 The world’s largest seed catalog with more than 500 pages
- 4 Jere Gettle in a sea of watermelon



LOVE

AMOUR

LÍNGUA

ID

## Speaking a New Language of Love



**Ricky Oliveras,**  
Office of  
Adventist  
Mission

**S**omething new and exciting was happening on campus at the Adventist University Institute of Venezuela! Students and faculty from the theology department wanted to do something to have a lasting impact on the people around them.

So, in 2016, they opened the Center of Languages, giving university students access to learning English, Portuguese, and French. Language skills were in high demand!

"I had the privilege of seeing the birth of the Center of Languages and organizing the curricular contents of the courses that were taught," recalled former coordinator Jane Mendes. "It was a great challenge, but with the support of my team of

teachers, we were able to advance in fulfilling the mission."

This urban center of influence has since evolved and now opens its doors to the entire city community, many of whom are not familiar with the Adventist message.

Antony Vera, the current coordinator, spent a year teaching English at the center before accepting the responsibility of its leadership. "In 2019, we received a lot of students that weren't believers," he said. "So we created some strategies for reaching them and sharing the gospel with them."

The courses include devotionals and spiritual discussions that have piqued the interest of some students.





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IOMA

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Former language student Rafael Álvarez observed that one of the best things about the center was that spiritual seeds were planted in each student's heart.

Juan Diego Benavides, coordinator of the theology program, reported that, "In 2020, despite the challenges caused by the pandemic, the urban center of influence continued teaching its classes online with 138 students attending, 16 of them non-Adventist. This center of influence will continue working to reach the unreached!" Please pray that God will continue to bless the workers at the Center of Languages at the Adventist University Institute of Venezuela as they share Jesus with their community.

### Urban Centers of Influence

Global Mission supports wholistic mission to the cities through the ministry of dozens of urban centers of influence (UCIs). UCIs follow Christ's method of ministry to meet people's needs and start new groups of believers. To learn more, visit [MissionToTheCities.org](https://MissionToTheCities.org).

Please support urban centers of influence (Fund # 9730) by scanning this QR code or visiting [Global-Mission.org/giving](https://Global-Mission.org/giving).





# The Family That Hiked Together

**H**iking the 2,193\* miles of the Appalachian Trail (AT) is quite a feat. Doing it with four young children is even rarer. Drs. Olen and Danae Netteburg did it during 2020.

Lyonel (11), Zane (9), Addison (7), and Juniper (4) hiked the entire trail. Juniper, finishing the trail at 4 years and 340 days of age, became the youngest person to complete it. “She hiked every step of the way,” Danae said.

Hiking the trail in pandemic-crazy 2020 added another wrinkle. Olen remembers their first brush

with the virus. “March 19 was the day things started to close. We had hiked only 44 miles to that point. I bought fresh supplies, so everyone’s pack was heavy. We hiked 8.2 miles to the hut where we planned to stay, our longest hike so far. But the shelter had a sign: ‘Closed for Coronavirus.’”

The next place to stay was three miles away, and they’d be pushing dark, something they’d never done before. They decided to continue and made camp just before dark. “We were eating ramen [noodles] with headlamps, and nobody was complaining. Instead, the kids were practicing their Mount Katahdin poses for when they reached the northern terminus of the trail!” That night, Olen smiled to himself, figuring they had a chance to complete the trail.

Juniper earned her trail name—“The Beast”—on one of the first big climbs. They faced 1,000 feet or so of vertical incline, and Danae took Juniper’s backpack to make it easier for the child. No more than 100 yards up the trail, Danae found Juniper crying. *Uh, oh*, she thought. *Juniper can’t make it.* But the truth came out: Juniper whimpered that she wanted to carry her own backpack! The Beast was born. “She often led the family, setting the pace for the rest of us to keep up,” Olen said.

Everyone else got trail names too. Lyonel became Blaze because he started the campfire every



From the United States, **Kermit Netteburg** taught communication at Andrews University between 1973 and 1996, then served as assistant to the president for communication at the North American Division until 2004. He pastored for 10 years before retiring in 2014 with more than 50 years of service in the Adventist Church. Kermit and his wife, Donna (Karpenko), were proud cheerleaders and provided occasional rest stops for their son Olen and his family as they hiked the Appalachian Trail.



