

2023

Offertory
Devotional
Readings

Lighting Up All Corners



by Charlotte Iskhanian.



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

2023

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A SIMPLE GUIDE



TO THE OFFERTORY DEVOTIONAL VIDEOS

The Offertory Devotional Readings you have in hand gave origin to the Offertory Devotional Videos. These two-minute educational and motivational videos are planned to be presented every Sabbath in your church, before the offering collection.

You may play or download the two-minute videos (for this and previous years) by using the QR code below. The following are instructions on how to use them:

- The videos are to be presented in the church before the offering collection.
- They do not include the appeal or the final prayer, which should be supplied by the person scheduled to promote the offerings.
- The videos may (and should) also be shared through social media or during congresses, youth programs, small group meetings, camp meetings, church boards, Stewardship Weeks of Prayer, etc.
- The videos were recorded in English, but each division or union is permitted to translate them into their various languages or customize them with regional accents.
- The entire video with original soundtrack—no voiceover/no letterings—will also be available, upon request, to divisions and unions at no charge from the GC Stewardship Ministries Department.
- Local church pastors and stewardship ministries directors must be informed about the videos and how to download them and share them in their churches, especially before the offering collection.
- You may watch the videos using this link: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/weekly-offertory-videos>

“Money is an exact index to a person’s true character. All through Scripture there is an intimate correlation between the development of a person’s character and how they handle their money.” *Richard Halverson*

Preface

Everyone loves stories, especially true stories—stories of people around the world who have listened to God’s voice and say “yes” when God says, “Follow me.” It may be a young boy who responds to God’s call (1 Sam. 3), or it could be an experienced prophet who is called by God with a vision and a question: “Whom shall I send, and who shall go for Us?” The prophet Isaiah understood that God was calling him for a difficult job, and he willingly answered: “Here am I! Send me.” God responded with powerful words: “And He said, ‘Go, and tell’” (Is. 6:8, 9 NKJV). We, too, can answer God’s voice and respond to Him.

The prophet Isaiah understood that God was calling him for a difficult job, and he willingly answered: “Here am I! Send me.” God responded with powerful words: “And He said, ‘Go, and tell’” (Is. 6:8, 9 NKJV).”

As you listen to the stories about people around the world who have shared their own personal testimonies, pray that God will open your heart to hear the message God gives you. Each of these stories has one thing in common: The people who heard God’s call to follow Him, obeyed, and were blessed. Likewise, God calls each of us to listen to His call, follow in His footsteps, and lead others to do the same.

As you hear these stories, let your mind take you to the scene. Listen to God’s voice as the story unfolds. Ask yourself, Do I hear God’s calls in my life? Am I willing to step forward and speak the words He has put into my heart? Am I willing to give my time, my life, my earthly goods as He has instructed? God’s call doesn’t just apply to sharing our faith. It includes returning our tithes and giving our promise offerings to Him, not because He needs our gifts, but because He needs our obedience and our faith above everything else.

What joy can fill our hearts when we understand that God will provide for us and our needs! If you doubt, ask someone who is giving a promise offering regularly. Listen to their testimony of how God has blessed their family in many unexpected ways.

Ask God to show you how He can provide for your needs far beyond what you have agreed to give back to Him. You will likely learn that God is providing more than ever for you and your family. He will bless you abundantly as your faith grows and your heart gives.



What is the “Promise” Offering?

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give **as he purposes in his heart**, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Cor. 9:6, 7 (emphasis provided).

“Promise” is a name used for the regular and systematic offering (it is different from the spontaneous or offering), in which:

- It is considered as important and binding as the tithe (See Mal. 3:8-10).
- The **system** is proportional (percentage-based).
- It is given as a **percentage** or proportion of the income (1 Cor. 16:1; Deut. 16:17).
- The worshipper chooses the **percentage** of the income that will be regularly given as “Promise” (any percentage is valid).
- The **regularity** of giving is determined by the regularity of the blessing which is received (the income).
- It should be given after any income (Prov. 3:9).
- It is not expected when there is no income (2 Cor. 8:12).
- The worshipper offers it immediately after the tithe, and before any other expense is met or giving is done (Prov. 3:9; Matt. 6:33).
- Regularity, percentage, and period of validity must be previously “vowed,” “promised,” or “purposed” by the worshipper (2 Cor. 9:7).



In Malachi 3:8-10, tithes and offerings are clearly placed under the same system. This implicitly suggests at least three similar characteristics for both tithes and offerings: (1) regularity (according to the income), (2) proportionality (a proportion of any income), and (3) delivery (brought to the storehouse).

Ellen G. White also agrees that tithes and offerings are under the same system. She alludes to the fact that this system includes the concept

of also giving offerings as a proportion of the income: “In the Bible *system* [singular word] *of tithes and offerings* [both under the same system] the amounts paid by different persons will of course vary greatly, since they are *proportioned* to the income.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 73 (italics provided).

In another quotation, she says that this offering along with the tithe, is not spontaneous or voluntary but is part “of our obligation.” This thought

is in line with Malachi 3:8-10, which states that that not bringing that offering is viewed by God as dishonesty. Here is the quote: “This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 80.

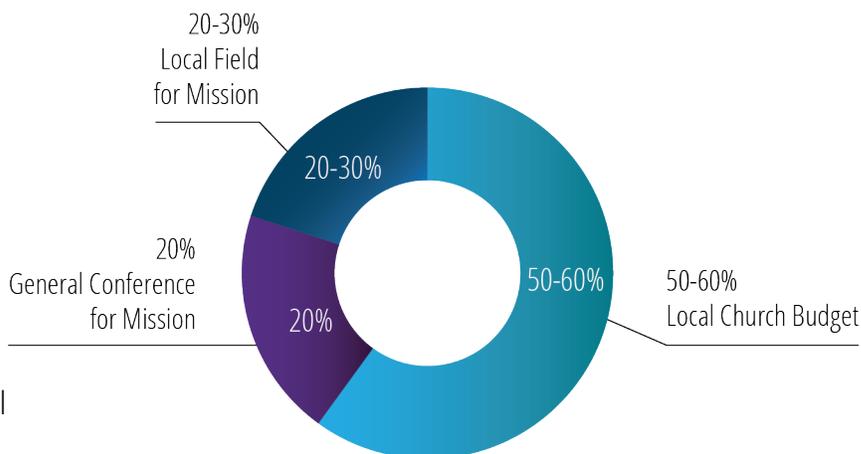
COMPARING TITHE, PROMISE, AND SPECIAL OFFERINGS

FEATURES/ OFFERINGS	TITHE	PROMISE	SPECIAL (SPONTANEOUS) OFFERING
REGULARITY	Determined by the frequency of one's Income	Determined by the frequency of one's Income	It is sporadic.
SYSTEM	Proportioned to the income	Proportioned to the income	According to the impression of the feeling or heart
MANDATORY	Lifelong	Lifelong	Circumstantially (when prompted by the Spirit)
PERCENTAGE	Predetermined by God (10%)	Chosen by the worshiper (___%)	N/A
POSSIBILITY OF PERCENTAGE ADJUSTMENT	No	Yes	N/A
DELIVERED TO	Storehouse	Storehouse	Place chosen by the worshipper
FINAL RECIPIENTS	Local, regional, and international range	Local, regional, and international range (suggested)	Chosen by the worshipper

Three Offering Plans of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

COMBINED OFFERING PLAN

The Combined Offering Plan was voted as the GC promoted and recommended offering plan at the Annual Council of 2002 after a recommendation by the World Stewardship Summit of 2001. It supports all levels of the church by putting total funds collected into one pool. The funds are distributed according to a formula approved by each division but within the following percentages: 50-60 percent for the local church; 20 percent to the GC for mission funds, and 20-30 percent for mission work in the local field. Divisions making use of this plan currently include: ECD, ESD, IAD, NSD, SAD, SID, SPD (Island Fields), SSD, SUD, WAD, MENAUM. Learn more about this plan here: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/combined-offering>.



CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

In the Calendar of Offerings, the original option, different destinations for offerings are promoted each Sabbath during the worship service following the approved calendar of offerings as voted by the General Conference committee every year. A calendar of the weeks of each year is drawn with certain offerings designated accordingly. About 26 Sabbath offerings are assigned to the local church, and the others are allocated between the other levels of church organization or designations in the local field. All loose offerings (not in marked envelopes) will go to the offering of the day. There are six Special Offerings days for particular ministries. Divisions ascribing to this plan currently include the EUD, Israel Field, SPD, TED. (The Calendar of Offerings for this year can be found on pages 55-57.)

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

2 Cor. 9:7

PERSONAL GIVING PLAN

The Personal Giving Plan organizes the financial needs of the church into three categories (roughly the same three categories covered by the Combined Offering Plan) and offers a suggested percentage of the member’s income to be dedicated to them. They are: (1) Local Church Budget (3-5%). This would include utilities, maintenance, insurance, school operating expenses, children’s magazines, teaching supplies, staff salaries, bulletins. (2) Conference Advance Budget (1-2%) for Christian education, local evangelism, Vacation Bible School, summer camps, union magazines, etc. (3) World Budget (1-3%) to support the global mission needs of the church as promoted in the approved Calendar of Offerings. Sabbath School offerings are received and treated the same way as in the Calendar of Offerings plan. This plan also makes provision for giving toward special projects. The NAD currently ascribes to this plan.



“Every man should freely and willingly and gladly bring tithes and offerings into the storehouse of the Lord, because in so doing there is a blessing.”

Counsels on Stewardship, 66.4

OFFERTORY READINGS

WEEK 1 • JANUARY 7, 2023

God's River of Life

John 4:13-14—“Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Have you ever wondered what happens to your Promise offerings? Think of your offerings as a vital river flowing through the entire world, providing life-giving support to build God's work in every mission field, locally, regionally, and internationally.

But exactly where do our offerings go? What do they achieve? And what do they support?

If your Promise offering is distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan, then 50 to 60% support the missionary work of your local church, 20 to 30% support the regional missionary endeavors of your conference, and 20% always support the World Missionary Fund (or World Budget) that, among other things, provides for about 400 missionary families around the world plus some 1,600 Global Mission Pioneers.

It is also from the World Missionary Fund that our mission offerings are distributed among the 13 world divisions plus the Middle East North Africa Union Mission, the Chinese Union Mission, the Ukrainian Union Conference, and the Israel Field (which are attached fields to the General Conference) to help these regions build and sustain mission activities in their territories. Other parts of the World Missionary Fund help several church institutions that serve the world church. For instance, these funds help finance the medical mission work of Loma Linda University, the outreach of Adventist World Radio and Hope Channel, and the humanitarian ministry of ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

In recent years, millions of people from the most challenging areas of the world have found salvation in Jesus and have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A recent study suggests that every 22 seconds someone becomes a Seventh-day Adventist, and every four hours a new church is established. Thanks to your offerings and the Global Mission focus, thousands of new congregations have been established in previously unreached areas and among new people groups. But after these new believers have been baptized, how are they nurtured? Part of our Promise offerings help to disciple new believers, teaching them how to share their new faith with others in their neighborhood.

Your river of Promise offerings helps grow and sustain mission work in an equitable way, locally, regionally, and throughout the world. Please keep this life-giving river flowing. Thank you for your offerings and for your continuing prayers for God's mission work around the world.

Each Sabbath this year, you will be able to see or hear a story of how God works in another new region. Listen intently and pray fervently for those who are working in the fields ripe for harvest.

A recent study suggests that every 22 seconds someone becomes a Seventh-day Adventist, and every four hours a new church is established.

WEEK 2 • JANUARY 14, 2023

Brazil: Mission on the Amazon

Matthew 21:16—“... and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?’”

Vitoria is a 10-year-old girl who loves to spend time with her parents and her brother, Daniel. Yet Vitoria has done something most young girls have not. She has planted a small group that meets every week to study the Bible. But it’s not a regular small group.

Vitoria lives on a tributary of the Amazon River. One day a week she climbs into a small canoe and paddles up the river. With skill and determination, she makes her way to the house of a friend and picks him up to go to the Bible study.

Sometimes her brother goes along to help. When the canoe is full, they make their way to another island and tie their canoe to a tree. They step into the jungle and walk on fallen logs, trying not to fall off into the thick mud that covers the forest floor. They reach a small house built on stilts which overlooks the river. This is the home of another friend who welcomes the children to study the Bible so he can attend too.

The young people start with prayer. They open their small group’s study guide and read the lesson. After discussing the topic of the lesson, the group sings songs before they close with a prayer. The children say goodbye and return to the canoe to go home.

Vitoria gives a simple reason for wanting to tell her friends about Jesus: “Because I want to be in heaven with them.”

Three of Vitoria’s friends have been baptized because of her witness, and they invite more friends to their weekly Bible lessons. Vitoria eagerly awaits the day she can be baptized as well.

If a young child is willing to brave a big river to share her faith with her friends, just imagine what we can do to help spread the gospel to others. All we need is faith, courage, the Holy Spirit, and Bible study guides to introduce others to Jesus.

The regular and systematic offerings, called Promise, make it possible for believers young and old alike to lead Bible study groups like those in South America. Let’s give our offerings faithfully so that people around the world will have what they need to share God’s love with those around them.



WEEK 3 • JANUARY 21, 2023

Bangladesh: Joyfully Serving Jesus

3 John 1:2—“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers”

Bangladesh is a country of 180 million people, but fewer than 23,000 are Adventists. That’s one Adventist for every 8,000 people in Bangladesh. The challenge of reaching the people of Bangladesh for Jesus seems impossible. But one Global Mission pioneer believes that with God’s help even one person can make a difference for God.

Ajoy Khayang, a Global Mission pioneer in rural Bangladesh, has worked with the villagers in his region for several years. When he first came, the people held tightly to their traditional religious beliefs, but Ajoy prayed that the people would let go of their gods and rituals and learn about Jesus. God paved the way to answer Ajoy’s prayers in an unexpected way.

The villagers get their drinking water from the same river where they wash their clothes and bathe. So, it was no surprise to Ajoy when the villagers became sick with diseases such as diarrhea, malaria, and cholera. With no medical services nearby, the villagers grew desperate to find a cure for their symptoms.

When Ajoy saw how seriously ill the villagers were, he called them to meet in the church for prayer every day for a week. At the end of the week Ajoy could see that many of the sick were recovering. They saw the healing also. As a result, many asked to follow Jesus. Now, most of the villagers are Christians.

