

# mission

STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PRODUCED BY  
THE OFFICE OF  
ADVENTIST MISSION  
VOLUME 10  
NUMBER 4

- 4** The Sower and the Sewer
- 8** The Path Miss-taken?
- 12** The Shop That Changes Hearts
- 14** Motocross for Jesus
- 28** Magic Dust in the Mission Field



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# EDITORIAL

**D**uring this giving season, I want to thank you for all you've done to help start new groups of believers among unreached people groups this past year. Your generosity and compassion for those who don't yet know Jesus—expressed in prayers, mission offerings, and donations to Global Mission—has helped thousands embrace Jesus as their Lord and Savior and find hope for this life and the life to come. Without you, Global Mission's work

among unreached people groups simply couldn't happen.

I wish you and your family a blessed holiday season as you celebrate God's greatest Gift.

*Gary Krause*

**Gary Krause**  
Director of Adventist Mission



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## ABOUT OUR COVER PHOTO . . .

PHOTO BY RICKY OLIVERAS

On a trip to Southern Asia, I filmed a group of new believers being ministered to by a Global Mission pioneer. This girl was part of the group, who sang and read the Bible together in the pioneer's front yard.

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# The Sower and the Sewer



**Clifmond Shameerudeen** is the director of the Global Mission Center for South Asian Religions.

**N**aresh and his wife, Rita, were assigned to a South Asian city as Global Mission pioneers. When they moved into a particular neighborhood, they prayed for ways to sow seeds of faith and plant a church. And they added, “Lord! Help us reach out and bring change in the community.”

Moving into any new neighborhood can present challenges, but through prayer, Naresh’s first challenge became an opportunity. In front of their new home was an open drainage ditch—a sewer—and it was blocked. This blockage resulted in a terrible stench that all the residents hated. However, no one wanted to do the disgusting work necessary to clean it out. As Naresh and his wife prayed for ways to reach out, they were impressed that they needed to clean out that sewer.

The next morning, the husband and wife woke up at five o’clock. They surveyed the sewer’s drain area to look for the blockage but couldn’t find the source. The next day, Naresh woke again at five o’clock and searched on the opposite side of the drain. This time, he found the blockage.

Immediately Naresh started unclogging the sewer, taking out the garbage that kept it from draining. While he was working, a community elder began yelling, “Why are you pulling out all this garbage? You’re creating more mess, and the stench is worse!” But Naresh kept cleaning. Finally, the sewer was unclogged, and the smell disappeared.

Afterward, the neighbors started noticing the clean surroundings—and Naresh and Rita. They said, “We saw you in the morning cleaning the sewer! Who are you? Why are you so concerned about unclogging and cleaning the drain?” Similar questions came from other curious neighbors. “Around ten o’clock each day, you dress up and go to work. Then, in the late evening, we notice you praying. Who are you?”

Naresh and Rita smiled as they understood that through a clogged sewer, God had opened the way for them to minister in this community,



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## GLOBAL MISSION

sowing seeds of faith. They invited the neighbors to join them for evening prayers.

A family invited Naresh and Rita to pray for a man named Raju, who was paralyzed. Naresh prayed for Raju regularly, but he didn't stop there. He also visited Raju and gave him massages. After three months of prayer and massages, Raju recovered muscle strength.

Raju's wife was overjoyed about this change! She told all her friends and relatives what was happening. One day, 30 women came to Naresh and Rita's house, requesting prayer for their families. More doors of ministry opened!

Naresh and Rita continue to serve the people of their neighborhood through small prayer groups and health programs. They conduct online and on-site prayer meetings every day, and they worship on Sabbaths with small groups. Forty people attend a weekly prayer meeting. Naresh and Rita are there to stay until they develop a house church that is ready to multiply.

Please ask God to continue blessing the incarnational ministry of Naresh and Rita and the ministry of other Global Mission pioneers in South Asian cities.

Please help Global Mission pioneers reach the 66 percent of the world's population who haven't had the opportunity to experience Jesus.

### Ways to Give

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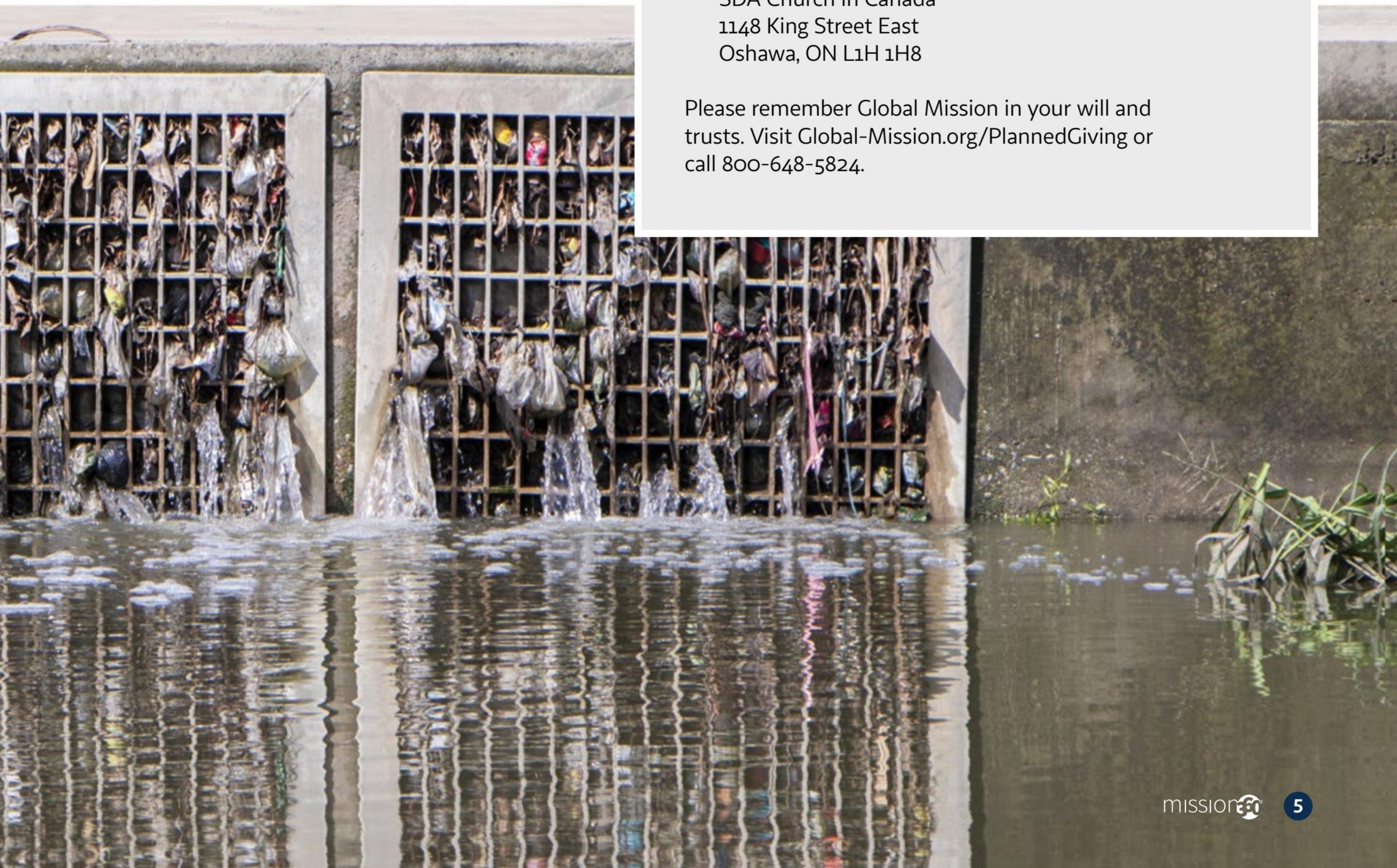
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# A Legacy of Generosity



**Joshua Sagala**, Office of Adventist Mission

**P**astor Ike and his wife, Gerbie, believe that God generously entrusted them with seven acres of land to develop for His service. So the retired couple has devoted their time, energy, and money to turning their property in the Philippines into a campsite for Adventist Youth Ministries.