The family hiked through cold and heat, snow and rain, and fog and sunshine. From left, Juniper, Zane, Olen, Danae, Addison, and Lyonel.



morning. Zane became Boomerang because he loved to hike ahead or slightly off the trail, but he always returned. Addison became Angel Wings because she often hiked in thick socks, trail boots, and a princess dress! Olen was Lion King, and Danae was Queen Bee.

How did they keep the kids going? They sang songs. ("I don't ever want to hear 'Do You Want to Build a Snowman?' again," Olen reminisced, shaking his head.) They enjoyed camp meals—pancakes or oatmeal at breakfast, trail mix for lunch, and ramen for supper. ("Sometimes we'd be close enough to hike off the trail to get take-out Chinese or pizza," Danae admitted. "Or ice cream!")

And they did schoolwork. "Every day, we could find something for school," Danae said. Trail games sometimes were spelling quizzes. Math was calculating distance and miles. Science was classifying flora and fauna. "Bible was seeing God's leading everywhere," Danae added.

"Kids are naturally inquisitive," Olen said. "When you get them into nature and they see what's around them, they start asking questions. They can become obsessed with a slug or newt or tree. No day is ever boring through their eyes."

The hike was a nine-month sabbatical from their regular work as missionary physicians at Béré Adventist Hospital in Chad, Africa. They've served the 100-bed hospital for 11 years, Olen as an emergency physician and chief medical officer/administrator and Danae as an obstetrician and gynecologist (OB/GYN). "Plus, we do whatever else is needed," Olen said.

They'd planned the trip in 2018, but the relief physician didn't materialize. Then in February 2020, they realized, "We have an exceptional staff at the hospital. We've got time. We should think about doing this now!"

They left Africa five days later. Their first day on the trail was four days after that.

"Being out on the trail for that long helped me re-find a sense of peace," Danae said. "Living in Chad, we deal with a lot of illness and death. You start to carry that weight around. This was God's way of getting us ready for more service in Chad."

The family began hiking in Pennsylvania and had to hopscotch back and forth on the trail because of the virus. That meant hiking in Virginia, then more in Pennsylvania, then down to North Carolina, before jumping north to Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine while the weather was nice.

"We always wanted to stay safe," Olen said, "so we went where the trail was safest to hike and observed the rules of the state."

They also did their best to maintain social distancing along the trail and not disturb the peace when they came up to a campsite. "But as a family of six, we're not really very peaceful," Olen said.



The Netteburgs marked every 100 miles of trail hiking by taking a picture of the moment. At 1,900 miles, the smell of the shoes was the focus of the picture. The family went through between two and four pairs of shoes each in hiking the 2,193 miles of the Appalachian Trail. From left: Olen, Juniper, Zane, Lyol, Addison, and Danae.



Olen remembers one of the scariest moments of the hike. "It had rained a lot for several days in Maine. This river normally has rock 'steps' for hikers to cross without getting wet. But the river had submerged those steps and was far too swift and deep for Juniper. So she clung to my back. I had to feel with my hiking poles, looking for the next rock step. Then I had to maintain balance while moving a leg through the rushing water to secure the next foothold. We took an hour crossing that stream."

The family averaged between 15 and 17 miles a day until they got to New Hampshire. "We didn't make 10 miles most days there," Olen recalled. "I began to wonder if we would be able to hike the entire trail before winter."

To add to the challenge, Olen injured his ankle. "We'd hiked a really hard section. When we were





Danae roused the family at about 4:30 a.m. to get everyone out to McAfee Knob for this silhouette against the morning sunrise.



Every night at the campsite meant several things. Lyol started a fire. Everyone took their shoes off. Clothes were hung out to dry if they'd been wet—or hung out to air because they didn't get laundered often. "Every week, we tried to find a place to stay that had laundry facilities and a hot shower," Danae said.

done, I took off my pack, stepped off a bridge, and rolled the ankle over 90 degrees. I thought I'd broken it."

An exam in the emergency room at a nearby hospital revealed a severe sprain. "The swelling made my foot huge. I was black and blue from my toes to halfway up my shin," Olen said, with typical physician detachment. "Every morning, it hurt a lot, but after a few miles of limping, it would loosen up."