The villagers are poor and illiterate, but they have hope for a better life for their children. They want to build a school and find a teacher to teach their children to read and write so they can study the Bible and have a better life. And they want to dig a well so they can have safe drinking water.

Ajoy is grateful to be a part of God’s Global Mission pioneer team. We are part of that same team, for our faithful promise offerings support the work of Global Mission pioneers in more than 100 countries. Our Promise offerings help spread God’s message of love to people who do not yet know Jesus.

If we purpose a determined percentage of our income to be regularly given as our Promise offering, it may not represent a large offering. But if all of us do the same thing, a constant flow of resources will be sent as God blesses us, and it will water the seed of the gospel that has been planted by our faithful missionaries. God will bless what we give so our offerings can go far and encircle the world with the message of the love of Jesus.



WEEK 4 • JANUARY 28, 2023

Albania: Mission Changed Us

Matthew 28:19-20—“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

When God called Delmar and Nati* and their three-year-old daughter Clara to serve as missionaries in Albania, the couple eagerly prepared to embark on a new adventure with God. They knew that living in a foreign country would stretch their comfort zone. It didn't take long to learn some of the challenges they would be facing as they worked to bring the gospel to Albania.

For years, Albania had banned religion. Even today religion isn't a priority for most people. There are only about 120 Adventists in Albania.

The family was assigned to serve in the city of Korçë [KOR-chuh]. They had great plans, but despite their efforts, few were interested in Bible studies. Delmar was discouraged. All their effort had led to nothing.

Then the family received a call to pastor a large church in Brazil. The offer seemed perfect, but Nati wasn't so sure. “Do you think we've done everything we can here? I feel that God has work for us here.” The couple decided to stay and pray that God would use them.

Delmar and Nati noticed a lot of children in their neighborhood. Maybe working with children was a good place to start. The couple prepared a volleyball court and invited the children to come and play. The kids started coming to the church yard to play. They got to know Delmar and Nati. Soon the churchyard was full of kids! They just needed to get them inside the church.

Angela, one of the church members, brought her friend Fatjon [FAHT-ee-ohn] to join the fun. Fatjon and Delmar started talking about God, and then they began studying the Bible together. Delmar invited Fatjon to be part of the youth group. “Great!” Fatjon said. “I want to help these kids, to serve this community.” Soon he was helping with the kids, and the kids loved him.

Fatjon helped bring the youth together, and some began asking questions about God. Delmar was thrilled to baptize Fatjon—his first baptism in Albania!

The church's youth group has added many new faces. The church's Center of Influence is growing.

As Delmar and Nati continue to serve on the front lines of Albania, we too can serve on the front lines of mission as we return our tithes and give our Promise offerings faithfully to God and His work.

*Names have been changed.

The couple eagerly prepared to embark on a new adventure with God. They knew that living in a foreign country would stretch their comfort zone.

WEEK 5 • FEBRUARY 4, 2023

Cyprus: Befriending a Shoe Shiner

Proverbs 11:24-25 (ESV)—“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”

Yulian hurried to a busy corner in the city of Nicosia, Cyprus, where he set up his shoe-shine stand. He had come from Bulgaria 10 years earlier in search of work. But cigarettes and alcohol consumed most of his earnings. When he lost his job, his family told him to leave his home. Although he worked long hours as a shoe shiner, he could barely support himself.

One day, Filip, a Global Mission pioneer also from Bulgaria, greeted Yulian and asked if he needed help. Yulian was surprised. It was nice to hear someone speak in his native Bulgarian and take an interest in him. Yulian offered Filip a shoeshine.

While Yulian shined Filip's shoes, Filip told him that Jesus loves us, no matter who we are. The mention of Jesus grabbed Yulian's attention.

The next day, Filip returned and asked if Yulian needed any help. Filip didn't need a shoe-shine, so the two men just talked for a while and looked through the books that Filip had brought. Filip stopped by often and read the Bible to Yulian.

Filip's eyes filled with tears as he offered his new friend hope for a better life in Jesus. Soon Yulian gave his life to God.

Yulian had drunk and smoked for years, but he decided to give up alcohol and tobacco. His family welcomed him back home, and now Yulian tells everyone who will listen about his love for God.

Filip, a Global Mission pioneer, leads a Bulgarian-language Bible study in Nicosia. Several people have been baptized through Filip's work, a significant number for a country where the Adventist Church has only about 100 members in a city of more than one million. Filip spends his time mingling with people, making friends, and introducing them to Jesus.

Every faithful Christian returns a tithe of income after every payday. But God asks us to do the same with our offerings, giving a regular offering beyond the tithe, a percentage of our income to support God's work around the world. We give in faith, knowing that God will supply our needs according to His riches, not ours (Phil. 4:19).

Let God challenge your heart to determine what percentage of your income your Promise offering will be, knowing that God will see that your every need is supplied when you trust and obey Him.

Every faithful Christian returns a tithe of income after every payday. But God asks us to give a regular offering beyond the tithe, a percentage of our income to support God's work around the world.

WEEK 6 • FEBRUARY 11, 2023

Croatia: Two Great Loves

Exodus 35:21—“Everyone came whose heart was stirred, and whose spirit was willing, and they brought the LORD’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.”

Eleven-year-old Joshua has two loves: God and his violin. Long before he went to school, Joshua learned to play the violin.

At school Joshua tried to tell his friends about God. But they weren’t interested. When Joshua learned that a Vacation Bible School (VBS) was coming up, he invited his friends to attend. Some seemed hesitant, so Joshua said, “Just come! It’s great!”

Some of Joshua’s friends attended VBS, and they liked it so much that they wanted to go again. One girl, Mela, was so impressed that she told Joshua, “It’s a miracle! There really is a God!” Joshua gave Mela a Bible and now Mela and her mother are attending Joshua’s church. Mela has joined Pathfinders, and her mother goes to a women’s group at the church.

One day Joshua heard his parents talking about a boy who was very sick with a brain tumor, and his family couldn’t afford to pay for the operation that he needed.

Joshua thought for a while and then said, “I know! We can have a concert to raise money to help this boy!”

“OK,” his mother said, “but who will organize it?”

“I will!” Joshua organized everything himself. He told his friends and teachers at his music school about his idea, and 15 young musicians agreed to play in the concert. Joshua talked with his pastor, who opened the church for the concert. Soon, posters advertising the special concert were posted all over town, inviting people to come to this special fundraising program. The concert was held at the Seventh-day Adventist Church. About 300 people came to the concert, most of whom had never been in an Adventist church before.

Joshua and his friends were delighted when they learned that their concert raised 8,600 Croatian kunas (about US\$1,300)! That’s more than an average person in Croatia earns in a month! Joshua and his friends were happy that they could help the sick boy and his family. Who knew that a boy and his violin could make such an impact for God? Imagine what you could do to help people around you!

Giving faithfully to God through our talents and our Promise offerings helps people around the world, near and far, hear God’s message of love—some for the first time. Imagine what heaven will be like when we meet those who met Jesus because we gave out of love.



WEEK 7 • FEBRUARY 18, 2023

Cambodia: Motorbike for Jesus

Matthew 5:16—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Seyha (SAY-HUH) lives in the city of Siem Reap, Cambodia. The city is known worldwide for its ancient Buddhist temple complex called Angkor Wat. Tourists come from around the world to see the expansive ancient carved buildings.

Seyha is a tour guide and is known for his honesty and love of Jesus. Seyha takes tourists to the ancient sites around the city by motorbike. This unique travel adventure gives Seyha opportunities to share his faith with his clients while he shows them the ancient buildings.

Seyha has met people of many different faiths and worldviews through his business. He wants to witness to people who have never entered a church. His way of giving tours has made him well-known among tour guide companies who hire him. His employers know that he does not drink or work on Sabbath.

“My regular clients know that I’m an Adventist,” Seyha says. “If a company wants to hire me, but wants me to work on Sabbath, or won’t allow me to share my faith, I won’t take the job, no matter how much money they offer.”

Seyha’s integrity takes first place over making money. One day, a man booked Seyha’s tour service. The customer had used other tour services before, and the man knew that the other tour guides had charged \$25 to rent a room in a certain guest house. But when the man asked Seyha how much the room would be, Seyha answered \$13. Surprised, the man said, “But I’ve always paid \$25 to stay here.” Seyha told him that the hotel charged only \$13 and it was against his principles to charge him more.

“Why?” the man asked.

Seyha answered simply, “Because I follow Jesus, and God wouldn’t be pleased if I cheated someone.”

Later, the customer sent a message to Seyha saying, “Thank you for showing me what it means to be a true follower of God. I’m reading my Bible now because of your testimony.”

God can trust Seyha to be a strong example of a faithful follower of Jesus. We, too, can be a clear example of God’s love in every aspect of our life, including returning our tithes and giving an honest Promise offering—a percentage of our regular income determined between God and each of us. Trust God to provide your needs, and He will bless you abundantly.



WEEK 8 • FEBRUARY 25, 2023

Georgia: The Little Missionary

Hebrews 13:15-16—“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, [d]giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Luka and his parents live in Georgia, a small country that once was part of the Soviet Union. Luka’s father is a pastor, so Luka has grown up loving Jesus.

One day at church, his father announced that he would hold some special meetings to introduce people to Jesus. He urged everyone to invite someone to the meetings. Luka knew exactly who he would invite to the meetings—his kindergarten teacher!

Luka loved his teacher, Ms. Keti. He wanted her to learn to love Jesus just like he did. The next school day Luka invited Ms. Keti to the meetings and gave her a card that contained information about the meetings. Ms. Keti said she would try to attend.

Luka was thrilled when he saw Ms. Keti enter the church the first night. Luka welcomed her and offered to sit with her so she would not feel alone. Ms. Keti came to the meetings regularly. She told Luka and his parents that the messages were just what she needed.

Near the end of the meetings, Ms. Keti told Luka’s father that she wanted Jesus to live in her life and asked how she could become an Adventist. Luka was so happy that the teacher now loved Jesus too.

Ms. Keti visited the children’s class in church and learned that the children in Georgia had no Bibles or Sabbath School lesson to read in their own language. That made it hard to remember the stories the teacher told in Sabbath School. Then a special part of our Promise offering from church members around the world helped the Adventists in Georgia buy Bibles and print the children’s Sabbath School lessons in Luka’s language. Now the children in Luka’s church can read their Bibles and their Sabbath school lessons in their own language.

Luka is glad to have a Bible and Sabbath School lessons to help him learn more about God. He shares his lessons with his friends at school and invites them to come to church with him to learn more about God. He’s also glad that church members around the world have an offering plan—giving tithes and Promise offerings regularly and systematically as regularly as they give the tithe—helping members and missionaries in other countries tell people about Jesus.

Even children can become Promisors, knowing that no matter what percentage of our income we dedicate to God as a Promise offering, besides the tithe, He will bless us.

He urged everyone to invite someone to the meetings. Luka knew exactly who he would invite to the meetings—his kindergarten teacher!

WEEK 9 • MARCH 4, 2023

Ethiopia: Getting to Know Jesus

John 9:4—“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.”

Talessa has lived in the rugged hills of Ethiopia his entire life. Most of the country’s 85 million people live outside the cities, surviving on the food they manage to grow in the dry, dusty soil. Each day Talessa travels by foot many miles to meet with his neighbors and church members. He speaks their language; he knows their struggles; he is trusted by those around him. Talessa is a Global Mission pioneer.

After sharing a Bible lesson and prayer, Talessa continues his journey to the next home. At times the next home is an eight-hour journey. The believers have a church for their growing congregation—a church Talessa built with his own money.

Many people from this region of Ethiopia worship idols. They are haunted by superstition and fear. Talessa tells them the story of Jesus and how He delivered people from devils when He walked on this earth. Talessa invites them to learn more about Jesus, the Son of God, who loves them and wants them to live with Him forever.

Around the world thousands of pioneers like Talessa are working to share God’s message of love with those around them. With your support, Talessa is finding many who are hungry to know that God is more powerful than the devil, that their idols are worthless. So, he treks over the hillsides of Ethiopia, sharing God’s love to anyone who will listen.

Please pray for our Global Mission pioneers and the people they work with. The call to go and tell the world that Jesus is coming soon cannot be maintained or expanded unless believers continue to give our offerings on a regular basis.

Our offerings should ideally be given as a Promise—a covenant with God—faithfully, regularly giving a covenant proportion of our earnings to support the programs that God has instituted to reach every person on this earth so Jesus can come.

If your Promise offering is distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan (which is recommended and promoted by the General Conference), then 50 to 60% help support the missionary work of your local church, 20 to 30% support the regional missionary endeavors of your conference, and 20% always supports the World Missionary Fund (or World Budget), producing balanced support to all the world missionary endeavors of the church. It is our duty to go, to pray, and to give so that others have an opportunity to meet Jesus in heaven one day.

If your Promise offering is distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan (which is recommended and promoted by the General Conference), then 50 to 60% help support the missionary work of your local church, 20 to 30% support the regional missionary endeavors of your conference, and 20% always supports the World Missionary Fund (or World Budget), producing balanced support to all the world missionary endeavors of the church

WEEK 10 • MARCH 11, 2023

Philippines: Warriors for Jesus

Jeremiah 24:7—“I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.”

One early morning on the island of Mindoro, Philippines, Jaslene* was making her family's breakfast. Suddenly gunfire shattered the peace. Her husband, Antonio, raced into the house, grabbed his gun, and began shooting back. Government soldiers had ambushed them because they were rebel fighters.

Jaslene grabbed her children and raced into the forest, where they hid in the bushes until the shooting stopped. Jaslene and her children slipped back home. They learned that Antonio had been killed by the soldiers. Jaslene's heart pounded with hatred. She decided to raise her children to fight and avenge their father's death.

When the oldest boy reached 13, he joined the rebels. Jaslene taught the younger children how to survive in the jungle, how to forage for food, and how to shoot to kill.

One day Jaslene was listening to her radio while she worked. The strains of a song touched her heart: “Coming again, coming again, Jesus is coming again!”

The speaker spoke about Jesus, the kind and loving Savior. Fascinated, Jaslene stopped to listen. Her heart warmed as she heard that God loved her and offered her forgiveness. Soon she accepted Jesus as her Savior and tried to forgive her enemies. Her children followed her example, and soon they all were baptized.

One day Jaslene met the speaker of Adventist World Radio. Tearfully, she asked him, “Pastor, why did it take you so long to come and tell us this good news about God? If only you had come before my husband died. He would have given up his fighting before it was too late.” Then she added, “This broadcast must go to other villages in the mountains! They need to hear about Jesus before it is too late for them!”