Founded in 1907, Adventist Youth Ministries is a Seventh-day Adventist Church organization for young people. Its programs include activities such as community service, camping, crafts, classwork, marching, Bible study, and leadership training. The young people visit Pastor Ike and Gerbie’s property regularly to enjoy these activities and fellowship with God and one another.

“Even before we acquired this property, we had a plan to provide a campsite for our young people,” Pastor Ike said.

In addition to dedicating their land for God’s use, Pastor Ike and Gerbie faithfully give their tithes and offerings to God, even when times are difficult.

Before they retired, Pastor Ike and Gerbie were paid on Fridays. But one payday, they were unable to collect their salary. Trusting in God’s providence, they set aside the last of their savings to be given to the Lord the following day.

“We prayed for means to get supplies until our salary arrived,” Pastor Ike said. On Sabbath,

the couple went to church. There, a young person approached them with a sack of *kamote* (sweet potato). The following day, a woman brought them two bunches of bananas. “We gladly received them,” Pastor Ike said. “We know that the Lord is very good because He knows that we are returning His property, His money.”

Pastor Ike and Gerbie were inspired to share what God has blessed them with and to leave a legacy of generosity to those who will follow behind.

“Since we are really the stewards of the Lord, everything is His,” Gerbie said. “We should remember that we are transient in this world; we are passing. The time will come when we cannot use it anymore. What shall we do if we cannot use it? While there is time yet and it can be used, give it to the Lord so that it will help hasten His return.”

If you would like to learn how your legacy gift can bless future generations, visit [AdventistMission.org/planned-giving](https://AdventistMission.org/planned-giving).



Watch “A Legacy of Generosity” at [m360.tv/s2235](https://m360.tv/s2235).



During this season of giving, make a gift that reflects **your life's passion for mission** through a legacy or a current gift that will help **reach the unreached for years to come!**

**100% of your charitable gift will support church planting in areas where people don't know Jesus.**

To learn about making a lasting impact, visit **[Global-Mission.org/PlannedGiving](http://Global-Mission.org/PlannedGiving)**.

To speak with our Global Mission planned giving and trust officer, call **800-648-5824** in the United States or **905-433-0011, ext. 2078**, in Canada.



**GLOBAL MISSION**





The Szamkos: *from left:* Wesley, Ivonne, Alyssia, and William



# The Path Miss-taken?





**Wesley Szamko** served as a missionary for 13 years in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, most recently as its director of Adventist Mission.

Everything that could go wrong was going wrong. My wife, Ivonne, and I were exhausted, disheartened, and delayed in Mexico City for the second time. Our children had finally fallen asleep in the early morning hours, but Ivonne and I were anxious about what the next day would bring. She turned to me and asked, “Have we made a mistake?”

As we embarked on our first international mission assignment, our path took us from where we lived in Canada to visit my wife’s family in Peru. Then we dropped our things in Cambodia and attended Mission Institute training in Thailand. Everything we had brought consisted of eight suitcases, four carry-on bags, our 22-month-old son, and our 3-month-old daughter. The morning of our departure, we awoke in the predawn hours to meet the worst blizzard of that winter. Fearful of missing our flight, we loaded our car in a rush, drove precariously through the storm to the airport, and gave quick and tearful goodbyes to my parents.

We had no way of knowing what our path would soon involve. There were forgotten strollers, a delayed flight leading to a missed connection, canceled subsequent flights, long hours negotiating with various airline staff members in two countries, rescheduled flights with short layovers, running through five different airports and between terminals carrying all the above-listed items—with no strollers.

On top of that, we checked in a bag at the last minute and then realized on the flight that it contained most of our money, leaving insufficient funds on hand for our visas on arrival.

“Have we made a mistake?” Physically, mentally, and emotionally drained, I reflected a moment on Ivonne’s question and then responded. “Either we’ve made a huge mistake, or we’re doing exactly what God wants, and the enemy isn’t happy.”

Partway through our adventure, we gave up and gave everything to God. Everything that seemed insurmountable in our path suddenly met miracle after miracle. There were airline staff members who held a plane and checked all our carry-on bags for free, leaving nothing for us to carry but our children. There were delayed flights that allowed us to make connections and visas for which we were charged half the posted fee. The list goes on. When we placed our trust in God, we still faced challenges, but God changed our reality and our hearts.

Thirteen years later, I wish I could say we’ve always remembered this lesson to rely fully on God. At times we have. We remembered when confronting spiritual warfare, when struggling with unexplained fevers and illnesses, and when facing imminent war while watching troop buildup

and waiting for news of peace or evacuation. We remembered when experiencing threats of violence, when finding ourselves caught in riots, when avoiding people lying in wait to kill me, and when being within hours of needing medical evacuation on three occasions. On some of the hardest paths, we put everything in the hands of God and found ourselves carried through in peace. At other times, while facing lesser troubles, we fought to solve our own problems and were overwhelmed to the point of near burnout.

In a few short weeks, we’ll end our international mission service with the church. We’ve served in Cambodia, in Timor-Leste, and at the Southern Asia-Pacific Division of the General Conference in the Philippines. It has been an incredible privilege and honor.

What have I learned?

Mission, in all its spheres, has come down to a few simple things. First, the mission of God is restoration. God is restoring people to what they were created to be so they can be restored to His kingdom. Let God do God’s work.

Second, our mission from God is disciple-making. We’re to continuously help people see God and His love and then teach them what we’ve learned about growing in Him and becoming witnesses and disciple makers. All of this happens in deep relationship with Him, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in ongoing Bible immersion and prayer.

The most important lesson is full reliance on God: to give up control and give everything to God, trusting in Him to restore me, to restore others, to change my reality, and to guide me in His purpose on His path. I know that whatever comes next, my family will find God’s love, peace, and help as long as we remember to trust Him fully.

Try putting your name in this special promise: [Your name], “trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6, NKJV).

Your generous and systematic mission offerings help support the ministry of hundreds of missionaries. Please give at [AdventistMission.org/donate](https://AdventistMission.org/donate).





# Volunteer Teacher's Remarkable Path to Lebanon

Is God calling you to go? Check out these links!

- ▶ **Volunteering:** [vividfaith.com](http://vividfaith.com) and [adventistvolunteers.org](http://adventistvolunteers.org)
- ▶ **Tentmaking:** [TotalEmployment.org](http://TotalEmployment.org)
- ▶ **I Will Go!:** [IWillGO2020.org](http://IWillGO2020.org)





As told to **Kathie Lichtenwalter**, Middle East and North Africa Union Mission

**V**olunteer teacher Ruan Oliveira struggled to listen to the speaker at an I Will Go! mission training event at Middle East University in Beirut, Lebanon.

*Where have I seen this guy before?* he wondered.

Ruan had arrived from Brazil to serve as a volunteer teacher at the Adventist Learning Center, which teaches Syrian refugee children in grades 1–8. He was listening to university teacher Brian Manley describe the work of tentmakers, Seventh-day Adventists who follow the apostle Paul’s example of using their profession to share God’s love in non-Christian countries.

Ruan pulled out his cell phone and began to scroll through years of photos.

Mission was in Ruan’s blood. Born in Brazil, he had grown up in a family that talked and lived mission.

When Ruan was in high school in 2017, they traveled to Argentina to attend an I Will Go! mission conference.

As he heard about the needs of the Middle East, Ruan’s heart was deeply touched.

During his first year of university studies, Ruan accepted an invitation to teach English in a non-Christian country in Asia. Soon after he arrived, however, the language school closed. He stayed to study the local language but was forbidden to mention God to anyone. His witness seemed limited to a few online Bible studies.

Returning to Brazil for his second year of university, Ruan felt a strong desire to go abroad again. He filled out several applications for openings in the Middle East, the region that had captured his imagination at the 2017 conference in Argentina.

“God, it’s up to You,” he prayed as he sent off the applications on [vividfaith.com](http://vividfaith.com), one of the

Adventist Church’s websites for volunteers. “I’ll accept the first response that I get.”