They did 30 miles in a day a few weeks later—in the Maine wilderness. "That's when I knew we had a great shot at completing the trail," Olen said.

They also had conflicting thoughts about the pandemic. "We heard the stories of our medical colleagues. They worked in extreme conditions. They risked their own health and lives. And here we were hiking the AT," Olen said. "Society had

invested a spot in medical training for each of us. And here we were, not helping out in the worst health crisis of a generation."

Danae reflected, "That was a daily battle."

They're back at the hospital, bringing healing to a remote area in Africa. Béré has 65,000 people—with no stoplights or paved roads or electrical grid or water/sewer system. There are more oxcarts than cars.

Every day presents a new challenge. A child who fell out of a mango tree has a depressed skull fracture. (He lived.) A pregnant woman has been in labor for days—but couldn't afford to come for care. (This is common for many.) Malaria, and malaria, and malaria. (Many don't survive.)

"We see stuff in Chad that physicians don't in America," Olen said. They removed an abdominal tumor the size of a watermelon. Danae has fixed 65 fistulas in the past three years—a number virtually no American OB/GYN sees in a lifetime.

But they are missionaries, not merely physicians. Every Sabbath, they pack the kids and some local Chadians in the truck and drive out into the bush. They find a mango tree and park the car. They spread plastic mats. Village children show up and sit on the mats. Olen teaches the children Bible songs. Danae tells a Bible story. Someone talks about how to pray. Adults hang around the edges of the shade of the tree. Soon the group is 50, 80, 100 people. And after a few weeks, it's a church.

They've started more than a dozen of these bush churches. Most have Chadian leadership now. Some have flourished, some haven't. "No matter what, two things have happened," Olen said. "People have heard about Jesus, and we've had a genuine Sabbath rest."

What's next for the Netteburgs? "Well, there's the Pacific Crest Trail and the Continental Divide Trail," Olen said. "The kids are jazzed about those. But I'm thinking about living aboard a catamaran for a couple of years, cruising the Caribbean."

It's how the Netteburgs keep the family together.

\* The exact mileage changes as parts of the trail are modified.

All photos courtesy of the Netteburg family

Adapted from Kermit Netteburg, "The Family That Hiked Together," *FOCUS: The Andrews University Magazine* vol 57, no. 1 (Winter 2021), 26–30.

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Science class meets lunch. One of the bonuses along the Appalachian Trail is foraging. Raspberries, blueberries, apples, and other fruit grow wild along the trail. More mushrooms and mustard greens were serendipitous additions to their diet. So for science class, they learned to recognize plants. And for lunch, they learned to enjoy science class projects.



On their hike, the family saw a variety of wildlife, including bears, deer, and wild ponies. Zane almost sat on a rattlesnake. Here Juniper holds a luna moth.



The Appalachian Trail snakes through canyons and along mountain ridges, providing spectacular views. From left: Danae, Olen, Lyol, Zane, Addison, and Juniper.



The Netteburgs at Springer Mountain, the Southern terminus of the AT. "We had just finished 2,193 miles as a family. I'd wanted to be an AT thru-hiker for 25 years, and now I was! I thought I might feel overwhelmed or a sense of loss. But it was simple joy and pride. My kids had done something no group of four kids had ever done before. And we all had fun doing it." To celebrate, the family laid out the number of miles in marshmallows, took the picture, and then stuffed all the miles into their mouths. From left: Olen, Zane, Danae, Juniper, Addison, and Lyol.





# Yes, I Can-vass!

**M**obile 1, do you copy? This is Ellie ready for pick-up!" I clutch the walkie-talkie in my one un-gloved hand as I exit the driveway of the last house on the block, carrying a bag of books slightly lighter than it was the previous hour. Soon Olivia, our group leader (also known as Mobile 1), appears in her car, and I hop into the back seat, excited for my next assignment. Why am I going house to house in the snow-covered streets of Niles, Michigan, in mid-January, my toes numb and hands freezing and chapped to the point of bleeding? The answer is simple. If I don't go, who will?