Jaslene and her children have found joy and forgiveness to replace the hatred in their hearts. They encourage their friends to trade their bullets for Bibles and find that Jesus brings true joy and meaning to their lives, delivered to them on the airwaves of AWR.

Our lives have been changed by the Savior, and we can show our gratitude and love by giving our offerings to Him faithfully. Our Promise offerings are gifts to God, not to the church, to use in reaching people for the Savior in every part of the world.

*Names have been changed.

Duane McKey is president of Adventist World Radio.



WEEK 11 • MARCH 18, 2023

Portugal: Goats Make Friends

1 John 5:13—“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, [a]and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

Christof’s family had grown tired of city life and moved to a small mountain-top village in Portugal to be closer to God and one another. Their new home has a garden and lots of room for Christof and his brothers to play.

The family didn’t speak Portuguese when they first arrived, so Christof and his mother decided to get acquainted by helping their neighbors. Soon they were learning their language and could talk to their neighbors.

Christof met a neighbor, Antonio, the goatherder. Christof asked Antonio if he could help take care of his goats. Antonio agreed and began to teach Christof how to care for the playful animals. When Christof learned that Antonio could not read or write, Christof offered to read to his friend. The next time Christof visited Antonio, Christof brought his Bible.

Antonio listened as Christof read stories from the Bible. Antonio was happy to have someone read the special messages from God. He told Christof that he believed that there is a God in heaven and that years ago his grandma had believed in the Sabbath as God’s day of rest and worship. Christof was happy that he had found a friend that he could share God’s stories with.

Christof invited Antonio to church, but the nearest Adventist church was too far and the roads too rough for Antonio’s old bones. So, Christof’s family came to Antonio’s home to worship and read the Bible with him.

Word spread through the neighborhood that Christof was reading the Bible to Antonio. Others wanted to join. Antonio invited those who wanted to join them to come to his home and study the Bible together. Soon several people from the village joined Christof’s family in worship. More and more came and found God’s love. Throughout the mountains of central Portugal people are hearing God’s message because a young boy shared God’s love with a goatherder.

Our faithful Promise offerings, given as regularly and systematically as the tithe and distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan, introduce people who live in mountain villages and large cities to Jesus. The Combined Offering Plan proposes that 50 to 60% of your Promise offerings should help support the missionary work of your local church, 20 to 30% should support the regional missionary endeavors of your conference, and 20% always supports the World Missionary Fund (or World Budget), which supports overseas missionaries, missions, programs, projects, and institutions focused on preparing more missionaries. Let’s give faithfully so God’s work can be finished and we can meet again in heaven.



WEEK 12 • MARCH 25, 2023

Brazil: The Neighbors Noticed

Romans 12:2—“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The city of Salvador in Brazil is changing. The Adventist Church is growing fast there; but despite the strong growth, unentered areas still exist in the city.

For years José [jo-ZAY] drank alcohol and disrupted the community. Ari knew that José was unemployed, so Ari offered him a job with his construction company, building churches.

José noticed that Ari treated him well and talked about God a lot when others treated him rudely. In time Ari invited José to read the Bible with him.

José felt his heart change. Things he had once loved, he no longer cared for. His life was transformed. José accepted Jesus as his Savior and asked to be baptized.

José’s neighbors saw the changes in José. He no longer played loud music and wasn’t drunk every evening. The neighbors asked, “What has happened to you? You’re so different!”

“I’ve met Jesus,” José said, his eyes shining with joy.

Some doubted that a drunkard could change so completely. José began inviting his neighbors to his home on Friday nights to talk with them and pray for their needs. José pointed to the Bible, showing them a Creator who cares deeply for them.

José’s neighbors are getting to know God. As a result, 10 people have been baptized and more are preparing for baptism. Small groups such as José’s form the core of the church in Salvador. These small groups grow into congregations, and these congregations divide into more small groups and spread throughout the city.

Five years ago, the church leadership in the state of Bahia, where Salvador is located, set a goal to build 1,000 churches in five years. They reached their goal, and all 1,000 churches now hold new congregations. The 1,000 churches across Salvador and the state of Bahia represent growing congregations of believers who, like José, have been changed by Jesus.

José’s life testifies that no matter what struggles someone may face, Jesus can transform their life.

Your regular and systematic offerings, called Promise, are your partnership with God. He promises, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. . . . For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38, NKJV). If you doubt this promise, test God. Prove Him, and you will see for yourself.

José felt his heart change. Things he had once loved, he no longer cared for. His life was transformed. José accepted Jesus as his Savior and asked to be baptized.

WEEK 13 • APRIL 1, 2023

Timor-Leste: A New Mission Field

2 Timothy 4:18—“The LORD will deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”

Timor-Leste is a small island nation located in Southeast Asia. It is home to 1.2 million people, most of whom are Catholic.

About 500 Seventh-day Adventists live in Timor-Leste. They worship in one official church in the capital city and three other groups spread across the island. Adventist members in Timor-Leste face persecution. They are often rejected, persecuted, or fired from their jobs. Adventist children are expelled for not attending school on Sabbath.

Joaquina is a tailor who lives in a humble home that is also her shop and workplace. She sews clothes and other creative items to earn a living. Joaquina suffers a lot of pain and physical challenges. One day she felt so weak that she prayed for God to help her. Soon afterward, two Adventists came to her house, prayed with her, and gave her a Bible.

Joaquina studied the Bible and became convinced that God’s truth lay in the Adventist teachings. On Sabbath she closed her shop and worshiped with the Adventists. When her neighbors learned that she had left her former church to become an Adventist, they filed a complaint against her, and she was arrested. It was a difficult time for Joaquina, but God gave her strength. She was freed and cleared of wrongdoing. Now she talks to her neighbors about God in spite of persecution.



Even the Adventist children in Timor-Leste face challenges. Public schools meet six days a week. When children refuse to attend school on Sabbath, they are expelled from public school. In 2015 part of the world church’s offerings helped build an Adventist elementary school where students can study without fear of being expelled. The school is registered as an international school where classes are taught in English. Enrollment grew steadily, and a dormitory was needed to accommodate students who live far from the school. Many non-Adventist parents are also eager to send their children to this school.

Part of our Promise offerings helped to build the dormitory and will continue to support the work in Timor-Leste. Let’s help continue evangelism in Timor-Leste and pray that God will strengthen the believers as they work to break down prejudice between those following the majority religion and the Adventists and open the hearts of those who want to know God personally. Giving to God our Promise offerings honors God and strengthens us as Christians as well.

WEEK 14 • APRIL 8, 2023

Hope Channel: Cipriano's Second Chance

Jeremiah 17:14—“Heal me, LORD, and I shall be healed; Save me and I shall be saved, for You are my praise.”

I was 25 years old and lay dying from alcohol addiction. I thought my life was over.

As a child I was bullied by older boys. As I grew up, I learned how to stand up for myself. In time the bullies stopped picking on me and accepted me. They introduced me to their dark music and alcohol. Before long I was addicted to alcohol; and when I couldn't get it from friends, I'd steal it.

I quit school when I was 15 and went to work. But everything I earned went to buy alcohol. The next five years were the darkest years of my life. I became everything I hated. I bullied others and became abusive when I drank. I was depressed and suicidal. The only thing I hated more than myself was my addiction. I lost friends and family members to death by alcohol.

I realized I was killing myself. I stopped drinking and went home to my grandparents. They welcomed me. My grandmother was a Christian and had helped several people overcome alcohol addiction. But even she was not prepared for the life-threatening effects that my withdrawal presented. I couldn't eat; my heart pounded constantly, and I shook uncontrollably. She knew that my life was hanging by a thread.

Fearing I would die, my grandmother talked to me about Jesus. She prayed and reminded me that Jesus loves me. Her words gave me courage. Day after day my life hung in the balance.

My grandfather set a television by my bed. He thought it might distract me from my symptoms. When I turned the TV on that day, a program called Hope Sabbath School came on. I had never heard of it before, but it caught my attention. As I listened to the program, it helped me focus on God's Word rather than on my agony. I felt the Holy Spirit working in my heart. Hope Sabbath School became my church and a part of my healing process. Hope Sabbath School and my grandparents guided me along the path to Christ.

God healed me and gave me a second chance at life. My heart is now filled with God's grace and love. God answered my grandparents' prayers. They and Hope TV opened my heart to God's love and brought me new life in Christ.

Fearing I would die, my grandmother talked to me about Jesus. She prayed and reminded me that Jesus loves me. Her words gave me courage. Day after day my life hung in the balance.

WEEK 15 • APRIL 15, 2023

Timor-Leste: Bino's New School

Proverbs 22:6—“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Even before Bino was old enough to talk, his mom wanted him to study at an international school. Public schools in Timor-Leste are free, and the teachers speak Portuguese. Going to an international school costs money, and the teachers teach in English. Learning English is an advantage when the children are ready for university or international business.

Bino's dad found several international schools, but they were too expensive. Then one day he saw a sign on a church fence advertising the Timor-Leste Adventist International School. He called the school for more information and learned that this school didn't cost as much as the others he'd visited. Bino's parents were not Adventists, but they had heard that Adventists are good and trustworthy.

When Bino was ready for school, his parents enrolled him at the Adventist school, and soon he began to learn English. When Bino returned home after school, Mom asked him to teach her the English words that he was learning at school.

English was not the only thing that Bino learned at school. He learned Bible stories and told his mom about David and Goliath, Jonah and the big fish, and Jesus and the little boy whose lunch fed more than 5,000 people. Mom loved hearing her little boy tell Bible stories.

Bino's parents began reading the Bible. Sometimes they had questions about what they were reading, so they asked the pastor of the Adventist church to help them. The pastor helped them study the Bible. The day came when Bino's parents asked to join the Adventist Church.

Today, Bino and his parents go to the school together. Mom and Dad work as the school's caretakers. Thanks to the Adventist school, the whole family now speaks English; but more importantly, they love Jesus with all their hearts.

Bino's school is growing rapidly. Many children wanted to attend the school but lived too far away. So, a dormitory was built so the children could live at the school and learn about Jesus.

Part of our Promise offerings will help this school grow and many people on the island of Timor-Leste learn about Jesus. Some of these children won't be from Adventist homes, but they will have a chance to learn about Jesus, and maybe they will give their hearts to Him.

Every time our Promise offering is distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan, we partner Jesus in reaching people for Him locally, regionally, and around the world.

Bino's parents began reading the Bible. Sometimes they had questions about what they were reading, so they asked the pastor of the Adventist church to help them. The pastor helped them study the Bible.

WEEK 16 • APRIL 22, 2023

Argentina: To the End of the World

2 Corinthians 5:17—“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

Erick Sanchez, a theology student from Peru, listened as his professor challenged the class: “God expects you to be a missionary—somewhere in the world.” These words planted a desire in Erick’s heart to serve God wherever He leads.

Soon after, Erick read an ad requesting a Bible teacher for a mission school in Argentina. He contacted the school and applied for the position. He was accepted. Erick prayed that God would use him to change the lives of the people he would serve.

Erick flew to Ushuaia [OOS-WHY-AH], Argentina, the southernmost city in the world. Ushuaia has beautiful, cold, snowy weather. Many people struggle to maintain a basic living, and many are addicted to alcohol or tobacco.

The church planned a stop-smoking program and invited everyone in town to attend. Erick gave out invitations wherever he went. One cold, wet day after hours of plodding through the snow, he sought shelter at a hospital. He warmed up but felt too weary to continue walking. He left some invitations in the reception area and walked home.

On the opening night of the seminar, dozens of people came. The room reeked with the pungent smell of tobacco, signaling how desperate these people were to stop smoking. Many attended regularly and conquered the nicotine habit. On the final day the attendees were offered Bible studies if desired.

While following up on requests for Bible studies, Erick visited Elena and her son, Jonathan, who had attended the meetings. They were eager to learn about God.

“How did you learn about the meetings?” Erick asked. Elena smiled broadly. “I was waiting at the hospital, and I saw the invitation to the stop-smoking meeting. We decided to attend.” Erick realized that God had used a flier he had left there to reach this family.

Through the influence of the seminars, Elena had found the victory over tobacco, and her family met Jesus. They studied the lessons and prepared for baptism.

By the end of Erick’s year in Ushuaia, God had used his service to lead 26 people to God.

If Jesus is calling you to serve, whether at home or far away, tell Him that you will go. In the meantime, you can serve God’s mission to the world through your tithes and regular systematic offerings, called Promise, that support every facet of God’s work around the world.



WEEK 17 • APRIL 29, 2023

Trinidad: Discipling a Dentist

Romans 10:9-10—“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Magdalena lives in the island-nation of Trinidad [TRIN-ih-dad] and Tobago [toh-BAY-go]. After school, she walks to a nearby pharmacy to wait for her dad to pick her up. While she waits, she watches the people pass by and wonders if they love Jesus. One day Magdalena asked her dad, “May I give tracts to the people who walk by the pharmacy?”

“That’s a great idea!” her dad said. He gave her some tracts to share with others after school. Magdalena gave away all the tracts to people passing by. When her dad arrived, she announced, “I need more tracts!” Her dad gladly gave her more tracts to give out.

Magdalena recognized a dentist who regularly walked by the pharmacy. She gave him a tract whenever he passed. One day she asked her dad, “I’ve been giving tracts to a dentist. May I talk to him about Jesus?” Her dad gladly agreed.

The next day, Magdalena watched for the dentist. When he walked by, she asked him, “Do you know Jesus?”

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

“May I tell you about God?” Magdalena asked. The man invited her to come to his office the next afternoon. Her dad gave permission for her to go and gave her a Bible to give to the dentist.

The next day Magdalena visited the dentist’s office. She gave him the Bible, and he gladly accepted it. Magdalena visited the dentist every day after school. They read stories from the Bible and talked about them. The dentist began to believe in Jesus, so Magdalena invited him to church on Sabbath. He smiled and accepted her invitation.

“Dad!” Magdalena said excitedly. “The dentist is coming to church with us on Sabbath!”

The next Sabbath, Magdalena and her family picked up the dentist on their way to church. “Your daughter is wonderful,” the dentist told her parents. “I didn’t know anything about Jesus before I met her. But now I know Him.”

Magdalena loves sharing God’s love on the streets of her town. We can share God’s love too. Whether we give out pamphlets, invite friends to meetings, or give a percentage-based Promise offering along with our tithes, we are sharing God’s love. If you don’t know how you can share God’s love, ask God for some ideas. He will surely answer your prayer.