Seven minutes later, a message popped up on his phone. It was from Alexis Hurd-Shires, director of the Adventist Learning Center in Beirut, Lebanon.

“I saw your application,” she wrote. “I’d like to talk with you!”



Ruan (right) with Brian Manley at Middle East University

Ruan arrived at the school six weeks later. After his experience in Asia, he appreciated the religious freedom in Lebanon.

“I realize what a privilege it is to be able to talk to people about God,” he said. “In Lebanon, I can even tell them I’m a Christian! My favorite part is visiting the families of our students and sharing hope with them in very discouraging situations.”

After a yearlong stint in Lebanon, Ruan intends to finish his studies and become a full-time missionary. His conviction that God has called him to serve was reaffirmed when he remembered where he had seen Brian previously.

After Brian finished speaking at the conference, Ruan approached him, phone in hand.

“I know where I’ve seen you before!” he said, showing Brian a photo of the two of them with Ruan’s family at the conference in 2017. It was Brian’s presentation about tentmakers at the conference that had stirred Ruan’s heart to serve God in the Middle East.

Ruan may only be at the beginning of a life of mission, but he can already speak with experience after following a remarkable path to Lebanon.

“Anyone who has said ‘I will go’ is giving God an open invitation,” he said. “He will take you places you never imagined.”

Ruan, (second from left) and his family with Brian Manley (center) in Argentina in 2017. Photos courtesy of MENA







# The Shop That Changes Hearts

The following article was written by a Global Mission pioneer serving in a veiled country. All names have been changed to protect her and her ministry.

**S**ome time ago, we started a church plant in a city of more than 2.3 million people, most of whom had never heard of Jesus. The church plant resulted from the ministry of our urban center of influence, a health shop where we sell food, offer free seminars and treatments, and build meaningful relationships with non-Christians by meeting their needs.

We share Jesus in several ways at our shop. We can't distribute literature publicly here, so we attach pamphlets about His love to our products. Because our shop is part of a large market, we've set comfortable chairs outside; while customers enjoy much-needed rest, we get to know them a little. We get to know some of them even better when we deliver merchandise to their homes and they invite us in to talk. As we learn about their daily struggles, we find ways to help. We also keep a list of our customers and pray for them each day.

One person we were able to share Jesus with is Ms. Lee. This is her story:

"I was an atheist, although I grew up in a family that embraced the traditional religion in this area. Christianity, viewed as a foreign, western religion, is uncommon here.

"One day, I came across a shop that offers a variety of free health treatments. I tried them and found that my health improved. The woman treating me taught me about health from a biblical perspective and told me about God's love. I developed an interest in the Bible, and my heart is opening more and more to Christianity."

I thank God for using our health shop to change people's hearts. As they apply their new knowledge to their lives, they experience the healing power of Christ.

Here is the testimony of a man we had the opportunity to help:

"When I was thirty, I divorced my wife, left my family, and moved to the city to work. I was

always in a bad mood and always drunk. I lived a hopeless life for fifteen years.

"When I was forty-five, I was injured at work. I had a large wound on my leg that wouldn't heal. It was very painful, and I couldn't walk. Around this time, I met a woman who worked at a health shop. She told me about someone named Jesus who could heal me. I didn't know who Jesus was, but because I had nothing else to do, I decided to follow her and her husband to their church plant for a Bible study.

"I kept meeting with them, and they taught me how to pray. One day I prayed, 'Dear Lord, if you can heal me, I will believe You are God.'

"Several days later, my wound healed! I accepted Jesus as my Savior. Even though I live alone, I know that I'm not alone. I have found a family among the members of the church plant!"

Sadly, some of the people we minister to won't experience Jesus' physical healing until He comes again. One such person was a 24-year-old woman named Sister Z. Here is her testimony:

"I had been a member of a Christian church since childhood, but I had never been a Christian. After graduating from high school, I learned that I had cancer.

"The cost of my medical treatment put my mother and me in debt. Despite the excellent care I received, my health didn't improve.

"It was during this time of hopelessness that a couple of members from an Adventist church visited me. They raised funds for me, comforted me with prayer and Bible verses, and took turns caring for me day and night."

Unfortunately, Sister Z passed away. Our church plant was heartbroken yet so thankful that God had allowed us to cross paths with her. Before her death, she had a clear understanding of the Bible and had accepted Jesus as her Redeemer.

We were worried about Sister Z's mother, so we spent a lot of time with her. "I dedicated my whole life to my daughter—my only child," she told us. "I believed that if she died, I would have no reason to continue living. I'm still suffering, but because of the members of the church plant, I'm hopeful. I believe I will meet my daughter again in heaven."

Please pray for our Global Mission pioneers and the people we meet through our health food shop. Pray that their hearts will be receptive to Jesus so they will be ready when He comes again.



Global Mission's priority is starting new groups of believers among unreached people groups. Please support Global Mission by visiting [Global-Mission.org/giving](https://Global-Mission.org/giving).



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## Motocross for Jesus



**Joshua Sagala**, Office of Adventist Mission

**S**eyha lives in the ancient city of Siem Reap, Cambodia. Less than five miles from his home lies a vast Buddhist temple complex called Angkor Wat. Named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1992, it's reported to be the largest religious monument in the world. Two million people visit the temples every year.

"God told me that I had to start a tourism business to reach out to these visitors," Seyha said. So he started a company that combined three of his greatest loves: Jesus, people, and motorcycles.

Seyha's business has enabled him to meet hundreds of travelers from a variety of religious backgrounds and worldviews, and he's had many opportunities to share his faith with them.

"[My] business is a way of reaching out to people who would never enter a church and who don't even like Christians," Seyha said.

Seyha is well-respected by those in the local tourism industry who regularly hire his services. But he has specific requirements before accepting their requests.

"Each of my clients knows that I'm an Adventist," Seyha said. "They know that I don't party, that I live a different life. . . . My first conviction is keeping the Sabbath. If they can't let me keep the Sabbath, I won't do the job even though it pays

one hundred dollars a day. Second, if they try to stop me from sharing my experience with God with the people around me, I won't take the job."

Seyha is known for his integrity. One day, a man asked him to reserve a room in a particular guest house. When Seyha told him the price was thirteen dollars, he was surprised. "That's impossible," he said. "Other tour guides have charged me twenty-five dollars for a room there." When the man confirmed the price with the guest house, he learned that the fee had been thirteen dollars all along.

"Why are you different from other tour guides?" the man asked Seyha later.

"What do you mean?" Seyha asked.

"You're honest," the man replied.

"That's because I'm a believer in Christ," Seyha responded.

The man was quiet for a moment and then said, "I hate Christians, but I like you!" He asked Seyha about his faith, and Seyha shared a little about being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. When the man returned home, he sent Seyha a message saying, "I'm reading my Bible now."

In another message to Seyha he said, "I just want to let you know that in this world you are the only person who doesn't rip me off. Even my family members just want money from me."



This man isn't the only person that Seyha has influenced for Jesus. Some of his guests who were avowed atheists have told him, "Because of you, I'm reading my Bible."

"We can share that Jesus is a true friend to us," Seyha said. "And if you are a true friend to people, they open up everything to you, and when they open up everything to you, when they fully trust you, then they trust your God!"

We can share God's love through almost any job, hobby, or talent that God has entrusted to us. Seyha is a wonderful example of this in Siem Reap, Cambodia. He has felt God's love and is empowered to do good works for Him. Please pray that Seyha will be able to continue sharing the love of Jesus through his company.