Throughout the semester, three friends and I, all full-time Andrews University students, pursued our goal of forming a club to unite people in the area interested in canvassing. Canvassing, also known as literature evangelism or serving as a colporteur, involves the selling of Christian literature. The club operates on the Andrews University campus with remote assistance from the Michigan Conference's Youth Rush canvassing program. What began as a handful of young people on a snowy January day grew into a group of some 12 participants canvassing every other Sunday. We occasionally host meetings to unite past canvassers and inspire future ones to serve. In fact, due to our recruiting efforts and the Holy Spirit's blessing, six young people signed up to participate in the



1

10-week summer program.

While canvassers are allowed to keep a portion of the money they earn, participants are continually reminded that they are "evangelists first and salespeople second." This attitude is evident as students return each evening excited to share stories of divine appointments, faith-building experiences, and answered prayers. And what incredible stories they are! On our first day of canvassing, a woman wearing a T-shirt stood on her porch for 15 minutes in subfreezing temperatures, holding our three-book devotional set as we attempted to complete the transaction. She explained that the recent passing of her mother had increased her interest in spiritual things. Holding the books up as she entered her house, she exclaimed, "I'm excited to read them all!"

Bethany, one of our student canvassers, shared an interesting conversation she had during a canvass. The man had shown little interest in the first few books she showed him, but when he saw *The Great Controversy* by Ellen White, the subtitle,



From the United States, **Ellie Butikofer** served as a student missionary and worked with the Michigan Conference's Youth Rush canvassing program. She is currently a Speech-Language Pathology graduate student at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where she helped form a canvassing club called Andrews University Youth Rush.





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“The history of freedom and the end of suffering,” caught his eye. “I have a Buddhist book by that title!” he exclaimed. He bought the book, promising to read it soon. On our last day of canvassing, a minister pressed a crisp hundred-dollar bill into my hand and eagerly chose eight books to add to his family’s library, including *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ*, another popular book by Ellen White.

These stories are just a few of many that demonstrate the incredible ways that God is using our canvassing club to help reach people hungry for spiritual truth. More than 20 Bible study sign-ups and several hundred books accepted into the

homes of local residents testify that the harvest surely is great. The laborers may be few, but our numbers are growing. Armed with the Holy Spirit and inspired by past success, we’re excited to see how God will use us in the future as we go to share His love!

- 1 Bethany (left) and Olivia canvassing on a snowy day
- 2 The canvassing team during their last outing of the semester
- 3 The canvassing team enjoying lunch outside on a warm spring day



3

Our church urgently needs people such as this team of dedicated canvassers who will answer the call to reach the unreached with hope and share the good news of Jesus. People who will say, “I will go!” Reach the World: I Will Go is the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s strategic plan for 2020 to 2025. It’s a rallying cry to all members to fulfill the Great Commission, inspiring and equipping them to use their God-given spiritual gifts in witness and service to Christ. I Will Go outlines specific objectives and ways to accomplish this task. Explore the “I Will Go” plan at [IWillGO2020.org](http://IWillGO2020.org) and find your place in this global movement!

To learn more about Andrews University Youth Rush, visit [icanvass.org](http://icanvass.org).



# Orley Ford: Champion Missionary to Central and South America



**Vicente Nafri  
Machado**

**Arévalo** is the communication and information support director for the El Salvador Union Mission. He is also the union coordinator for the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* and is devoted to church planting in the capital of El Salvador.

The following stories are adapted from a longer article in the online *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. We invite you to visit [encyclopedia.adventist.org](http://encyclopedia.adventist.org) to enjoy more stories about the Fords' mission experiences and those of other pioneer missionaries.

**O**rley Ford (1893–1972) and his wife, Lillian Shafer Ford (1894–1990), were pioneer missionaries in South and Central America. They served in Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and predominantly El Salvador, the country they considered their second home and where they requested to be buried. Orley's pastoral, medical, and administrative services and Lillian's teaching and youth ministries impacted the lives of thousands of indigenous people. I would like to share two stories that reveal how God used them in a special way to spread the love of Jesus.

## Peru (1918–1921)

In December 1917, Pastor and Mrs. Ford, recently married and in their early 20s, set sail for what would be their first adventure in a lifetime of mission experiences.