WEEK 18 • MAY 6, 2023

Malawi: Making the Right Choices

Psalm 27:10—“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.”

John was a bright, young student in Malawi. As a teenager, he was chosen to study at a special school that focuses on his religion more than other subjects. The goal of his education was to learn as much about his own religion as possible so he could convert Christians to his religion. After three years of intense study, John completed his religious education.

John then enrolled in an Adventist school to learn about Christians. His goal was always to equip himself to convert Christians to his faith. He attended classes and talked about Adventist beliefs with the pastor and his other teachers, always with the intent to learn about Adventist beliefs and to discover Adventists' weaknesses.

After three years of study in the Adventist school, John was convicted that Adventists teach the truth. He told the school's principal that he wanted to give his life to God and be baptized. When John's father learned of John's decision to leave his family's religion, his father disowned him. John was comforted as he saw firsthand the difference God makes in people's lives.

Eventually John was invited to become a Global Mission pioneer and was sent into an unentered area of Malawi, his homeland. There he ministered as a pioneer, following Christ's method, and sharing his testimony with people he met.

John wanted to complete his education, so he enrolled at Malawi Adventist University, where he studied theology. He graduated with zeal to become a minister. John never gave up. He wants nothing more than to teach others the truths of the Bible and lead them to Jesus.

God could work miracles to provide schools and churches and hospitals to draw people to Christ. But He wants us to use our faith and our finances to build up the work our forefathers have started.

While our tithe belongs to God and exclusively maintains authorized missionaries and pastors, who preach the word, and their support teams, our Promise offerings are designated to grow the missionary work of the church here and around the world.

If you haven't already done so, ask God what percentage of your income He would have you regularly give as a Promise offering to strengthen the missionary work of the church around the world. He has challenged you to “be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Heb. 13:5 NKJV). Trust Him, obey Him, and watch as He blesses you!

He told the school's principal that he wanted to give his life to God and be baptized. When John's father learned of John's decision to leave his family's religion, his father disowned him.

WEEK 19 • MAY 13, 2023

ADRA Rolls Up Its Sleeves

Matthew 25:42-43—“For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.”

When the COVID-19 crisis swept the world, ADRA stepped up to serve and save lives. The needs around the world were never greater, but getting help to where it was most needed was more difficult than ever. Travel was restricted and supplies were hard to find and move.

ADRA quickly launched a COVID-19 task force with church members around the world to address the fallout of the pandemic and the urgent needs it created.

In 16 countries in Africa, for example, ADRA partnered with Women’s Ministries and Youth Ministries in local Adventist churches to teach people how to plant sustainable gardens to feed their families and communities in the most difficult of times. Tools, packets of seeds, and training made it possible for participants to create a constant supply of healthy food for the entire village.

Some of those who took part in the gardening project reported that their gardens provided not only enough food for their families, but enough to share with their neighbors and sell for income.

On a global scale, during the first year of the pandemic, ADRA served close to 20 million people in 96 countries. These people now are working with their communities on the next steps to recovery.

When India and other countries in Southeast Asia were hit by a massive surge of COVID-19, ADRA provided several medical facilities with the critical supplies and resources necessary to save lives. One of the greatest needs was oxygen. ADRA provided oxygen supplies to many hospitals and an oxygen generator plant to the largest Adventist hospital in India so the hospital could have a sustainable source of oxygen for this crisis and beyond.

ADRA’s goal is to serve humanity so that all may live as God intended in ways that are sustainable and transformational.

Not everyone may be able to join ADRA working in a far-away country, but every time you distribute your Promise offering as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan, 20% of it will be sent to the World Missionary Fund (or World Budget), which supports ADRA and its ministry to those in need. By distributing your Promise offering in an equitable way, as proposed by the Combined Offering Plan, you are helping ADRA continue its lifesaving work around the world.

On a global scale, during the first year of the pandemic, ADRA served close to 20 million people in 96 countries. These people now are working with their communities on the next steps to recovery.

WEEK 20 • MAY 20, 2023

Papua New Guinea: Dorcas

Deuteronomy 6:7—“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

In a small village in the jungle of Papua New Guinea lives a young girl named Dorcas. Her family is Adventist, and they share God’s love with others whenever they can.

Dorcas wanted to find a new way to share her love for Jesus with her friends. She decided to copy Bible verses onto pieces of paper to share with two of her best friends. She copied verses from her Bible and gave them to her best friends the next day. The girls agreed to memorize the verses. The girls memorized the verses and repeated them the next day. Soon they were meeting every day at lunchtime near the river to sing, study the Bible, and recite their memory verses.

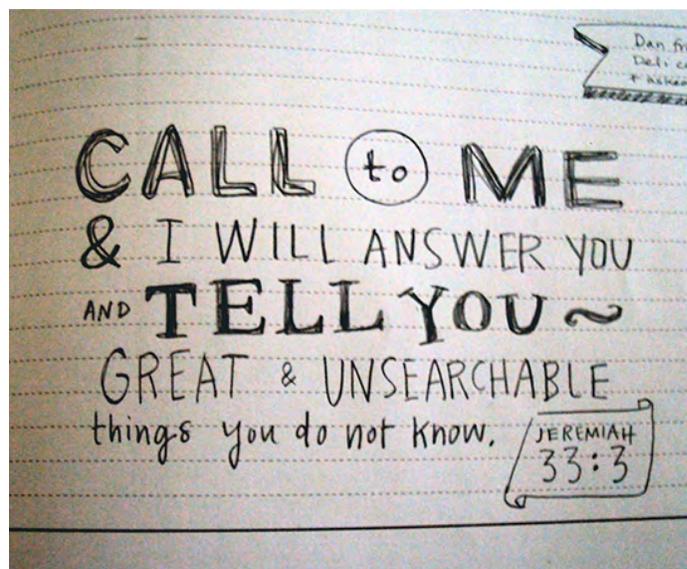
Others began coming, and the group quickly grew. More children began memorizing Bible verses. When Dorcas told her mother how many children were attending her little group to learn about God, her mother suggested they meet in the evening at their house so more children could come. They began meeting every Wednesday and Friday evening. Soon their group grew to more than 40 children. Some of the children’s parents began coming as well.

Dorcas invited her friends to attend the Adventist church on Sabbath, and many children—and some parents—joined them. In time several of the children and some parents gave their hearts to Jesus and joined the little Adventist church. The little church outgrew its small building and began meeting under a tarp until they could build a bigger church.

One sunny Sabbath the church members gathered at the river where Dorcas was baptized. It was a memorable day for Dorcas, her family, and the entire church.

Dorcas is attending an Adventist boarding school far from her home. But she continues sharing her faith with others while her family shares their faith in their village by the river.

Sharing our faith is the best way to grow our church and build our own faith. And by regularly giving our Promise offerings we are helping to build the church in large cities and tiny villages in the jungle of Papua New Guinea. Let’s give regularly and liberally to finish the work around the world.



WEEK 21 • MAY 27, 2023

Denmark: Happy Hand Store

Matthew 24:14—“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

For more than thirty years, Global Mission’s mandate to reach the world for Jesus focused its attention on the most challenging unreached areas of the world. Millions of new believers have come to Christ, and thousands of new churches have been planted in previously unentered areas. Largely because of this initiative, the Adventist Church has tripled its membership in areas where the work hardly existed 30 years ago. But one urgent challenge still exists—reaching the cities.

In recent years, millions have left their rural homes to seek employment and a better life in the cities. How can we share God’s love with the masses who live in the urban areas of the world?

More than 100 years ago, Ellen G. White challenged the church: “We must do more than we have done to reach the people of our cities. . . . We should establish . . . small plants which shall be centers of influence” (*Counsels on Health*, p. 481). She goes on to say that “We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are. . . . There are multitudes who will never be reached by the gospel unless it is carried to them” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 229).

Centers of Influence (COI) are designed to reach people for Jesus wherever they are. Many COIs focus on teaching health and wellness, providing after-school tutoring, learning a language, and even providing showers for the homeless.

One unique center is making a difference in Copenhagen, Denmark’s capital. Like much of Europe, religion is no longer a part of most people’s lives in big cities. In the heart of the city is a second-hand shop called “Happy Hand.” Second-hand shops are popular in large cities, but Happy Hand offers more than quality used items. It offers an opportunity to make new friends and talk about spiritual principles with those who enter its doors.

Bible texts on the walls spark conversations with the customers that may lead them to ask deep questions they’re not comfortable asking a minister. In a land where religion struggles, Happy Hand’s volunteers mingle with people, meet their needs, win their confidence, and introduce them to Jesus—something that all of us are supposed to do.

But you also can have a part in this outreach by giving your faithful Promise offerings to support global mission outreaches that are changing people’s lives for eternity.



WEEK 22 • JUNE 3, 2023

Sri Lanka: Bandara, Beaten for His Faith

Acts 6:7—“The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”

Bandara hated Christians. He couldn't understand how anyone could believe that God created the world and can forgive our sins. But one day, everything changed for Bandara.

God used a Christian to change his life. This person answered Bandara's questions about God. Through this Christian, Bandara learned about God's love for him. In time Bandara gave his life to Christ and was baptized. He wanted to introduce people to Jesus and someday start a new congregation of believers.

Bandara's passion and commitment to sharing Jesus grew stronger every day. The change in Bandara's life became evident to his family and friends, and he began riding his motorbike around the city, sharing the love of Christ and His message of forgiveness with others.

Bandara's actions eventually got the attention of some who thought that Bandara's new calling would tear the community apart. The young men plotted to beat Bandara so as to convince him to stop telling others about Jesus. As Bandara returned home one day, the young men waited for him. They blocked his path, pulled him off his motorbike, and beat him. Bandara protected himself, but he refused to fight back. After about 15 minutes, the men grew tired and walked off. Bandara waited a moment and then got on his motorbike and rode home.

When he looked in the mirror, he found no scratches or bruises on his face or upper body. God had protected him from the beating.

When the neighbors heard about Bandara's beatings, many stood by him. They had seen the changes in his life and others who have given their lives to Christ because of Bandara's work.

Bandara's commitment to God is growing stronger by the day. He tells others, “If we are not doing God's gospel work, who will do it? God has called us to serve Him. If we don't answer His call, who will?”

Just as Bandara and hundreds of other Global Mission pioneers have chosen to follow God's call to share their faith with others who don't yet know Christ's love, we may also choose to answer His call, sharing our faith in any possible way.

One way God is calling us to share His message is by regularly returning His tithe and Promise offerings. This offering helps support the work of the church through many channels in all the world, including Global Mission pioneers. Listen carefully when God asks something of you and respond with faith and gladness.

When the neighbors heard about Bandara's beatings, many stood by him. They had seen the changes in his life and others who have given their lives to Christ because of Bandara's work.

WEEK 23 • JUNE 10, 2023

Korea: The Invitation

Proverbs 27:9—“Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man’s friend gives delight by hearty counsel.”

Sehee [SEH-hee] and her family moved out of the city and into the countryside in South Korea. At first Sehee missed her friends in the city, but soon she was helping her mother plant and care for their vegetable garden. She watered the vegetables and picked the weeds to give the vegetables lots of room to grow.

When the cucumbers and lettuce and sweet corn were ready to pick, the family had too much to eat themselves. So Sehee shared them with her neighbors. The neighbors were delighted to receive fresh vegetables and often gave her gifts of homemade bread or pickled vegetables. Sehee often carried as much home as she had given away. That reminded her of Proverbs 11:24 that says that the more we share, the more we receive.

Still, Sehee missed having friends at church. The only other child her age was her brother. Vacation Bible School was coming, and her mom suggested that Sehee invite her classmates to attend with her. Sehee wrote special invitations and gave them to the children at school. But she wondered if the kids would come.

“Don’t worry,” her mom said. “It’s not your job to persuade them to come. That’s God’s job.”

Sehee waited for her classmates at the church door, but none of the children she’d invited came to Vacation Bible School. However, one of the boys in her class came to church on Sabbath. The boy didn’t know about Jesus, but he was happy to learn. He didn’t have any friends at school, so he became friends with Sehee and her brother. “I like church!” he said. “I want to come every week.”

Sehee’s mom told her that one boy had come to church. “He wouldn’t have come if you hadn’t invited him.”

Sehee prays for her new friend who comes to church, asking Jesus to help him and his family to learn to love and trust in God.

When Sehee prays for her friend, she is trusting Jesus with her friend’s heart. When we regularly give our Promise offerings to Jesus, we are trusting Him to use those offerings in the best way possible so that other people have a chance to meet God and decide to love and serve Him all their lives. Let’s be faithful with our tithes and offerings and with our witnessing to friends so many people will meet and love Jesus.

The neighbors were delighted to receive fresh vegetables and often gave her gifts of homemade bread or pickled vegetables. Sehee often carried as much home as she had given away.

WEEK 24 • JUNE 17, 2023

Ethiopia: The Family I Found

2 Timothy 3:15—“And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Berhanu has been preaching in Ethiopia since he was a boy. Because of his great faith and vision, he was invited to serve as a Global Mission pioneer. The young man gladly accepted the challenge.

When Berhanu arrived in his new area of ministry, he began mingling with the people in his new community. But he found no Adventists. As he got to know the people, he invited them to a Bible study. Now, an Adventist group meets in a small, rented building.

Berhanu loves to sing, and he uses his music to introduce Jesus to his new neighbors. One of his favorite songs speaks of the Second Coming. The words translate to, “We must wake up. Jesus is coming!” After the song, Berhanu shares a message from his heart. Most of the people who attend his meeting work on government farms in the area, and many are far from home and family. It is easy to feel lonely and isolated here, so Berhanu has focused on gathering the people and building a sense of community and friendship. After a long work week, the people enjoy hearing his messages.



Berhanu met Solomon when he moved to this town to work on a farm. But Solomon became lonely. One day, the two men met and talked. They realized they were from the same village. They became friends, and Solomon joined Berhanu's small group.

As Solomon continued attending this new congregation, he felt like they were his extended family. Berhanu's words constantly tugged at Solomon's heart. God's love and the group's family atmosphere filled a hole that was missing in his life in this new town. He decided to give his life to God and has become a permanent member of this congregation.

While Berhanu regularly meets with this group, he also walks two hours to meet with a group in another town. His work can be tiring and challenging, but he finds hope and strength in Jesus.