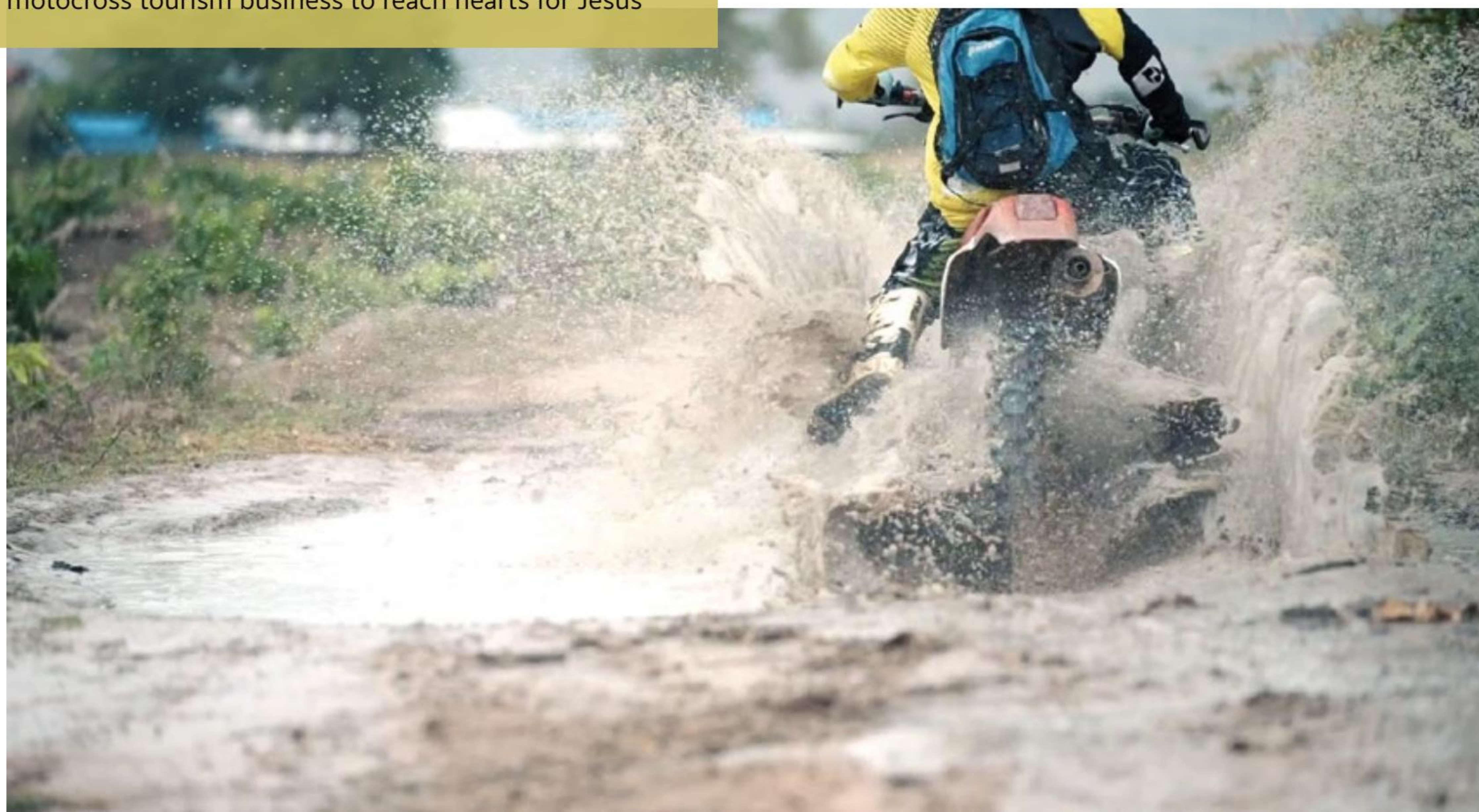
Seyha's outreach to the city of Siem Reap is an example of Total Member Involvement (TMI). TMI is a full-scale, world church evangelistic initiative that involves every member, every church, and every institution in mission. To learn more about TMI, visit [TMI.Adventist.org](http://TMI.Adventist.org).



Watch this story in action at [m360.tv/s2129](http://m360.tv/s2129)!



Seyha, a Global Mission pioneer in Cambodia, uses his motocross tourism business to reach hearts for Jesus

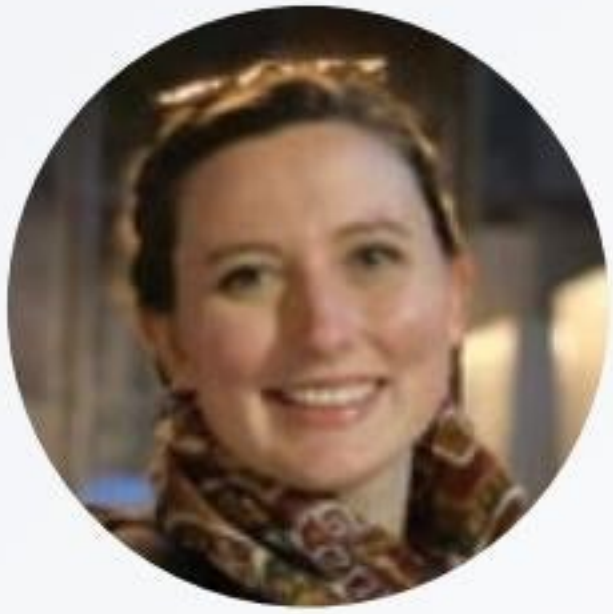






NIGERIA

# The Night We Needed Blood



Melissa Giebel grew up as a missionary child in Nigeria with her father, Herb; mother, Gail; and sister, Tami. She is a nurse and works with refugees.





**A**unty Belen wants to know if you would like to go to the theater [operating room]," my dad said as he came into the house one evening. Like my parents, Aunty Belen and her husband, Jason, were medical missionaries from the United States serving at Ile Ife Adventist Hospital in Nigeria. "I'm planning to join her for an operation," Dad continued, "but I need to do something first. Can you help her get started?"

"Sure," I replied. I turned to Chris, a student missionary seated next to me at the table. "Want to come?" I asked. Chris was thinking about becoming a doctor but wanted to see what it was like first. This visit to an operating room would be a perfect opportunity.

Chris and I made our way to the theater, where we washed, put on scrubs, and joined Aunty Belen and John, a local nurse anesthetist. They had just finished preparing a woman for surgery to deliver her baby. John prayed for God's guidance, and Aunty Belen started cutting. I got some gauze to soak up the blood.

As we worked under the surgical lights, I noticed that the air conditioning wasn't on. *That's odd, I thought. It's boiling in here. Maybe it's not working.* I saw sweat on Aunty Belen's forehead and realized I was sweating too. Suddenly, I felt woozy. I told Aunty Belen that I had to sit down, took one step back, and toppled backward. Chris and John rushed over and lowered me gently to the floor.

When Seun, one of the student nurses, learned what had happened, she insisted on helping me recover. She took me to the nurses' station, where she doused my head with cold water and then had me drink some of it too. When I stopped feeling dizzy, I returned to the theater to watch the rest of the operation.

I arrived just in time to see Aunty Belen pull a big baby boy out of the mother's tummy. The moment he was out, he gave a yell of protest. John took the infant while Aunty Belen and my dad, who had recently joined her, worked on removing the mother's placenta. Suddenly, blood started shooting out of her abdomen. "Melissa, we need blood," my dad said as he and Aunty Belen attempted to stop the hemorrhage. We had collected and stored a unit of blood for this woman before surgery, and I ran to our "blood bank" to get it.

When I returned to the theater, my dad told me they needed four more units. I looked at him incredulously. Where was I supposed to get four

units of blood at this time of night? In Nigeria, people are afraid to give blood. With lots of cajoling, a person might be talked into giving blood only if they see that a relative will die without it. Our blood bank rarely had blood in it. When we needed blood, we looked for donors. This woman lived far away and had no family there to ask.

"What type?" I asked.

"O-positive," my dad replied.

I was O-positive, and so was Chris. Chris made his way to the lab while I went in search of two more donors among the nursing students.

I first went to the men's dormitory, where no one admitted to being O-positive. Then I went to the women's dormitory, where the few women who were O-positive were either sick or refused to come. Defeated, I headed down to the lab to give my unit. A few minutes after I got there, several students who had heard I was looking for donations showed up to give blood. The lab technician took my blood and then began testing the others to determine their blood type. I ran my unit to the theater only to learn they needed more than four units of blood. As I searched for more donors, I ran into the students from the lab and learned that they all had been turned down for one reason or another.