They arrived in Peru on January 13, 1918. They were the last couple of five assigned in 1917 to the Lake Titicaca region.<sup>1</sup> While he worked there, Pastor Ford was under the leadership and mentorship of Ferdinand Stahl, known as the “apostle to the Incas” in South America.<sup>2</sup> Stahl regularly visited Ford to conduct baptisms and supervise the opening of schools and churches.

When the Fords arrived at the Pomata Mission, they were met by R. A. Nelson, a missionary who



Pastor and Mrs. Ford with baby Elden wearing the traditional dress of the Aymara Indians, Lake Titicaca, Peru

had been there for almost a year. Nelson had to leave due to his wife's deteriorating health, but he was able to stay an additional couple of weeks to help the Fords settle in.

From the beginning, the young couple faced many challenges. The Pomata Mission had an unfinished church and house. Pastor Ford, busy treating some 30 patients a day and carrying out



other responsibilities, had no prior knowledge of carpentry. Even so, he managed to finish the house where he and his wife would live and complete the construction of the church where they would meet with 80 to 100 people.

The Fords didn't speak Spanish when they arrived. But in three months, they were able to communicate fluently in the language, and soon they had 30 people prepared for baptism.

Pomata had a population of some 10,000 people, and the only health center was at the Adventist mission run by the Fords.<sup>3</sup> One of the more notable experiences of their ministry in Peru happened when Pastor Ford received an urgent request to treat the son of a local chief. The boy was about to die from a gangrened leg. The locals called it a "warlock leg,"<sup>4</sup> and amputation was the only way to save the boy's life. With just four months of medical training, Pastor Ford knew little about surgical procedures. He also had no surgical instruments. Yet he did the best he could with improvised tools, and according to his words, "God did the rest."<sup>5</sup> With a butcher knife and a carpenter's saw, and without anesthesia, he removed the boy's leg, and in a short time, the youth was completely healed. The successful surgery helped

Pastor Ford performs a dental exam at the Colta Lake Mission in Ecuador



Pastor Ford win the hearts of a family who had been hostile to the mission and enabled him to get closer to hundreds in a tribe that hadn't wanted to listen to his message.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of his time at the Pomata mission, Pastor Ford had 28 requests to open schools. The church, despite its capacity to seat 400 people, was not big enough, and many who came to worship had to remain outside the building. Ford prepared 75 people for baptism and had more than 400

Pastor and Mrs. Ford with their children, Elden *left*, Sylvia, and Billy. The Fords had six children. Theodore, Arlis, and Donald died in childhood





Pastor Ford conducting a baptism in South America

people in a new baptismal class. Clearly, he had won the hearts of the local community.<sup>7</sup>

### Ecuador (1921–1931)

The Fords were next asked to serve in Ecuador. At the end of 1921, they arrived at the port of Guayaquil,<sup>8</sup> where they began their long journey by train to Quito, the capital. They had been praying that God would direct them to the right place to work and asked that, as a sign, He provide them with a house surrounded by people who welcomed them.

Pastor Ford spent several weeks visiting various places, but no one was willing to offer him a home. When he felt impressed to visit the Colta region, many tried to discourage them. They told him that criminals lived there and that it was a terrible place to live. Ignoring the comments, he visited Colta and was surprised to find a community of 20,000 Indians there.<sup>9</sup>

The first home he visited was that of a prestigious and influential man who was sick. As Pastor Ford began treating him, some neighbors arrived at the house, curious to see the “gringo,” a term used by most Latin Americans for foreign, English-speaking people. Pastor Ford told them that

God had sent him and Lillian to open schools and heal people, and if they wanted, he and his family could live among them. The people, who had no schools, expressed great interest. Pastor Ford explained that to live there, he needed a house for his family, a house for his interpreter, and a place for a school.<sup>10</sup>

When Pastor Ford visited Colta again, he saw that the villagers had set aside three huts for his use—one for the interpreter, a second for a school, and a third, taller than the others, to accommodate his at least six-foot, four-inch height.