Berhanu is just one of 1,600 Global Mission pioneers around the world. Please pray for them as they introduce people to Jesus.

Let your prayers join your faithful Promise giving to hasten the work of leading lost men and women and children to the feet of Jesus. God will bless your faithful giving to finish the work on this earth.

WEEK 25 • JUNE 24, 2023

Zimbabwe: Three Cows and a Bull for the Lord

Luke 6:38—“Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Mr. and Mrs. Mpofu [M'POE-FOO] live in Zimbabwe in southern Africa. They raise cattle and acknowledge that their animals are the Lord's. One day as the couple watched over their livestock, they felt impressed to give God more. So, they decided to give a portion of their animals as tithe and promise offerings.

From their herd of 31 animals, the husband and wife selected three strong cows for their tithe and a bull as their promise offering. “The Bible says everything belongs to God, and we are just His stewards,” Mr. Mpofu said. “We're reading the Bible and learning that God promises great blessings that come from giving. That touched our hearts so much because the Lord has been so good to us.”

This gesture not only encouraged the visiting church elders who collected the animals, but it caught the attention of neighbors and church members as well. Several others have pledged to contribute more to their offerings because of the Mpofu's example.

The mission offerings make a huge difference around the world and can make the greatest impact when given faithfully and regularly.

Zimbabwe is home to Solusi University. Founded in 1894, this Adventist institution educates students from all over Southern Africa. Its strength comes from the sacrificial gifts and offerings of millions of believers around the world.

Zimbabwe is part of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean region. This territory is home to more than 4.3 million Adventists. Despite having a well-established history of church growth, the people living in Southern Africa-Indian Ocean region face difficult financial struggles that affect the churches and the members in each country. Our mission offerings help spread a message of hope in some of these most challenging areas, especially in the growing cities.

Please pray for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean region as church members there faithfully follow God's call in their lives. The Combined Offering Plan was devised by the church to help Adventists around the world use their Promise offering to support the work in an equitable way, locally, in their homeland, and in every country. Ask God, “What percentage of my income would You have me regularly give beyond your tithe?” And then stop and listen, even as the Mpofu family asked God what He would have them give. Then prayerfully say “Yes,” and watch God bless you as you obey.



WEEK 26 • JULY 1, 2023

Peru: The Man with the Curious Cap

Matthew 6:33—“ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Felipe lives in the city of Lima, Peru. He has dedicated his life to sharing the love of Jesus with others. But not long ago, Felipe was searching for a meaningful relationship with God, but he hadn't found it in the churches he had attended. However, God wasn't ignoring Felipe. He used a cap to lead Felipe to the Savior and the Adventist Church.

Every day Felipe walked to work at a university. One day he passed a store where he saw a cap that caught his eye. He loved interesting baseball caps and had never seen one like the cap in the window. He stepped into the store and bought the cap. He wore it the rest of the day. Felipe was not aware of the significance of the logo on the cap.

At work some people asked Felipe if he knew the meaning of the logo on the cap. But he did not. Someone asked him if he was an Adventist, and he answered, “No. I'm not an Adventist.” But his fellow workers' questions made Felipe curious, so he went looking for an Adventist church.

Felipe saw a man selling orange juice and asked if he knew about Adventists.

“I'm an Adventist,” the orange seller said. The two talked for some time, and then the orange seller invited Felipe to go with him to an Adventist church the next weekend. Felipe agreed. When the two men arrived at the church, Felipe felt welcome and decided to return. Not long after, Felipe was sure that he had found God's church—and God's plan for his life. Felipe asked to join the Adventist church.

“My life is more than complete,” Felipe says. “God has answered my prayers, and now I tell other people about Him.” Felipe knows that God can use anyone or anything, including a cap, to lead a soul to the Savior.

God has a thousand ways to get people's attention—even a hat! But He wants us to have a part in introducing others to Jesus, too. As we faithfully return our tithes and our Promise offerings to God, we support the mission work at home and around the world. Be part of God's evangelistic efforts through praying, giving, and telling those we meet that God loves them.

When the two men arrived at church, Felipe felt welcome and decided to return. Not long after, Felipe was sure that he had found God's church—and God's plan for his life. Felipe asked to join the Adventist church.

WEEK 27 • JULY 8, 2023

World Budget: Where Do the Offerings Go?

Proverbs 3:9-10—“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”

You probably know that our mission offerings which should ideally be part of our Promise offerings, are critical to the continued growth and sustaining work of the church in every corner of the world. You probably know that some missionary projects in each division are initiated or sustained by part of the Thirteenth Sabbath project.

But what about the regular mission offerings you give regularly? Where do these funds go? What do they support? And what do they achieve? You may be surprised to learn that your regularly mission offerings help support the work overseen by 400 missionary families around the world. In fact, 70 percent of the weekly mission offerings each quarter goes to support missionaries and the international work of the church. Appropriations from the General Conference to world divisions, unions, and fields help these regions build and sustain mission activities in their territories. While our tithes help pay the salaries of missionaries, our missionary offerings help provide the buildings and equipment the missionaries may need to carry on their work.

The remaining money helps various institutions and agencies that serve the world church. For example, it helps the compassionate medical mission work of Loma Linda University, the outreach of Adventist World Radio, and the humanitarian ministry of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

In recent years, millions of people from challenging areas of the world have found salvation in Jesus and have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thanks to your offerings, thousands of new congregations have been established in underreached areas and among new people groups. But after these new believers have been baptized, how are they nurtured? How do we make sure that their new faith is strengthened and that they grow as disciples? Sixty-six percent of the world's population is still waiting to experience the refreshing news about Jesus. Your ongoing support of the Mission of the church through your regular and systematic offerings, called “Promise”, will help grow and sustain new work throughout the world. Please keep this life-giving river flowing.

In fact, 70 percent of the weekly mission offerings each quarter goes to support missionaries and the international work of the church.

WEEK 28 • JULY 15, 2023

Micronesia: Following God's Leading

John 16:13—"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

I'm Ellie, and a text message changed my life.

I was in my second year of college when a friend texted me. "How would you like to be a volunteer teacher in Chuuk this year?" her text read. Confused, I wondered, Who is Chuck, and why do I need to teach him? Then I realized she was asking me to consider working as a volunteer teacher on the island of Chuuk in Micronesia.

I learned that Chuuk Seventh-day Adventist School had only six teachers for its 150 students. They desperately needed more teachers. I prayed for guidance, filled out an application, and a few weeks later boarded a plane to Micronesia.

Although Chuuk seemed relatively modern at first glance, I didn't have to look far to see that traditional spiritual beliefs still held people in their fearful grasp. Then a student told me that her neighbor's son had become possessed by a demon and would stare into space, not acknowledging anyone.

Chuuk's tropical climate and fantastic diving sites are big draws, but they pale compared to the needs of the island people—a people desperate for truth. With most of its students from non-Adventist families, Chuuk School is truly a mission school, and I really believe that I'm making a difference in the lives of the students and the community.

I'm amazed at how far God has led in this incredible journey called faith. Some days my best hardly feels good enough, but I believe that God put me here for a reason and gives me the strength I need to serve Him. I now understand that sometimes the success of our Christian walk isn't measured by our own "goodness" or capability, but by how we listen to and obey God's voice.

God calls each of us to stretch our faith, whether it's to go where He calls us, or to give regularly and systematically as He directs. Giving includes faithfully returning God's tithe and listening to His voice as He calls us to covenant with him in giving a regular and systematic offering, called "Promise", besides our tithe. He asks us to give. I challenge you to ask God, "What percentage of my income do You want me to regularly give as my Promise offering?" Then listen for His answer. Saying "yes" to God is the only way to stretch your faith.

Ellie Butikofer is from Alaska, USA.



WEEK 29 • JULY 22, 2023

Indonesia: Spiritual Light for the Blind

Colossians 3:12—“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsufferin.”

Mr. and Mrs. Mpofu [M'POE-FOO] live in Zimbabwe in southern Africa. They raise cattle and acknowledge that their Mundari (moon-DAH-ree) is an Adventist man living in the city of Manado (mah-NAH-doh), Indonesia. He enjoys making new friends for Jesus. One day after work, Mundari was tired and wanted to get a massage. He went to a rehabilitation center for the visually impaired and asked if a student could give him a massage. The center had just finished a training course in massage, and one of the students gladly offered to practice his new skills on Mundari.

During the massage, Mundari chatted with the student about work and life in general. Then he talked about how God changed his life. He quoted several Bible texts to the student. The talk grew deeper, and by the end of the massage, the student wanted to know more about Mundari's faith.

That simple massage marked Mundari's friendship not only with this student, but with others in the rehabilitation center. It didn't take long before Mundari started a ministry among the staff and students of the rehabilitation center.

The rehabilitation center allows worship services for their Christian students, which created opportunities for Mundari and members of the Adventist church to minister to the students.

“We are happy to have the Adventists reach out to our visually impaired friends here,” said a staff member at the rehabilitation center. “These people need to feel accepted and cared for. They need compassion and support from the community around them. Their goal is to live independently and be accepted by society. We are grateful for the activities conducted here by the local Adventist church. Their regular visits tell us that Adventists really care. Some organizations visit us once a year, but the Adventist church makes it a priority to visit us regularly.”

Mundari invited the visually impaired to worship at the Adventist church. Many accepted his invitation. “It brings joy to our hearts to see these visually impaired people singing praises to God,” Mundari said.

Mundari and the Adventist church members have shown God's love to their visually impaired friends just as Jesus did when He was on earth. The results are new members in the body of Christ.

Besides our individual missionary work, God asks us to worship Him with our tithes and our regular and systematic offerings, called “Promise.” Those funds will be used to provide light for those who are still spiritually impaired around the world. Let us join Jesus's army!



WEEK 30 • JULY 29, 2023

Russia: Masha's New School

John 15:15—“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

Masha [MASH-uh] was discouraged and felt she had no friends in school. Her mother asked Masha if she'd like to attend Zaoksky [za-OHK-skee] Christian School, an Adventist elementary school near their home. Masha wanted a new start in life, so she agreed.

Masha shyly walked into her new classroom. The school was pleasant, and the students were friendly. But Masha still felt lonely. At lunch, one of her new classmates sat with Masha and asked to be her friend. Then another girl told her that Jesus loves her and wants to be her best friend. Masha was surprised that the girls were so kind. Masha found a quiet place where she poured out her heart to God. From that moment on, Masha's life changed. She realized that Jesus really is her Savior and her Friend. Soon Masha found herself actively taking part in classwork, knowing that the other children would help her and be her friends.

Children come to Zaoksky Christian School for many reasons. Ivan says that he likes the happy teachers. Many other students say that they like that their classmates and teachers tell them that Jesus loves them. In fact, many students at Zaoksky have learned to love Jesus as their Savior, just as Masha did.

The school started with just a few students who met in rooms on the campus of Zaoksky University. Now it has 200 students and its own building. The school doesn't have to advertise for students because many people learn about the school from their friends and neighbors.

But Zaoksky Christian School's popularity has created a new challenge: space. The school can't accept more children until it is enlarged. Many people in the area want to enroll their children so they can have a Christian education. We can help build a bigger school for these children and those who want to come but can't right now.

Our tithes belong to God, so we return them to Him to support our pastors, missionaries, and other workers for God around the world. Our “Promise” offerings are also God's possession and should ideally be distributed to support the church's work locally and around the world. That includes schools, hospitals, clinics, and many other institutions that help lead people to Jesus. Let's covenant with God to regularly give a specific proportion or percentage of our earnings so that we can have a part in God's work around the world.

The school started with just a few students who met in rooms on the campus of Zaoksky University. Now it has 200 students and its own building. The school doesn't have to advertise for students because many people learn about the school from their friends and neighbors.

WEEK 31 • AUGUST 5, 2023

USA: Hope for Ex-Offenders

Matthew 25:36—“I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.”

After spending three years in prison for burglary, Shane Echols was determined to start a new life. But he had been in prison before, and he knew that his criminal record would make it hard to find work and acceptance in any community. The first time he was paroled, he eventually ended up back in prison. This time he was determined that it would not happen again. This time he had reason to believe it was possible.

While in prison Shane had met Jeffrey Cobb, a former prisoner who had found Christ and a calling. He knew the difficulty of finding work and housing after being released from prison. He knew that God was leading him to help ex-offenders with their most urgent needs—work and a place to live. Upon release, Jeffrey kept his promise to God and founded Shelter From the Storm, a transitional home or halfway house for ex-offenders. His transitional home provides shelter for four men at a time, and his lawn service provides them with employment. Jeffrey promised Shane a place to live after release and a job in his lawn service. Shane is free and building a new life.

Most U.S. prisons lack programs to train convicts in useful skills so they can find work when they leave prison. Programs such as Jeffrey’s help fill the gap.

Others have felt this call as well. Earl Gator spent 11 years in prison. He credits his family’s support and Adventist James Settles with helping him stay out of prison. “James took me under his wing and taught me how to paint,” Earl said. “Now I’m a painting contractor.” Settles, the founder of the Nashville-based transitional living program called Aphesis House, turned his life around in prison. Aphesis House now operates four facilities that serve 28 men, but there’s a waiting list of about 200 men.

God is using Aphesis House to provide men with the life skills they need to live a better life after prison. The relapse prevention program and behavior modification classes are particularly helpful in changing these men’s lives.

Your Promise offerings help support programs such as helping men and women who leave prison and need help establishing a new life outside prison and within God’s sheltering love. Investing in God’s work is a way to partner with Him to speed His coming!

He credits his family’s support and Adventist James Settles with helping him stay out of prison. “James took me under his wing and taught me how to paint,” Earl said. “Now I’m a painting contractor.”

Lucas L. Johnson II is a former reporter for The Associated Press. Reprinted and adapted with permission from the Southern Tidings.

WEEK 32 • AUGUST 12, 2023

Unnamed Country: God's Talent Show

Romans 1:16-17—“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” ”

Sarah and her family live in a country where Christians are not welcome. But God has ways to show their love for Him by their actions.

When Sarah started school, she asked her teacher to let her have Saturday off so she could attend church.

“Oh, but you will attend school on Saturday,” the teacher said firmly.

Sarah decided to say nothing more; but on Sabbath she went to church, even though her teacher threatened to expel her. All year long Sarah quietly went to church on Sabbath in spite of her teacher's threats.

The next year, Sarah had a teacher who gave her permission to go to church on Saturdays. Near the end of the school year the teacher announced the annual talent show. Sarah was chosen to plan her class presentation. Sarah told the teacher, “The only songs I know are about God.”