Whispering a prayer for help, I went from door to door on our hospital campus looking for donors. It was a hectic night, but eventually, with God's help, I collected enough blood. Chris and I ended up donating two units each. As they finished taking the second unit from me, I blacked out, so they had to put half a unit back in.

In the end, the woman received approximately 16 units of blood. Both she and her baby survived!

I'm glad we were able to give blood to save this woman's life. I'm even more glad that Jesus gave His blood so we can have life eternal!

Your generous and systematic mission offerings help support the ministry of hundreds of missionary families. Please give during Sabbath School, by scanning this QR code, or by visiting **[adventistmission.org/donate](http://adventistmission.org/donate)**.







# Bringing Hope Over Airwaves



**Ricky Oliveras,**  
Office of  
Adventist  
Mission

**B**ogaram and his wife, Clara, discovered Hope FM in Papua New Guinea while searching for radio stations to fulfill Bogaram's appetite for music and information.

"We listened to different radio stations daily," Clara said. "However, we were not satisfied until one day when my husband stumbled upon Hope FM. He then invited me to listen to the many inspiring programs. From then on, we listened to Hope FM every day."

Bogaram listened to the new FM station more and more.

"The radio station is unique and already impacting my life," Bogaram said. "My wife has joined me in listening to the radio since last October. I didn't attend any church at that time. After listening to the radio station, I decided to attend church for the first time.

"My family began to notice changes happening in my life," Bogaram continued. "My children were happy about the changes. Conflicts between us ended. I am convinced about my choice to worship on Sabbath. My choice is a blessing to my family."

Bogaram invited Jesus into his heart and decided to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He's become not only a disciple but also a disciple maker, inviting his family to follow his newfound faith.

"Hope FM brought light to my life," Bogaram said. "I was truly convicted by the truth. I then shared my newfound truth with my family. The experience was awesome and exciting."

Bogaram can't read, so Clara reads the Bible to him. They follow Bible lessons from the radio. Their faith grows as they spend this time studying together.





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“I listen to Hope FM every day,” Clara said. “One day, I took the radio to church for a women’s meeting. However, when I connected the radio to the power source, it overheated, and we began to see smoke coming from the device. I concluded that it was the end of the radio. I lifted it toward heaven and prayed for God to fix it. Immediately God fixed my boombox. It was working well again afterward. I praised God and thanked him for the experience. I’m thankful to Hope FM, which brought change into my life.”

We praise God for media ministry reaching far and wide. These programs reach listeners in the mountains, across the valleys, and along the coastlines of Papua New Guinea, transforming lives.

This quarter, a portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go to reach more people, such as Bogaram and Clara, through Hope FM

radio and Hope Channel television. Please give to this special opportunity to spread the message of hope. Thank you for supporting the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering!



Watch this story at [m360.tv/s2242](https://m360.tv/s2242).

Please give generously to support the work in this part of the world by contributing to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter at Sabbath School or by visiting [adventistmission.org/donate](https://adventistmission.org/donate).







# A Picture of Heaven

**W**hy are you so nice to us?" Fernanda asked. "We're bad girls. I'm bad inside." I looked deep into Fernanda's eyes and caught a glimpse of the pain that filled her heart.

I was halfway through my volunteer term at Familia Feliz (Happy family), an orphanage and boarding school in Bolivia for kids who have a history of abuse, neglect, or extreme poverty. I taught several classes to fifth and sixth graders and served as a houseparent for girls 11 to 17 years old. Fernanda was one of the girls I taught and cared for. I'd spent hours trying to show her unconditional love, but the concept was still unfamiliar to her and many of my students. I felt like I had failed her.

While some of the children at Familia Feliz had an enormous capacity for love and friendship, many of them had serious behavioral issues. They didn't respect me, one another, or themselves. I had to break up fights almost daily in my classroom. Some would harm themselves or each other when they had the opportunity, so we couldn't leave them unsupervised. I dearly loved each of these children, but I wondered whether anything I did or said got through to them.

One of the classes I taught was religion. I was worried about teaching this class because two of my students knew next to nothing about Jesus. I wanted to present faith in a way that would make sense and be meaningful to them.

One day we were talking about heaven. I tried to briefly share how I was looking forward to seeing family members and friends again who had passed away, but my students stopped paying attention, and soon chaos reigned. I realized this was a battle I wouldn't win, so I changed my plans, grabbed some paper, and told everyone to draw what they thought heaven might be like.

At the end of class, a student named Mateo gave me the picture he had drawn. Mateo was a tough student to have in class. He had serious attention difficulties and was prone to angry and aggressive outbursts. I was surprised when I looked at his picture of heaven and saw stick figures drawn in the clouds and a caption that read, "Teacher Alyssa and her family." I had thought that he wasn't paying attention. I realized that I had

underestimated him and his ability to be compassionate. He had been listening and was thoughtful enough to draw a picture showing the comfort and hope that heaven gives.

Shortly after this experience, Mateo left Familia Feliz. I didn't see him again, but I hope and pray that his short time at Familia Feliz planted in him a desire to know more about God and His unconditional love and forgiveness. I keep his picture as a reminder to pray for him each day.

I've added Mateo's name to my list of people I look forward to meeting again in heaven.

During my time at Familia Feliz, I felt like I got to experience a bit of what it's like to be an earthly parent and understand a little more about God's love for us. If I, an imperfect human, could feel that much love, how much more does God love these kids?

I miss the kids at Familia Feliz, but I'm so grateful for a God who is watching over them and loves them (and the rest of us!) with true unconditional love.

---

**Alyssa Dybdahl** graduated in 2021 from Walla Walla University in Walla Walla, Washington, with a degree in international communication. She lives in Loma Linda, California, and works with children who have disabilities.



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://www.adventistvolunteers.org).





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# God Is the Contractor

This story was written by a frontline worker serving in the Middle East and North Africa Union.

**T**he task before me appeared impossible. I knew there was no way I could manage the remodeling of a facility that needed to be ready in three weeks to house a new center of influence in one of the largest cities in the Middle East. I was new in the area, I didn't know the local language, and I certainly didn't have a network of available tradesmen and workers.

Just to make the space usable, I needed walls put up, plumbing put in, an air conditioning system installed, new lighting hung, ceramic floor laid, every surface painted, and countless small maintenance tasks checked off. To do it all in three weeks would require careful coordination too. But where was I to begin? I felt I would rather do almost anything else than try to navigate such an impossible task. A job that would be relatively easy in my home country seemed overwhelming.

I took my impossibility to the Lord and cried out to Him. "You led us to find this place to rent. This is Your project. Now, please, help me get through the next three weeks to have this place ready to begin classes."

But I couldn't just pray; I had to begin doing something. I recalled Ehab, one of our current language school students, who had told me once in passing that he was a painter. I figured at least he was someone I knew, and he could speak simple English too! I felt confident enough to call for an estimate. The next day he slowly followed me through each room, eyeing every detail carefully. "No worries," he assured me at the end. He felt he could easily organize the painting within the given time frame.

With our business done, Ehab invited me to go out to eat with him and his brother. As busy as I was, I accepted; I've learned that doing business is relational, personal. Over lunch, I listened intently to the brothers' testimony of being led by God to leave their childhood faith and become Protestant Christians. My heart resonated with their sincerity and commitment; I was blessed.

Later that day, knowing I had little time to spare, I called and assured Ehab I would hire him. I had to ask him for a delay, though, because I knew I still needed to get other tasks completed before he could paint. I expected him to be understanding. I didn't expect him to abruptly ask for a full list of what needed to be accomplished in the next three weeks. He wanted to know every single task. "I'll help you get them all done," he informed me.

He offered a simple explanation. After our lunch together, his brother dreamed that God told him that I was God's son and that Ehab was to help me with all that needed to get done. Ehab assured me that God had ordered him to help me, and he was completely available to get the task done. It took me a few moments to register the unexpected offer. Then, praise God! I felt like singing.