Friendly and kind to Pastor Ford, the villagers requested that he stay with them and teach them how to live and become Christians. They lovingly called him “Little Doctor” because of his tall stature, and he became known by that title in Ecuador.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of 1922, Pastor Ford became very ill, worn out from treating about 4,000 people a month and accepting invitations to preach in many new areas. Doctors recommended that he immediately undergo surgery, but he didn’t want to leave his post until a replacement could arrive. The mission had no money to send for anyone else.<sup>12</sup> Finally, Pastor Ford’s brother John and his wife left California and headed to Ecuador on December 7 to work among the people.<sup>13</sup> Soon after their arrival, Pastor Ford was able to get the medical attention he urgently needed.

John Ford served alongside his brother in the Lake Colta Mission<sup>14</sup> during 1923<sup>15</sup> and 1924.<sup>16</sup> Taking advantage of his brother’s help, Pastor Ford left with his wife on their first furlough, or long vacation, that they were entitled to as foreign missionaries. During his vacation, he visited schools, universities, and churches to encourage youth to become volunteers in foreign missions and to garner financial support for the cause.

In October 1924, the Fords returned to Lake Colta. Even though they had government permission to open a school from the time they arrived at Colta Lake, it was not possible until after 1924. By that time, a church was already built at the Colta mission.<sup>17</sup>

What the Ford families accomplished at the Lake Colta Mission began to produce an abundant harvest as the principal cities in the country became open to receiving the Adventist message.<sup>18</sup>

These two stories highlight how the Fords shared the love of Jesus by living among the people, ministering to their needs, and treating them with the utmost respect. Today, may we follow the example of these champions for God.

Photos courtesy of Robert Ford, the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, and the Ford Family Collection (PUC.MSS.083), Pacific Union College Archives & Special Collections, Angwin, CA, USA.





Pastor Ford, Lillian, and Elden ready to drive to Cajabamba, Ecuador, to begin their mission service there in 1921

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# In the Midst of a Storm



**Kaitlyn Lively** is a contract public relations manager for Southwestern Adventist University.

**G**rowing up immersed in the life of the small college town Keene, Texas, Deanna felt comfortable in her choice to attend nearby Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU). After all, that’s what her friends were doing. So, in 2013, she enrolled to pursue a nursing degree. “At the time,” she said, “all I cared about was having fun and living the college life.”

Yet, after a few semesters, Deanna began to feel that she needed a change—a new beginning. She believed it would be in her best interest to live in Puerto Rico with her grandfather and continue pursuing her degree there.

Little did she realize she couldn’t have moved to Puerto Rico at a more dangerous time. In 2017, Hurricane Maria hit the island, causing great destruction and leaving Deanna and many others heartbroken.

The storm’s devastation forced Deanna to leave Puerto Rico, and after much prayer, she decided to return to SWAU to pursue a different degree—one in radio, TV, and film.

Along with her studies, Deanna juggled three jobs: one in the marketing and public relations department, a second in the business office, and the third at 360 Degree Restaurant & Lounge. She also got to know the members of the Spiritual Life





and Development department, a team dedicated to empowering young people to find their calling to serve God. From them, she learned about the Abroad program, which oversees the placement of student missionaries.

One day, Deanna overheard a man from the Abroad program talking about sending student missionaries to teach in South Korea.

"I had no idea you could teach overseas without a background in education," Deanna said.

Deanna liked the idea of serving and committed herself to pray about the possibility and to seek more information about the program.

She had already decided to go to Korea when COVID-19 hit the United States and made her plans unstable. There were many obstacles to be overcome, yet Deanna felt certain that God still was calling her to teach overseas. One by one, the obstacles were resolved, and soon after graduating in 2020, Deanna packed her bags and flew to Korea. "If God didn't open the door, then it wouldn't have been opened," Deanna said.

Deanna now serves as a kindergarten English teacher for a new school in a small town. She is fascinated by how quickly her students can learn a new language. Most, if not all, come from non-Adventist homes, so the school is a real mission field.

"Being able to teach them about God means the world to me," Deanna said. "And them wanting to know more keeps me going."

While being overseas has been an incredible experience for Deanna, she said, "Something I miss most about home is vespers and being in a space praising and worshiping with other people." Because of COVID-19, the churches in South Korea have limited space, so Deanna has had to be creative. She, her coworkers, and the director have held their own small church service every Sabbath morning. They take turns teaching the lesson and organizing their time together with God.