“That's fine,” the teacher said.

Sarah chose her favorite song and planned motions to make the song's meaning clear and take the place of a dance. The students worked hard on the presentation. Then the principal announced that the talent show would be on Saturday.

Disappointed, Sarah told her classmates that she would not be at the show. Her classmates were disappointed. “What will we do without your leadership?” one girl asked.

“Will you pray with me that God will work it out so we can perform together?” Sarah asked. Her friends agreed.

The day before the talent show, bad weather moved in, and the principal postponed the talent show until Sunday.”

“Wow!” her classmates said. “Your God is amazing! Now you can lead us in the talent show!” The performance was a big hit. Students asked Sarah for the beautiful music she had used. “It's a song about God,” she said. Sarah realized that she could share God's love with others. All she had to do was obey Him.

Some Christians go to other countries as secret missionaries who share their faith in God in dangerous places like the country where Sarah lives. Please pray for the people who work quietly in these countries so that those who know nothing about God can learn of His love and salvation. And be faithful in regularly giving your Promise offerings so the church can plant more secret missionaries in places where Christians aren't well-liked.



WEEK 33 • AUGUST 19, 2023

Laos: 100 Words a Day

2 Timothy 2:15—“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Nung is a teenager who lives in Laos, a mountainous country in Southeast Asia. She wanted to learn English so she could attend an English-speaking university one day. When she learned that an Adventist English language center had opened in her town, she eagerly signed up.

Nung took her studies very seriously. She set a goal to learn 100 English vocabulary words every day. Nung didn't know any English, but she worked hard and quickly began to understand the language. She faithfully attended classes and practiced with native English speakers at every opportunity until she was able to speak fluently.

The Adventist English language center in Laos taught Nung more than English. It provided a chance to learn about Jesus. Nung and her mother were among the first to join the center's weekly Sabbath worship services. Only seven people came to the first meetings. Today, more than 100 people come every week! Nung and her mother gave up their Buddhist faith and gave their hearts to Jesus.



Speaking English has made it possible for Nung to attend an Adventist university in Thailand where she is studying education and psychology.

In some parts of Laos, it has been difficult to reach people with the knowledge of Jesus. The English language center is an excellent way to reach young and old alike with the gospel while teaching them an important skill.

The English language center is not the first effort to plant a congregation of Adventists in the region where Nung and her mother live. Years ago, a missionary family entered a city in Laos to introduce the Lao people there to Jesus. After four years the family was forced to evacuate the region due to war, leaving behind a handful of new believers who were still quite young in their faith. Today, only one Adventist remains in the city of Luang Namtha, a city that is a strategic location as Laos' northern gateway to China. The Church is working to reestablish an Adventist presence in this region of Laos.

The Lao Adventist Mission plans to build a bilingual primary school here that will reach families with children who wish to study in a Christian international environment. Our faith-driven Promise offerings help make hundreds of projects such as this new school a reality and an important outreach for Jesus in northern Laos and around the world.

WEEK 34 • AUGUST 26, 2023

Angola: The Blind Boy Sees Jesus

Matthew 19:14—“But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” ”

While playing one day, 10-year-old Ricardo fell head-first while jumping over a fence. Soon he began to lose his eyesight. Within a few months he couldn't see the blackboard at school. Eventually, the teacher sent Ricardo home saying, “I cannot teach a blind boy.”

Ricardo's parents took him to many doctors, but no one could help him. They said he would eventually become blind. Ricardo was sad that he could no longer play soccer, ride a bicycle, or play hide and seek with his friends.

Ricardo's older cousin invited Ricardo to a Pathfinder Club outing, but Ricardo hesitated. Ricardo's cousin convinced him to go, and Ricardo was surprised that he could participate in the activities. Ricardo was glad he had gone.

Eventually, Ricardo joined the baptismal class to prepare for baptism. The leader asked those wanting to be baptized to memorize the Ten Commandments. Ricardo was afraid he couldn't be baptized because he couldn't read, but his mom encouraged him. “God willing, you will be baptized,” she said.

Ricardo's sister offered to read the Ten Commandments to Ricardo every day. By Friday, Ricardo could recite the Ten Commandments. The elder congratulated him when he was baptized the next day.

One day the Sabbath School leader asked Ricardo to tell the mission story the next week. Some church members were concerned that he would be embarrassed because he couldn't read, but the Sabbath School leader asked Ricardo, “Can you tell the story next week?” Ricardo nodded. “Then I will put your name on the program.”

Again, Ricardo's sister read the mission story to him, and he memorized it. On Sabbath, Ricardo told the story with confidence. When he finished, loud “amens” filled the church. Such experiences gave Ricardo confidence that he could work for God.

Today, Ricardo is a university student preparing to become a pastor. He leads a Pathfinder club and preaches in churches around Angola. Dozens of people have given their lives to Jesus after hearing his sermons and testimony.

The boy who thought he wasn't worth anything because he was blind has learned that with God's help, he can do anything. God's children can faithfully return their tithes and Promise offerings whenever they receive an income.

Our Promise offerings are gifts to God, not to the church. Show Him your love and dedication by giving in faith.

We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are. . . . There are multitudes who will never be reached by the gospel unless it is carried to them
(Christ's Object Lessons, p. 229).

WEEK 35 • SEPTEMBER 2, 2023

Brazil: The Birthday Soup

Philippians 4:19—“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Juliana’s birthday was coming up, and she wanted to make soup for the homeless on her birthday.

“Making soup is hard work,” Mom said. “It costs a lot, and we don’t have a pot big enough to cook soup for lots of people.”

Juliana wasn’t discouraged. “God will provide what we need for the soup.” Juliana had learned that God can provide for our needs at a Pathfinder meeting. Mom was glad that Juliana loved God, but Mom didn’t go to church.

Juliana prayed about the soup, and God gave her an idea. The next day Juliana visited her neighbors and asked if she could borrow a big soup pot to make soup for the hungry. Two neighbors lent her their biggest pots. Then Juliana visited the nearest grocery store and asked the manager if he would donate some vegetables to make soup for the homeless. He agreed and gave her a bag of vegetables. Juliana visited several other stores to ask for vegetables, and each one gave her bags of ingredients. Juliana returned home pulling a wagon full of vegetables.

“What’s this?” Mom asked when she saw bags of food.

“It’s the soup ingredients!” Juliana beamed. “And here are the pots. Some ladies from the church will come tomorrow to help make the soup.” Mom was amazed at Juliana’s plan. With the help of the Adventist women, they made lots of soup.

The next day, Juliana and her Mom and the ladies from the church finished making the soup and loaded the pots into a van. They drove into town to meet the homeless and hungry men and women who were waiting to eat. One girl announced that it was Juliana’s birthday and that she had made soup for them. The homeless people cheered and sang “Happy Birthday” to Juliana.

Mom realized that Juliana was filled with God’s love. Mom wanted to feel God’s love too. She began attending church with Juliana, and several months later, Mom asked Jesus into her heart. Today, Juliana, her mom, and several other church members feed the homeless twice a month.

Juliana and her mom didn’t have the money or time to cook the soup, but Juliana believed that God would supply her need “according to His riches” (Phil. 4:19 NKJV). He will provide for our needs when we trust Him and give Him our regular and systematic offerings, called Promise.

Mom realized that Juliana was filled with God’s love. Mom wanted to feel God’s love too. She began attending church with Juliana, and several months later, Mom asked Jesus into her heart. Today, Juliana, her mom, and several other church members feed the homeless twice a month.

WEEK 36 • SEPTEMBER 9, 2023

Unnamed Opportunity: When God Opens a Door

Proverbs 6:6-8—“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.”

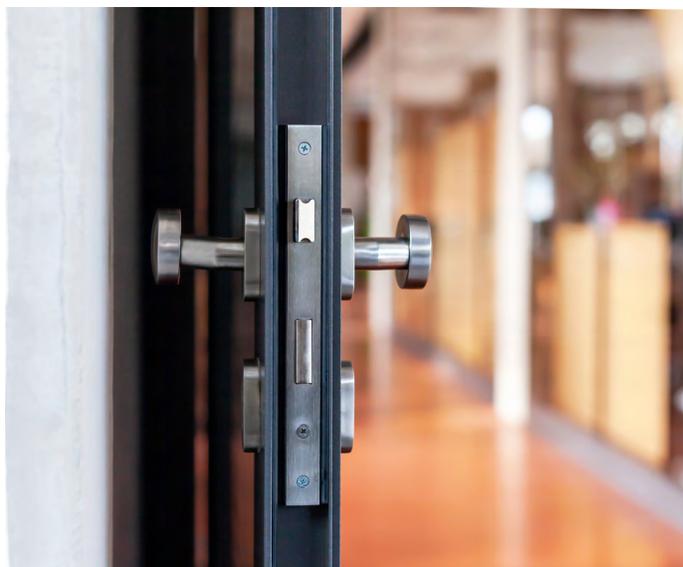
God works in wonderful ways to open doors to spread His message of love and faith around the world. And our offerings are allocated to be able to meet the needs of new ministries. But what happens when carefully planned evangelistic meetings are successful way beyond expectations? Suddenly existing churches overflow and new churches must be built, rented, or purchased quickly. But that costs money—money way beyond the planned amount the division set aside before the evangelist meetings began. How can the division provide church homes that new believers need to grow spiritually?

For years the Adventist Church has been blessed with radio and television programs expanding globally. New stations are sprouting across the world, and new languages are reaching thousands of new listeners every year. But this expansion requires more equipment, more staff, and more satellite time. When an unexpected opportunity opens, allowing the Church to reach out to an otherwise unreachable region of the world, how does the Church provide the funds to make such a giant step for God?

God has impressed the Church to make a way to prepare for the unexpected by establishing a fund with resources that will be available when such unexpected blessings come to God’s people. It’s called the Unusual Opportunities Offering. For Adventists living where the Combined Offering Plan was already adopted (more than 90% of the Adventist population), a determined portion of all their unassigned offerings, collected at any time, will automatically be directed to this fund. But for those residing in areas that still use different offering plans, a special offering for this fund is taken once a year. Today is a new opportunity to build up that fund so the church is ready when God says “yes” to our prayers.

Perhaps you remember when the Soviet Union broke into numerous countries in the early 1990s. Suddenly restrictions preventing Christians from openly preaching about God in the countries that made up the former Soviet Union fell away, and hundreds of ministers entered this vast region and shared God’s love with millions. The cost of this outreach was high, but funds from the Unusual Opportunities fund helped make this evangelistic outreach possible.

God has many plans to reach others for His kingdom. Let’s do our part to be ready when the opportunity comes to reach out for God today.



WEEK 37 • SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

Ethiopia: Worship in a Shipping Container

3 John 1:4—“ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

Twelve-year-old Bamlak [BOM-LOCK] lives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She loves to tell Bible stories using her colorful felt pictures. She teaches the children’s Sabbath School class, which meets in a shipping container that stands beside the church.

On any given day of the week, children invite their friends to gather in the classroom to sing and play games like Bible trivia. They organize their own programs for the week’s meetings.

Teodrow’s [TEE-OH-DROH] family lives near this church, and he could hear the singing from his house. When he was still quite young, he wandered down the street to check out the music. He loved it! Soon Teodrow and his siblings were at the church every Sabbath.

Their parents noticed that the children had changed, and they were curious about where they spent so much time. The children begged their parents to come to church with them. When they finally did, they were impressed by what they saw; this was the right church for their family. Fifteen years later, they are still grateful to their children for introducing them to the Adventist Church.

Bamlak and the other children are praying for more space in their Sabbath School container so they can invite more friends to come and worship.

When church leaders understand the importance of ministering to children, they strive to provide a simple room—or even a shipping container—outside the church building that will serve as the children’s division. These “Lamb Shelters” protect the children from the hot sun, rainstorms, and distractions. Children often lead their parents to Jesus and thus build the church from the children up.

We know that the tithe and regular offerings are God’s part, expected to be returned to Him from our earnings. Even though the tithe represents a proportion of our income that is determined by God, offerings, are ours to decide what percentage to give to Him. Rather than dropping a coin or paper bill into the offering basket to support the church, prayerfully ask God what percentage of your income He would have you give regularly, every week or month, when you receive your paycheck. Ask Him to bless you in return and see how He will “supply all your need according to His riches” in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19 NKJV).



WEEK 38 • SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

Indonesia: The Sabbath-Keeping Dog

Exodus 20:8-9—“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.”

The villagers gathered along the airstrip as mission pilot Gary Roberts landed his plane at Suminka, a remote village on an Indonesian island.

As Gary stepped out of the plane, one man pointed to the three angels painted on the plane and asked, “Is this a Seventh-day Adventist plane?”

Surprised, Gary asked the man how they knew about Adventists. Gary listened as the villagers told him how their dog had taught them to keep the Sabbath.

Several years earlier, an Adventist pastor named Moses and a lay person named Darius had a dream in which an angel told them to go to Suminka and preach. The two men knew God was calling, so they set off on the three-day hike to Suminka.

Arriving at the village, they announced that they would hold evangelistic meetings for a week under the village tree. But on the first day, Pastor Moses fell sick with malaria. The villagers thought he would die.

Pastor Moses was feverish all day. Then at 5:00 his fever broke. He stood up and preached, but when he was done, his fever returned. This happened every day. He was sick all day, but at 5:00 he preached about God’s love, the Sabbath, and a healthy diet.

But when Pastor Moses appealed to the villagers to accept Jesus, no one responded. The meeting ended, and the two men returned home disappointed.

Life returned to normal in the village—until Saturday. The village’s hunting dog, Dolby, got up early and plodded over to the tree where the evangelist had preached. When his owner called him to go hunting, Dolby refused to move. Dolby hunted every other day, but not on Saturday.

The villagers noticed that Dolby had stopped eating wild pig. “Dolby has become a Seventh-day Adventist!” one villager said. “If he worships on Sabbath, we should too,” said another. Many villagers began to keep the Sabbath and stopped eating wild pigs.

When Pilot Gary told Pastor Moses the story, Pastor Darius flew to the village to teach the villagers. Today, about half of the 200 villagers worship God on Sabbath.

We worship God in many ways—by keeping the Sabbath, by praying, by telling others about God, and by returning God’s tithe and faithfully giving our regular offerings, called “Promise.” God doesn’t need our money, but He wants us to learn to trust Him to meet our needs (Phil. 4:19) when we put Him first in our lives.