Ehab spent the next three weeks working every day, all day, preparing the center. He called in technicians for every task. He oversaw each person's work. He personally negotiated the lowest prices possible. He let his own business wait until every item on our list was finished. Everything got done, with one day to spare. He even took more days off to help us move our things into the new facility.

How much did he charge? He wouldn't allow me to pay him anything, though he deserved three weeks' wages for a working man. Every time I insisted payment was due him, he would remind me that God had directly revealed through his brother that this was his task. He was working for God.

What could I say? There aren't words enough to respond, only a prayer. Thank you, God, for carrying my burdens and managing Your work, for providing committed workers willing to take Your direction, for building our faith once more by showing Yourself faithful.

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Reprinted with permission, this story originally appeared in the *MENAU Communique*, the newsletter of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission.



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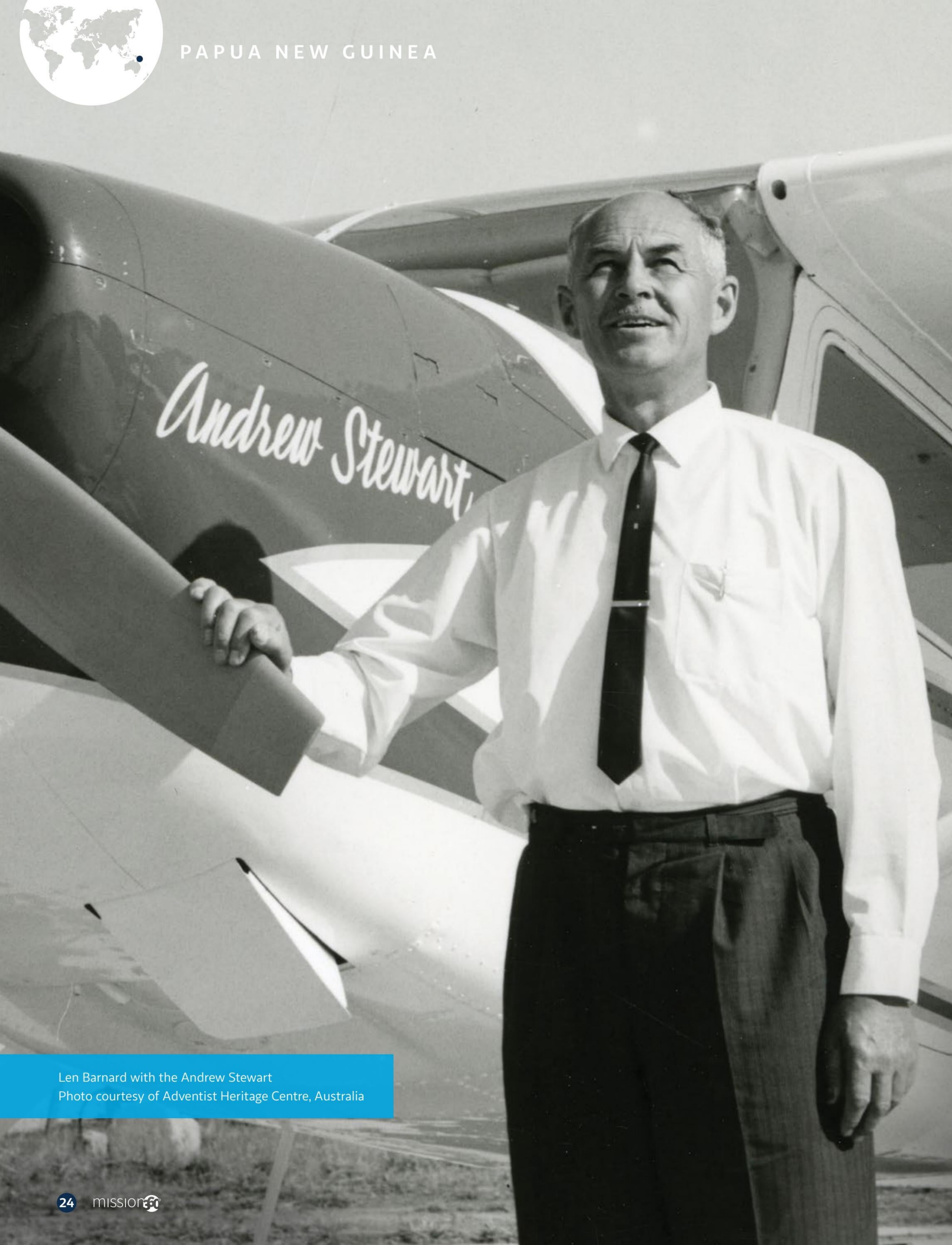
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Len Barnard with the Andrew Stewart  
Photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Centre, Australia



# Leonard Henry Barnard and the Birth of Adventist Aviation

**A**ustralian Leonard “Len” Henry Barnard (1919–2015) was best known for his three decades of pioneering missionary work, particularly in what is today known as Papua New Guinea (PNG).<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s, he cofounded Adventist Aviation, which operates a fleet of aircraft in the South Pacific Division to the present day. The following story is adapted from his biographical article in the online *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* (ESDA). To enjoy more stories about Adventist missionaries, we invite you to visit the ESDA online at [encyclopedia.adventist.org](http://encyclopedia.adventist.org).

## Early Years

Len Barnard was born into a Seventh-day Adventist family in Wellington, New Zealand, on November 11, 1919, the youngest of Eustace and Maud Elizabeth Barnard’s four children. When he was five days old, his mother disappeared. Len and his siblings were placed in an orphanage for the next five years until his father remarried and he could be brought back into the family home. At this time, the family moved to Christchurch in South New Zealand, where Len’s father worked as an engineer for the Sanitarium Health Food Company.

## Marriage and Military Service

Len first experienced PNG during World War II when attached to the Australian Armed Forces Fifth Casualty Clearing Station, treating wounded soldiers. He remained in active service until April 1946. While on leave, Len returned to New Zealand and married Mavis Catherine Parker on December 28, 1943. The couple later had two children: Sharyn Mavis (Lang) and Judith Kaye (Hawkes).

A noncombatant, Len had been sent to PNG, where he treated the wounded and ill, who were often evacuated back to Australia for better medical attention. While there, he observed the impact of aircraft in that mountainous country where there were practically no roads and the only way of getting around was on foot.

When released from army service in April 1946, Len wanted to remain in PNG doing medical work for the church, but the church had not yet reestablished its presence in that region. So, Len returned to New Zealand, where he joined the Hawera Aero Club and, within a few weeks, obtained his pilot’s license.

Len and his family did not remain in New Zealand for long, however. Len accepted a position with the Public Health Department in PNG, and the family moved to Bogia.

## Denominational Service

While in Bogia, Len was asked to pioneer the establishment of a leper colony at Hatzfeldthaven on the coast. For various reasons, this did not occur at that time, so he instead was asked to establish another such colony in the Highlands. He reentered denominational service in October 1948.

The Barnards’ first denominational appointment in PNG was to the Togoba Hansenide Colony, Western Highlands, where they remained for six years working among lepers. The family lived for a time in a house made of Kunai grass. One evening the house burned to the ground. The family escaped but lost all their belongings.

Their next appointment was to Omapura in the Eastern Highlands of PNG, where Len was the director for the Omapura district. There, he ran a small hospital and trained medical orderlies. At the beginning of 1960,



**Lester Devine** is a director emeritus of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Center in Avondale, Australia.





The Andrew Stewart in Papua New Guinea.  
Photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Centre, Australia.

Len was appointed director of the Homu district at Mount Michael in the Eastern Highlands. In 1962, the family transferred to Tetamanda, back in the Western Highlands, where Len was again the district director. It was just after arriving at Tetamanda that Len was ordained at Sopas Hospital on February 3, 1962.

Trekking through the difficult mountainous terrain while taking medical help to remote villages, Len was constantly reminded of how having an aircraft would greatly help in his work, especially as he saw planes belonging to other denominations on their way to his destinations. They were covering ground in minutes that took him days, even weeks, to traverse.