Through her experiences in Korea, Deanna has grown in her relationship with God, gained a better understanding of the workplace, and learned how to network with people. When she returns to the United States, she plans to use her new knowledge and passion to serve her community and, hopefully, one day own a film studio of her own.

Going through a major storm, pursuing God at SWAU, and taking a leap of faith to serve overseas as a missionary have put much in perspective for Deanna. She has seen God moving in her everyday journey as she steps out of her comfort zone and continues to lean on Him.

1 Deanna with her students

2 Deanna wearing a traditional Korean dress called a *hanbok*



2



If you're interested in being a volunteer, visit [AdventistVolunteers.org](https://AdventistVolunteers.org).



Watch video stories about Adventist Volunteer Service missionaries at [m360.tv/avs](https://m360.tv/avs).



# Discipling a Dentist



Story by **Andrew McChesney**,  
Office of  
Adventist  
Mission



Animation by  
**Diogo Godoy**

**E**very afternoon in St. Martin, a town in Trinidad and Tobago, Magdalina would stand outside a pharmacy, waiting for her dad to pick her up after school.

Sometimes she had to wait more than an hour. She watched all the people coming and going from the pharmacy, and she wondered if those people loved Jesus.

One afternoon, Magdalina had a question for her dad as she hopped into the car.

“So many people come by the pharmacy,” she said. “Can I share some mission tracts with them?”

He was happy to hear that his daughter wanted to share Jesus with other people. “Yes, that’s fine,” he said.

Her dad found some tracts about the love of Jesus, and Magdalina put them in her backpack when she went to school the next day. After school, she offered the tracts to people outside the pharmacy.

“Hello, how are you?” Magdalina said. “Can I share with you this tract about the love of Jesus?”

Everyone accepted the tract. Nobody could refuse one from her. When her dad came to pick her up, she happily announced that she had given away all the tracts.

Magdalina took more tracts the next day and the next. When they ran low on tracts, her dad made copies on the printer at home.

After a while, Magdalina noticed that a dentist passed by the pharmacy every afternoon on his way to the office. Every afternoon, she gave him a tract, and every time, he took one. Magdalina told her dad about the dentist.

“Daddy, can I talk to him about Jesus?” she asked.

Her dad knew the dentist. “Sure, no problem,” he said.

The next day, Magdalina was waiting for the dentist when he walked by. “Do you have Jesus in your life?” she asked.

The dentist was surprised by the question. He hadn’t read the tracts the girl had given him.

“I’ve heard about Jesus, but I don’t believe in Him,” the dentist said.

Magdalina was sad to hear that. “Do you have time to hear a Bible story?” she said.

The man once again couldn’t refuse the offer and invited her to come to his office the next day.

Her dad gave permission for Magdalina to go to the dentist’s office. That night, Magdalina asked her dad for some Bible verses about Jesus to share. She also had one more request.







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“The dentist doesn’t have a Bible,” she said. “Can I give him one?”

Her dad found a brand-new Bible. When Magdalina gave him the Bible the next afternoon, the dentist said thank you.

For the next month, Magdalina went to the dentist’s office every day after school. She and the dentist read the Bible together and talked about the stories. Slowly, the dentist began to believe in Jesus. So Magdalina invited her new friend to go to church with her the next Sabbath.

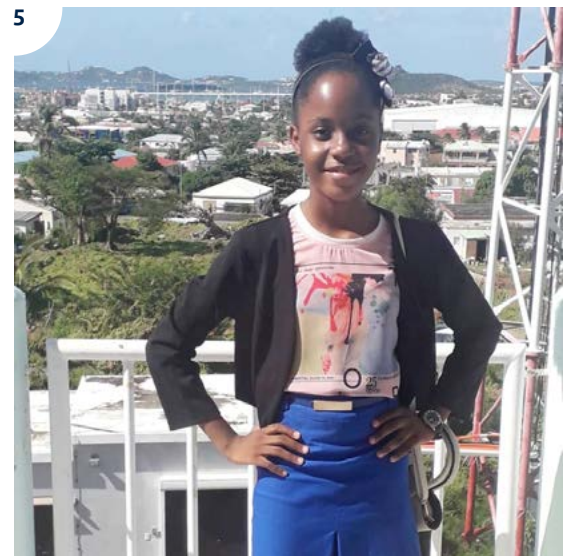
“Yes, I have time,” he said. “I can go.”