The villagers noticed that Dolby had stopped eating wild pig. “Dolby has become a Seventh-day Adventist!” one villager said. “If he worships on Sabbath, we should too,” said another.

WEEK 39 • SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

Brazil: The Floating Church

Matthew 25:38-40—“When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ ”

The massive Amazon River stretches 4,000 miles (6,700 km) from the mountains of Peru to the Atlantic Ocean. Amair Jesus [ah-MAYR hay-SOOS] lives in a village on the Amazon. Every day he paddles his small boat from village to village, watching out for crocodiles and deadly snakes. When he reaches each village, Amair prays, asking God for a blessing on his efforts. Then he wastes no time taking the love of Jesus to the people who live there.

Amair visits a woman who is going through a difficult time. He reminds her that heaven is hers as a believer. There she will know no pain or suffering or tears. His message rings sweet in her ears. Amair closes with prayer for peace and a blessing upon the woman’s household.

As Amair steps outside, he greets a group of children playing. He stops to talk with them about God’s exciting plan for their lives. Amair is their friend, and they trust him as he introduces them to a caring Savior.

Amair explains his work this way: “We visit people, seeking to identify their needs and helping them however we can. We make friends and teach them about God. By helping the people, we can break down barriers so as to bring them the gospel.”

The vast size of the Amazon River makes this mission a challenging work for pastors and lay workers like Amair.

For years the local Adventist leaders have dreamed of building a boat that could bring God’s message to the people who live on its shores. Almost 100 years after Leo Halliwell launched the first Luzeiro mission boat that provided medical and spiritual care to the people who lived on the Amazon, this new boat has become a reality. The new boat and its pastor provide hope and connection with their church to the villages along the Amazon.

Projects such as the mission boat can reach much more than several smaller boats like Amair’s. When God’s people meet a major project far bigger than what one conference or union alone can support, they can unite in making the project become a reality. No matter where we live, we can help by giving our regular and systematic offering to God to make the project a reality. In addition, special, sacrificial offerings may be given as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Let’s continue to give our offerings to God so that more people can hear the word of God wherever they live.

For years the local Adventist leaders have dreamed of building a boat that could bring God’s message to the people who live on its shores.

WEEK 40 • OCTOBER 7, 2023

Kenya: Reaching the Samburu People

John 15:16—“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

For years, sharing the gospel with remote nomadic people groups such as the Samburu of Kenya has been a challenge. These people follow their livestock, wandering the land to find grass to feed them. So how does one share the gospel with such peoples that are always on the move?

Lawrence is a Samburu who was introduced to Jesus a few years ago. He studied with two pastors to prepare himself to share God’s love with his people. He knows the language and customs and has dedicated his life to being a Global Mission pioneer, sharing God’s love with his people in a way they understand.

During the past two years, the Samburu have come to know the love of God and have accepted Jesus into their hearts. They meet under a tree every Sabbath to study God’s word with Lawrence. The Samburu people love to sing and value their time together. They spend the Sabbath day telling stories, singing, and eating together.

Nearby are their simple homes, where the Samburu sleep at night. Their homes are made of materials ranging from animal skins to empty rice bags and sticks. This type of home can easily be packed up to move when the group must find new pastures for their animals.

The Samburu people’s homes are their safe spaces, where they will be protected from dangerous animals like lions and elephants. Their homes are a refuge for the family, and to be invited into this space is a privilege. The Samburu people extend this privilege to Lawrence, allowing him to share lessons from the Bible in their homes. He visits them often, and they look forward to listening as he reads the Bible and prays with them.

This Samburu group has come to know the love of God, but they are just one of many similar nomadic groups throughout Eastern Africa. Please pray for the unreached people groups in this region of the world and for Global Mission pioneers like Lawrence, who have answered God’s call to serve.

Our faithful Promise offerings support not only the local missionary work, but also efforts to teach others around the world about Jesus in a way they can understand. Our offerings can go where we cannot, so let’s make every effort to share God’s love through our generous and regular offerings.



WEEK 41 • OCTOBER 14, 2023

Chad: Hippos, Mangos, and Missionary Kids

Romans 10:14-15—“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Chad is a landlocked country in the heart of Africa. Far from the capital city stands Bere Adventist Hospital, the only healthcare facility available in the region. Overseeing the hospital and its patients are Drs. Olen and Danae [Dan-AY] Netteburg [Neh-teh-burg] and their family. The Netteburg children give us a peek into life in their mission field.

Hi! We're the Netteburg kids. Our parents are missionary doctors, but we're missionaries too because we love telling people about Jesus.

Juniper, age 6: I like animals. People bring us animals like our baby goat. Someone even gave us a camel! The local people raise them here. We live in a compound—a bunch of houses with a wall around them. We have lots of mango trees. During mango season, we don't need dinner; we just pick mangos from the trees! My mother and I give baby clothes and blankets to new mommies while we talk about Jesus.

Addison, age 8: I like to visit the nearby villages. There are shepherds and farmers who live on what they can grow. On Sabbath, we hop in the truck and drive to remote villages to worship God under a big mango tree! We teach kids and their parents Bible stories and songs. It makes me sad to think of all the children who don't know about Jesus.

Zane, 10: I love to swim in a nearby river during the summer. But we had to change rivers because hippos took over our river. Hippos are dangerous, so we can't swim with them! I like to make stuff like bows and arrows. My friends from Chad can make the most amazing things out of trash—like cars and even airplanes! Most people here don't know about Jesus, so I like telling people that Jesus loves them.

Lyol, 13: There is so much to do here! My mom does a lot of surgeries. My dad takes care of the sick patients and keeps the hospital running smoothly. He also homeschools us. We have fun here, but our work is serious, and we want everyone to know Jesus. she could share God's love with others. All she had to do was obey Him.

When you give God your tithes and Promise offerings, remember that they help support the 400 missionaries around the world and Global Mission pioneers, too. Thank you for supporting us while we teach people about God. After all, that's why we're here.



WEEK 42 • OCTOBER 21, 2023

Chile: Sebastian's Goal for God

Colossians 2:2—“That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.”

Sebastian loves to play soccer, so he was excited when his parents signed him up for soccer lessons at the Global Mission Life Hope Center near their home in Santiago, Chile. Sebastian worked hard, and his skills improved quickly. His coaches were young people serving at the Life Hope Center as One Year in Mission volunteers. Soon he realized that he was learning more than just soccer; Sebastian had met Jesus through these volunteer missionaries. He was eager to share his new love for Jesus with his parents.

So, each day after soccer lessons, while walking home with his parents, Sebastian told them about Jesus.

Then Sebastian's grandmother got very sick. Sebastian was worried. He told his friends at the Life Hope Center. Pastor Cabezas, leader of the Center's outreach programs, and his volunteers began visiting the family to pray with them and encourage them.

Sebastian's parents enjoyed these visits, and in time they asked to study the Bible. Eventually, the love of Jesus won their hearts, and they were baptized. Sebastian's grandmother regained her strength. The family is eternally grateful for the friendship and care shown by the volunteers at the Life Hope Center. These volunteers selflessly give up their time to be lights of hope in the community.

Pastor Cabezas says, “These volunteers are willing to give their gifts, talents, and abilities to serve others. We have many types of workshops, such as cooking, language, and exercise classes that bring our neighbors to us. These outreach programs help us meet our neighbors and teach them using Christ's methods (Ministry of Healing, p. 17). Through these workshops many people can mingle with Adventists and get to know the Lord.”

Sebastian is so happy when he listens to his parents talk about their new lives. He says, “The Life Hope Center helped me have the word of God in my heart. . . . Now my family can go to heaven together!”

Thanks to your tithe and regular and faithful Promise offerings, outreach organizations of the Adventist Church are leading people to Jesus around the world every day. Thank you for your faithful giving.

Sebastian's parents enjoyed these visits, and in time they asked to study the Bible. Eventually, the love of Jesus won their hearts, and they were baptized.

WEEK 43 • OCTOBER 28, 2023

Israel: No Human Did This!

Matthew 5:10—“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Wisam is a member of a powerful anti-Christian family living in Nazareth, Israel. When his sister became a Christian while studying in Europe, the family sent Wisam to kill her. Wisam loved his sister and hoped to convince her to give up her new religion. He found her and told her the family wanted him to kill her. She suggested that he stay in Europe and study at an Adventist school in Austria.

Wisam liked the idea, hoping that he could convert Christians to his religion. But Wisam grew interested in Jesus, and before the year ended, Wisam accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized.

Wisam returned to Nazareth and told his uncle that he had not killed his sister. Angry, his uncle shouted, “Stone him!” The men hurled rocks at Wisam until he fell unconscious. Moved by compassion, Wisam’s father ordered his other sons to take Wisam to the hospital. When Wisam returned home, his parents urged Wisam to leave Israel.

Wisam returned to Austria to complete his pastoral studies. He pastored several churches in Europe before he was called to pastor in his hometown, Nazareth.

When Wisam’s cousins learned that Wisam was back, they led a mob to attack him. Wisam faced his aggressors but refused to fight. As Wisam turned away from the men, his cousin raised a deadly knife and stabbed him in his back. The knife blade bent to a 90-degree angle. His cousin, seeing his bent knife, dropped it. Wisam’s brother held up the useless knife saying, “Now try to kill the man of God!” One of Wisam’s cousins shouted, “I will die if I don’t kill you!”

A few months later the two cousins who had threatened Wisam were killed when a truck hit them head-on. This tragic accident made a huge impact in the local community. Many asked questions about Wisam’s faith.

In time, Wisam opened an Urban Center of Influence in Nazareth, where he teaches English using the Bible as his textbook. Many want to study English with this man of God.

Wisam’s life is a light shining in Nazareth. His work is made possible because believers around the world return God’s tithes and faithfully give their regular offerings so that men and women can train to serve God in difficult places around the world. Let us give faithfully so many can serve.

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that he could convert
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year ended, Wisam accepted
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was baptized.

WEEK 44 • NOVEMBER 4, 2023

Canada: A Vision of Hope (Blind Congregation)

Acts 20:35—“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Neena and her husband, Kevin, live in a high-rise apartment in Toronto, Canada. In many ways they live a normal life. But one thing is different. Neena and Kevin are visually impaired.

“Sighted people don’t know how to relate to blind people,” Kevin says. “It’s as if we’re not near them. I’d like to tell sighted people to please talk to us, get to know us.”

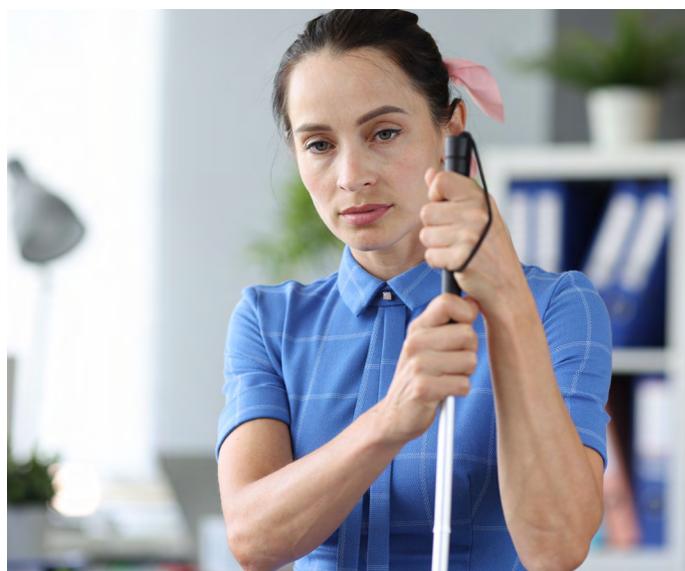
Several years ago, Kevin and Neena were asked to help establish an Adventist congregation for the visually impaired. The church’s goal is to lead blind people to Jesus and to provide emotional and spiritual healing and hope through God’s wonderful grace.

The group, now known as Hope Vision Fellowship, was formed to meet these needs. Today new visitors come through the doors regularly because they know they will be welcomed and feel safe here. With its own church now, Hope Vision Fellowship can open the door with more ways to assist the visually impaired.

“There are a lot of visually impaired people who need a refuge from the challenges they face every day,” Neena adds. “I want them to feel welcome and loved.”

Most of the people who attend the church are not Adventists. They come because they feel safe there. This congregation goes beyond meeting the spiritual needs of our community. We also help them meet some of their physical needs. Pat, one of the founding members, prepares food bags for the members to take home. “Most of our members can’t afford some of the basic necessities of life,” Pat says. “Some rely on food banks, but they can’t always get there. So, we try to help them get what they need and bring balance to their lives.”

Jesus touched the visually and the hearing impaired, healing them and calling them to follow Him. He wants us to do likewise. God asks His followers to return their tithe and give a regular and systemic offering, called Promise, every time they are paid. We give the offering to God through the church, and trust God to use it locally, regionally, and internationally as He sees fit. He in turn promises to supply all our needs “according to His riches” (Phil. 4:19 NKJV) and our faith to draw those who do not yet know Christ to find their way to the feet of Jesus. Let’s give willingly and bless abundantly.



WEEK 45 • NOVEMBER 11, 2023

What Would You Sacrifice?

Deuteronomy 16:17—“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.”

If you could save someone’s life by risking yours, would you do it? If this person were a stranger, would you risk your life to save them?

If you could make a difference in someone’s life by giving up something you enjoy for one day or one week, would you do it? What would you give up? A favorite meal? A new pair of shoes? A day’s income? Think about what you can give up this week so someone you don’t know can be introduced to Jesus.

We are talking about special or sacrificial offerings, those given after being prompted by the Holy Spirit, and in addition to or beyond our regular and systematic offering, called Promise. If your gift is small, maybe \$10, it might buy five Bibles or outreach books that tell someone about Jesus in their own language. If you give \$25, your offering could help sponsor a seminar about healthful living. And if you feel you should give a day’s income, your offering could sponsor a Global Mission pioneer in a city where most people have never heard about Jesus. Whatever you give, your sacrificial offering will be used to tell others about Jesus. And just think: Your sacrificial offering could make it possible to meet the person you sacrificed for in heaven.



You can determine what you will sacrifice. Or ask God what He wants you to sacrifice for Him this week beyond your regular tithe and offerings. Ask God and then listen to His answer. Be confident that God will provide your needs because you trust Him.

We sacrifice so that someone somewhere will meet Jesus, a homeless family won’t have to beg for their next meal, or maybe a wealthy family can learn that all their wealth means nothing without Jesus. Would you sacrifice for them? How much is the soul of any person worth? To Jesus, any soul is worth everything, for He died for them—and for you.