## A Vision for Aviation

In 1963, Len shared his vision for aviation with the new Coral Sea Union Mission president, O. D. F. McCutcheon, and asked whether he would be willing to accept an aircraft if he, Len, could acquire one. Len was delighted when his president responded positively to his request.

The Australasian Division Executive Committee noted that several physicians in America wished to donate a Cessna 180 aircraft for mission service in PNG. The Coral Sea Union Mission not only endorsed this offer but had two qualified pilots in its employ. On November 7, 1963, the committee requested that the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church authorize the operation of a denominationally owned aircraft in PNG. On March 31, 1964, the General Conference authorized the operation of a denominationally owned aircraft in the Coral Sea Union Mission.

In anticipation of the procurement of an aircraft, the Barnard family was transferred to Laiagam, Western Highlands, in early 1964. Laiagam was

a relatively short distance from Tetamanda and possessed an airstrip. The Barnards remained in Laiagam until the end of 1972.

## A Vision Realized

Len flew to the Bankstown Airport in Sydney, Australia, for the dedication of the plane at a well-attended ceremony on June 27, 1964. In his dedicatory address, division president L. C. Naden provided a short history of the work of the church in PNG. He concluded his remarks by honoring Pastor A. J. Stewart, the aged South Sea Islands missionary, “whose life had blessed so many, by naming our first denominationally owned plane *Andrew Stewart*” and calling upon him to “dedicate it to the service of God and the people he loves so much within the territory of New Guinea.” He said, “We would ask him to remember especially missionary pilots Len Barnard and Colin Winch who will share this plane, and all those who will travel with them on their flights in the service of the Master.”<sup>2</sup>

The two-day, 1,988-mile (3,200-kilometer) trip from Sydney, Australia, to PNG included some challenging flying. Barnard described the final leg into Goroka: “Majestic storms were scattered along the dreary coast of the Papua Gulf as we approached, and the mighty Fly River, which is thirty five miles wide at its mouth, was emptying the water and soil it had brought down from the shrouded hinterland. We were now only six degrees from the equator. . . . Climbing to nine thousand feet, we managed to keep clear of the cloud near the coast, but as the mountains guarding the highlands reached up to meet us, so did the clouds. Mammoth cumulus cloud build-ups challenged our advance, so we climbed higher and higher, but in our small plane we could never hope to top the hats of these giants of the heavens.”<sup>3</sup>

Then, at 14,000 feet, a gap was found in the clouds, and they piloted the descent into Goroka. When it landed on June 30, 1964, the plane was greeted by union president O. D. F. McCutcheon. The Seventh-day Adventist Church members were excited. Adventist aviation in the South Pacific was now a reality.

Len was joined in flying the *Andrew Stewart* by Colin Winch, who also had his pilot’s license and about 300 hours of flying experience. Years later, Winch reflected, “I remember very well the thrill when a few days after his arrival in Papua New Guinea, Len flew the aircraft down to the Hayfields airfield near Maprik in the Sepik District where I was stationed. It was a wonderful thrill for me to take the controls and to fly the aircraft through to the Maprik airstrip. Len and I shared this aircraft (VH-SDA) for two years opening up work throughout the Western Highlands and the Sepik District.”<sup>4</sup>

Len himself reflected on the difference that



an aviation capability made to the mission of the church. “In 1959 I led a medical mission patrol into the notorious Karamui cannibal country. It took forty days of footslogging to reach these remote and appallingly needy people and return. We gave injections and medicine and treated ghastly wounds and ulcers. This was the first medical aid given these people. Leprosy was rife and evidence of their cannibalism was all around. After meeting their physical needs, these people were ready to hear news of a loving saviour and God who cared for them. Subsequently a government airstrip was built, and it is now possible to fly there in twenty-eight minutes, and in comfort. What a contrast.”<sup>5</sup>

After two years of flying in PNG, Len had a serious accident when his left leg was almost severed by the propeller while testing its compression. Four doctors said it must be amputated, but Len insisted that it be sewn together and that the Lord would heal it. This was done, and much to the surprise of the surgeon, Len returned to flying for the mission for several more years. The massive wound that circled his thigh had healed quickly, but the bone took a lot longer. While Len had a limp for a while, it was only eight months after the accident that he was back flying mission aircraft.

Experience, along with Len’s vision, had shown Adventist aviation in the South Pacific to be an invaluable part of the program. Eventually, larger and more capable aircraft were added to the fleet, with the *Quiet Hour* radio broadcast in the United States funding several of them.

After four years as an army medic and another 23 years as a medical missionary and pilot in PNG, 55-year-old Len, together with his wife, Mavis, returned to Australia at the beginning of 1972 for health reasons and was invited to be the church pastor at Hillview Church, Morisset. He pastored several other churches before he retired on December 29, 1984.

## Retirement and Later Years

When Len retired from his work as pastor-pilot, he did not retire from flying. He could be seen and heard on most Sundays flying his own ultra-light plane above the Avondale College community and beyond for almost another two decades. At the age of 90, he was the oldest recreational pilot in Australia. He also was the inspiration behind the Adventist Aviation Associations (AAAs), which operate in a number of conferences in Australia.

Mavis died on October 15, 2005, and on April 9, 2006, Len married Noela Shinnars.

In 2014, just seven months before he died, Len made a nostalgic final trip back to Papua New Guinea accompanied by his daughters, Sharyn and Kaye. The occasion was the fiftieth anniversary of the commencement of Adventist Aviation in

Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific Division. Full of gratitude, he was able to observe firsthand the enormous development of Adventist mission aviation in that country and was amazed at the load-carrying and short-field capability of the new turbine-powered aircraft in service there.

Len died on January 14, 2015. Just an hour before his death, he was visited by his close friend and colleague of 50 years, Pastor Colin Winch, who had shared flying duties with him in the *Andrew Stewart* back in those early years.

Some years before his death, Len expressed his commitment to the Lord and to mission aviation in the South Pacific Division: “If men’s eyes were opened, maybe we would see mission planes flying in formation with the Three Angels of the apocalypse and together proclaiming the gospel to the uttermost parts of planet earth.”<sup>6</sup>

- 1 The area where Len Barnard worked passed through several administrative changes from the time he first worked there to the present, resulting in several name changes. For the sake of simplicity, this article will refer to “PNG” regardless of what the area was called historically except within quoted statements.
- 2 Len Barnard, “The Introduction of Mission Flying to the South Pacific,” *Flightwatch*, November/December 1976. 7.
- 3 Leonard H. Barnard, “A Dream Come True: Aerial Evangelism in Papua New Guinea, 1964–1972,” *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*, vol 1 no. 2 (2001): 5.
- 4 Colin Winch to Mary Stellmaker, June 12, 1975, private letter in the personal collection of the author.
- 5 Barnard, “Dream Come True,” 6.
- 6 Barnard, “Dream Come True,” 8.



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# Magic Dust in the Mission Field

It was the summer of 2020. A mentor and good friend, Pastor Rich Carlson of Union College in Nebraska, was talking to our group of soon-to-be student missionaries about what we should expect. “There’s no magic dust in the mission field,” he said.

I interpreted his warning to mean that we would be the same people at our mission destinations as we are at home, having all the same flaws, issues, and bad habits. I left our Zoom meeting believing that I would grow during the year and that to grow, I would need to suffer or, at least, sacrifice (Romans 5:3).

Six months later, I was still in America because the North American Division’s COVID travel restrictions prevented us from

serving overseas that year. During the winter break, I was on vacation with a good friend, driving through eastern Utah. It was getting late, and the quiet drive on the two-lane highway was relaxing our minds. We got into a deep conversation.

“I don’t feel like I know nearly enough about the Bible to be a high school Bible teacher and witness to dozens of kids,” I said.

“If you know everything about a subject, it’s probably you talking, not God,” my friend replied.

His response stunned me, and I knew he was right. If I had pride in my knowledge or my speech, it would always be me talking. I would never have to rely on God.