Magdalina excitedly broke the news to her dad when he picked her up. “I invited the dentist to go to church with me, and he said, ‘Yes!’” she said.

On Sabbath, Magdalina and her mom and dad picked up the dentist on their way to church. “Your daughter is wonderful,” the dentist told her parents. “Before, I didn’t know anything about Jesus. But now I know Him.”

Magdalina became a real missionary when she shared tracts with the dentist and told him about Jesus. She wants to live the rest of her life sharing Jesus with others.

- 1 Magdalina offered tracts about Jesus to people outside the pharmacy
- 2 Magdalina asked her dad for some Bible verses about Jesus to share with the dentist
- 3 Every day after school, Magdalina and the dentist read Bible stories together
- 4 Magdalina with her mom and dad and her new dentist friend on their way to church
- 5 Magdalina at her home in Trinidad and Tobago



## More Children’s Mission Stories

Find dozens of inspiring mission stories for children at [AdventistMission.org/childrens-mission-quarterly](http://AdventistMission.org/childrens-mission-quarterly).



Watch this story at [m360.tv/s2128!](http://m360.tv/s2128)



# Stepping Into COVID Wave Three With Calm Assurance and a Beach Chair



Volunteer **Sharon Weaver Pittman** serves as the vice-chancellor for Malawi Adventist University in Malawi, Africa.

**W**hat? Fifteen more students have tested positive for COVID? How can that be?"

"But wait," cautioned our dean of students, "there's more news. Fifty additional students are in quarantine."

I fought back tears as I thought about resuming the all-too-familiar routines of sanitizing classrooms, purchasing face masks, and creating posters about social distancing.

This was wave three of our COVID battle at Malawi Adventist University. We nearly sunk financially during wave one, and we could only imagine how bad this wave would be. The news from India left us shocked and afraid. Our COVID Preparedness and Response Team, exhausted from being on the front lines of this war, recently asked for an extra risk allowance. But our Executive Management Team had to deny their request because we were still paying the back salary of faculty who had to survive on 50 percent of their salary during

wave one, when the government closed us for an entire semester.

I sat in my chair, running my hands through my graying hair. "Lord," I prayed, "You called me to volunteer for mission service, but I don't see how this could possibly be what You had in mind!" Never in my 35 years of experience in higher education did I dream that my "retirement" would be twice as busy and more challenging than my actual career. Never had I felt more devoid of professional insight and wisdom than I did at that moment. "Lord," I pled, "please navigate the challenges that the devil has thrown our way."

While I sat in solitude, I sensed a quiet voice saying, "My daughter, I love this university more than you ever will. Step into the water, and I will part wave three as I have parted waves one and two."

Flooded with assurance, I called our team together, and we mapped our way forward in God's strength.





Did you know that you can find *Mission 360°* on the issuu app or [issuu.com](https://www.issuu.com)?

We expanded our online course training modules and made more of our curriculum available online for our students in quarantine. We also hired an online learning director to help us. We're better prepared now than ever before!

So far, our students who tested positive have experienced only minor symptoms. None have tested positive at our second campus, and our more seriously ill faculty member has been discharged from Malamulo Adventist Hospital and is doing well.

A few days later, I sat gazing out over Lake Malawi as I prepared to chair the Malawi National Conference on Higher Education. The conference had been postponed twice before due to COVID. As monkeys played within sight of my chair, I mused, *Now, this is the retirement I had planned for!*

But a moment later my phone rang, calling me back to my duties. "The team from the Ministry of Higher Education is here to set up the final plans for the conference." As I hurried away, I glanced back at the chair and thought about all

my colleagues who are "beaching" their retirement for real, and I smiled. The Lord has a great sense of humor in calling me to this truly value-added "retirement" where I can serve yet enjoy a few minutes on the beach as well!



If you're interested in being a volunteer, visit [AdventistVolunteers.org](https://AdventistVolunteers.org).



Watch video stories about Adventist Volunteer Service missionaries at [m360.tv/avs](https://m360.tv/avs).

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