When I arrived at Pohnpei Seventh-day Adventist School in 2021, I was overwhelmed like my seven peers who had also gone through a two-week quarantine just to get on the island. We had a daunting task before us. We had seven days between getting our curricula and the first day of school. As a Bible





teacher, I felt underprepared and unworthy, that my understanding of the Bible was extremely inadequate. It was humbling.

I asked God to talk through me, to fill and use me completely in the classroom so that it wouldn't be me teaching but Him. I implored Him not to let me cloud His holy Word with my flaws, for what could I teach compared to the abilities of my Father?

As the school year progressed, my feeling of inadequacy turned to joy and awe as I was used by the Creator. I would come to my classroom without a grasp of how the class was going to go, but He always took it in the direction of His choice. It was common for me to say something I didn't know as He enabled me to explain and expand His words way beyond my own understanding. He more than sprinkled me with "magic dust." He drowned me in an ocean of miracles!

My students were constantly telling me how my "God's class" was impacting them. I had mothers cry as they expressed thanks for the work God had done on their children through this class.

I have been blessed and directly shown the power of God. Privileged beyond my



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understanding. Used beyond my belief. Strengthened beyond my abilities. I'm still the same Tobias Novak I was when I left home. I only know now how weak and unqualified I am to speak.

Adapted with permission from the stories on the Guam-Micronesia Mission's website.

**Tobias Novak** served as a Bible teacher for grades 9 through 11 at the Pohnpei Seventh-day Adventist School in the Federated States of Micronesia. He grew up in Nebraska, where he is earning a degree in business administration from Union College. He enjoys photography, off-roading, and mountain climbing.







CHILDREN'S STORY

# Flying on the Mission Plane



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



Animation by  
**Diogo Godoy**

**E**ight-year-old Christian squinted his eyes as he looked up to catch his first glimpse of the plane in the Papua New Guinean sky.

"Papa, is that it?" he said.

"Yes, son, that's the mission plane that will take us to our mission outpost," Papa answered.

The plane circled around the small runway at the airport one time before landing and taxiing up to where Christian and his family were waiting.



"Hello there!" the pilot said in a friendly voice as he walked up to greet everyone. "We need to get going quickly. A storm is heading this way, and we don't want to get caught in it."

Christian grabbed his backpack.

"The door is on the other side," the pilot said. "Go ahead and get in." Christian walked around the plane, looking at the big propeller at the front and the three small wheels underneath.

Then he and his two sisters climbed in. He had flown on big planes before but had never been on one this small. He found a window seat right behind the pilot. The perfect spot!

The engine started, and Christian and his family bumped down the runway. Before he knew it, they were in the sky.

Looking out the window, all Christian could see were trees, trees, and more trees.

*Are there any people down there? he thought. I don't see any houses or streets or neighborhoods like the ones in the United States.*







Soon, the mission plane circled a small grass airstrip in the middle of the trees. With a bump, it landed and quickly came to a stop at the end of the runway.

Christian picked up his backpack and followed the others down a path to a river, where he saw a boat with a mission logo on the side. Once all the family's bags were loaded, the engine started, and they were on their way down the river, going fast! There was so much to see. Egrets gracefully flew by; people paddled long, dugout canoes; and children waved from the banks.

"Look!" Papa said. "There's the mission outpost. That's our new home."

The boat followed a bend in the river, and the motor slowed down. On the bank, people stood ready to welcome them with big, happy smiles. The boat pulled over to them. When the engine stopped, Christian heard them singing, "We are happy today, we are happy today, we are happy to have you here!"



Christian couldn't stop smiling. As soon as the song ended, he was the first to climb out. As he walked down the long line of waiting people, he shook hands with each person, becoming even more excited because he saw many kids. He knew that he was going to love his new home.

Please pray for missionaries such as Christian who leave everything they know and travel far to follow God's call. Thank you for your mission offerings that help spread the gospel in Papua New Guinea and around the world.



Watch "Flying on the Mission Plane" at [m360.tv/s2243](https://m360.tv/s2243).

## More Children's Mission Stories

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



Christian and his family serve as missionaries in Papua New Guinea through Adventist Frontier Missions.



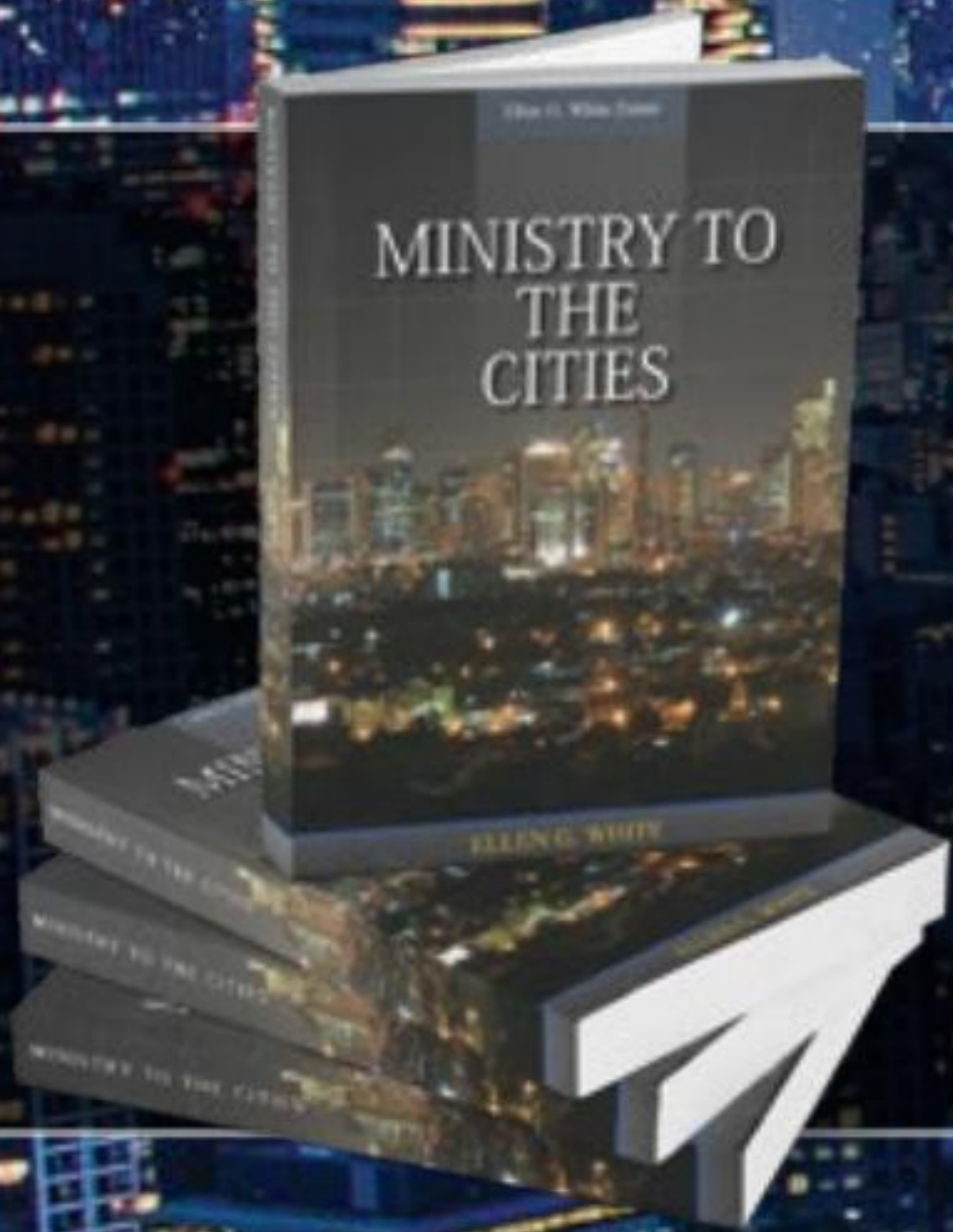
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Ellen G. White, *Ministry to the Cities*, p. 26



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