Perhaps you are not prepared to give your sacrificial offering today, or you wish you had sacrificed more. You can give your sacrificial offering at any time. Just write “Annual Sacrifice” on your electronic or regular offering envelope and turn it in before God’s generated conviction may subside.

In Hebrews 13:16 Paul says that sacrifices are pleasing to God. So, let us ask the Lord to bless our offerings of sacrifice so that they multiply and help Global Mission pioneers reach the unreached.

WEEK 46 • NOVEMBER 18, 2023

USA-Alaska: God's Gift of Light

Acts 13:47—“For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Sammy sat on his bed watching the Alaskan twilight. A loud knock announced the arrival of his parents' drunken friends. Sammy's heart pounded as he covered his ears and tried to ignore the noise in the next room. It wasn't long before shouting erupted in the living room. Chairs scraped the floors, and fists hit heads. Sammy couldn't stand the noise. Then courage pumped through his body. Not tonight! Sammy thought. I'm getting out of here! Sammy grabbed his coat and boots and pushed through the crowd and out the door.

The cold air stung his cheeks as he pulled his coat around him and walked down the dirt road. Where can I go? he wondered. Down the road he saw a house with the porch light on. He recognized the house as the home of the new Bible workers. He had heard that the couple opened their home for kids to come to play games and listen to Bible stories. The sound of children's laughter floated in the air.

Sammy wondered whether he should stop or keep walking. He slowly made his way to the door, knocked, and stepped back, ready to run if necessary. The door opened, and a smiling woman invited him in.

Sammy stepped inside and sat down on a blanket with another boy. As he listened to the story, Sam realized that here was a different way of life where he didn't have to be afraid. He listened as the story of the wise men unfolded. Later, as he walked back home, he realized that, like the wise men who had followed a bright star and found the Messiah, tonight he had followed the bright porchlight and had found a safe place where he could be just a kid.

People living in Arctic Alaska have some of the highest drug and alcohol abuse and suicide rates in the United States. Sammy is one of many young people whose lives have been changed by the Bible workers ministering in the remote villages of the arctic. God has called the Arctic Mission staff to shine the light of Jesus in a dark and challenging world.

Part of our Promise offerings regularly support the ministry of caring for the children of Alaska by the workers who seek to reach them for Jesus there and in similar ministries around the world. (Remote native villages are in a region of Alaska that is isolated and cannot be reached by road or ferry.) Tandis Perkins is the director of development for Arctic Mission Adventure at the Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, United States.

Sammy wondered whether he should stop or keep walking. He slowly made his way to the door, knocked, and stepped back, ready to run if necessary. The door opened, and a smiling woman invited him in.

WEEK 47 • NOVEMBER 25, 2023

Unnamed Country: Satan Couldn't Touch Her

Matthew 6:24—“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

When Sarah's husband left her several years ago, she needed work to support herself. She didn't know where to look for work, so she prayed for guidance. God impressed her to share His Word with her neighbors. Sarah began visiting her neighbors. She prays for the sick, and they get well. She prays for relief from evil spirits, and the spirits flee.

Many are happy when Sarah visits them. But others don't want her in their homes. One day Sarah visited a family who was worshipping their idol. They demanded that she worship with them, but she gently refused. A young woman became angry with Sarah and plunged Sarah's hand into a pot of boiling oil. But when Sarah pulled her hand back out from the oil, it wasn't burned.

The next day, the young woman's father visited Sarah to apologize. He asked her to pray for his family. Sarah was happy to pray for them. Today this family are Christians. Others who witnessed Sarah's escape from the boiling oil have asked for prayer as well.

When the local Adventist pastor learned about Sarah, he offered her a position as a Global Mission pioneer and Sarah gladly accepted it. Sarah continues to visit families in her community. She prays with them and shares literature about Jesus. On Sabbaths, she invites a group of women to worship in her home, and on Wednesdays she hosts a Bible study.

Sarah helps the widows and orphans in her city. Though she receives a stipend for her work, it's not a lot. But Sarah does all she can to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the poor and fatherless, providing food, clothes, and hope. And God always provides.

Sarah is not angry that her husband abandoned her. She says, “I'm not alone. God is my Father; He is always with me. He gives me strength to introduce people to Jesus and tell them that God is coming soon. God takes care of me. I want to be ready when Jesus comes, but I also want others to be ready to meet Jesus too.

We can support Sarah and hundreds of other Global Mission pioneers by praying for them and by regularly giving our Promise offerings, which distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan equitable supports all approved missionary projects of the church around the world, including pioneers who are sharing the good news of Jesus's love and soon return.

God is my Father; He is always with me. He gives me strength to introduce people to Jesus and tell them that God is coming soon. God takes care of me. I want to be ready when Jesus comes, but I also want others to be ready to meet Jesus too.

WEEK 48 • DECEMBER 2, 2023

Belize: The Little Preachers

Matthew 24:14—“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Jaheel and his friend Joseph are eight years old and live in the country of Belize in Central America. The boys love living there because they know so many places to explore. They can go swimming with the fish in the ocean. Or they can go walking through the jungle to see the animals. Sometimes they can even find an ancient carved stone that may have been left by the people who lived in the area hundreds of years ago.

Joseph and Jaheel go to school in southern Belize. They like it there. During recess the children run outside to play. The boys enjoy playing marbles, and the girls like to jump rope. They study subjects like math, English, Spanish, history, and Bible. Jaheel and Joseph love to study the Bible. There are so many great stories to read. They like to preach, too.

Sometimes the teacher asks Jaheel to present a short sermon to the other students during worship time. When he preaches, he always asks Joseph to sing for the class. Joseph is a good singer. Jaheel gets a little nervous when it's time to speak in front of a group, but he knows that God will help him. So, he comes prepared with notes. As soon as the teacher introduces Jaheel and Joseph to the class, Jaheel doesn't feel nervous anymore!

“I like to preach about the stories I have read in the Bible,” Jaheel says. The other kids listen carefully to the lessons, and some of them ask questions after I'm done. I feel good that I can share some of God's Word with the other students. The pastor at my church told me that soon I can preach at my church! I'll be sure to invite Joseph to come sing there! Maybe someday I'll be a pastor, but I have to finish school first.”

There are a lot of children in Belize who love the Lord just as Jaheel does. Please pray for the children in the Adventist school so they will grow up and know what God wants them to do.

Every Adventist school is a mission field. Thousands of children never knew about Jesus until they enrolled in an Adventist school and studied stories of Jesus and His love. We can have a part in teaching children and adults about God's love when we bring our tithes and our Promise offerings to God each Sabbath. Let's remember that our regular Promise offerings—given to God as a percentage of our income—help to build and maintain mission schools in more than 100 countries.



WEEK 49 • DECEMBER 9, 2023

Philippines: The Buffalo and the Bible Worker

Psalm 103:2-3—“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.”

Jerry is a farmer living near Lake Sebu in central Philippines. The land is rich and grows abundant fruits and vegetables, and Lake Sebu provides abundant fish for the people.

Jerry and his water buffalo work the fields until about 2:00. Then his buffalo rests and Jerry begins his second job: studying the Bible with his neighbors.

Jerry lives among the T'boli people, a tribe with a unique language and culture. They welcome Jerry to learn God's message with the tribe. Jerry was trained as a Bible worker by a pastor who led him to Christ 20 years ago and taught him to give Bible studies.

Jerry struggled for years with sharp pain in his side. He went to a doctor who told him he needed surgery, but Jerry couldn't afford the surgery or the medication he needed. He had only one option: He needed to sell his water buffalo to pay for the surgery. The buffalo was valuable; it helped him work the fields and earn money for his family. Without the buffalo, Jerry couldn't till his land and feed his family. This saddened Jerry. He saw no other way to conquer the pain and regain his health.

Jerry met an Adventist pastor and decided to turn the situation over to God. When the pastor came to visit him, Jerry asked to be baptized.

“When I came up from the water after baptism, my pain was gone. I haven't had any pain since then! God healed me,” Jerry said. “I didn't have to sell the buffalo! I was able to continue farming and providing for my family.”

Since then Jerry became a dedicated Bible student, working with other Bible workers who are eager to share the Adventist message with the T'boli people. The passionate Bible workers grow in number, but they still don't have enough to meet the need for workers near Lake Sebu. And they need a training center where they can learn as a group the truths of God. There are more T'boli people eager to hear the gospel message than there are trained Bible workers. As you give your regular Promise offerings, please pray for the people living in the Lake Sebu area, as well as the Bible workers needed to teach them God's truths.



WEEK 50 • DECEMBER 16, 2023

Unnamed Country: Breaking the Curse

Psalm 46:1-3—“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling.”

Sunny* is a Waldensian, a Global Mission project in which young Adventists live, study, and serve at a secular university in the Middle East or North Africa. These students make friends while studying and quietly share with them the message of salvation in Jesus.

Sunny met Salma, a local student who is a member of a non-Christian family. The two girls became friends. Salma learned that her new friend is an Adventist Christian. Salma had been taught to be wary of Christians, but Sunny seemed so kind and honest.

As their friendship grew, Salma accepted Sunny's invitation to attend Friday evening meetings at Sunny's house. Salma liked meeting other Adventists and enjoyed their friendly conversation. Near the end of the school year, Sunny invited Salma to visit an Adventist church where nearly all those attending were international students.

Salma enjoyed the meetings. But her parents learned that she was attending a Christian church. They warned her that they all would be cursed if she became a Christian. But Salma continued attending the church. Soon Salma asked for Bible studies. The girls studied the Bible weekly, but Sunny was still worried that her family would be cursed if she became a Christian.

Then one Sabbath the group took part in a meditative activity in which each one took a card and read the Bible text on it. Salma's card read: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31 NKJV).

Salma realized that she didn't have to worry about a curse falling on her or her family. She stood up and announced with a trembling voice that she wanted to accept Jesus as her Savior and be baptized! Sunny and Salma wept with joy.

Experiences like this have inspired Sunny to continue serving as a Waldensian student. “I will stay in the Middle East to develop friendships with people like Salma. This is a great way to touch the hearts of the people who do not know Jesus in this region.”

Part of our Promise offerings help support, train, and send Waldensian students like Sunny to universities in the Middle East and North Africa. We may not be able to go and serve, but we can support those who can serve by giving our faithful Promise offerings.

Salma realized that she didn't have to worry about a curse falling on her or her family. She stood up and announced with a trembling voice that she wanted to accept Jesus as her Savior and be baptized! Sunny and Salma wept with joy.

*The names have been changed to preserve the identity of the young women in this true story.

WEEK 51 • DECEMBER 23, 2023

Burundi: Best Friends

Psalm 122:1-2—“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.” Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!”

Larissa, eight, and Rosette, seven, are best friends. They live in the country of Burundi in eastern Africa.

Larissa and her family are Adventists. One day while the girls were playing together, Larissa’s mother called her daughter home for family worship. “Come with me!” Larissa invited Rosette. “We’re having family worship.” Rosette didn’t know what family worship was, but she went anyway. Larissa’s family sang a song about Jesus, then Mother read a Bible story, and then they all prayed.

“I like family worship,” Rosette said. “May I come again?”

“Of course you can!” Larissa said. “Would you like to come with me to Sabbath School on Saturday?” On Sabbath Rosette and Larissa walked to church together. Rosette liked singing songs about Jesus and hearing Bible stories. That evening Rosette told her parents about Larissa’s Sabbath School. Her parents were glad that she was learning about God.

Rosette rarely misses Sabbath School. She invites her parents to go to Sabbath School with her. Her father doesn’t go, but Mother goes when she doesn’t have a class on Sabbath.

Rosette was excited. “I’m so glad you’re coming, Mama!”

Rosette wanted her family to pray together like Larissa’s family does. In time Mother let Rosette lead in family worship. Then one day Mother had a surprise for Rosette. She had decided to join the church.

Rosette’s father doesn’t attend church with the family, but Rosette knows that if she prays for him and is an obedient and kind daughter, her father may one day want to know about Jesus.

Sharing God with others is an important part of worshiping God. Children can do it, and so can adults. It is our privilege to pray to God about all our concerns. And it is also our privilege to give God our tithes and systematic offerings, called Promise, every time we earn or are given some money. When we give God our tithes and Promise offerings, God promises us that He will supply our needs according to His richness, not our poverty (Phil. 4:19). That way we can focus on giving to God so that adults and children around the world can learn about Jesus. This week let’s focus on sharing our offerings with Jesus and our faith in God with a friend.

Sharing God with others is an important part of worshiping God. Children can do it, and so can adults. It is our privilege to pray to God about all our concerns. And it is also our privilege to give God our tithes and systematic offerings, called Promise, every time we earn or are given some money.

WEEK 52 • DECEMBER 30, 2023

Unnamed Country: No Time for Toys

Matthew 22:39—“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

Rishon and his parents were moving from the big city to a small village on a mountainside to tell people about Jesus. Rishon had many toys, and his parents talked to him about giving some of them away. “You will be busy in our new home helping us tell others about Jesus,” his father said. “You won’t have much time to play.”

Rishon liked the idea of giving his toys to other children, and the children were excited to receive them. Rishon was happy to see their joy; it felt good doing something kind for others.

Soon Rishon’s family were settled in their new home. Rishon really was busy in his new home. His parents taught him his school lessons at home. When Rishon wasn’t studying, he enjoyed working in the family garden. As his hands pulled weeds, he memorized Bible verses.

The village children became Rishon’s friends. They saw that he was a kind and gentle boy. They liked to visit Rishon in his house. Rishon played church with the children and introduced the children to Jesus. He told them about people who lived in Bible times like Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, and Daniel in the lions’ den. He told them that Jesus died on the cross so everyone who believes in Him can live with Jesus forever. He showed them how to pray to Jesus. “Dear God,” he said. “Thank you for being our very best Friend. Please give us a heart of love for You and for others. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

The children told their parents the Bible stories that Rishon had taught them. Some of the parents asked Rishon’s parents to teach them about Jesus.

Rishon doesn’t miss the toys he gave away. He’s learned that if God asks us to give up something, we can know that “whatever we are asked to surrender is only that which we are better off without” (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 300). He’s also too busy telling his friends about Jesus.

We too can tell our neighbors about Jesus. When we put God first, people around us will see the difference in our life. And as we worship God with our tithes and Promise offerings, our hearts will disconnect from things of the world and connect with God and His eternal plan for us.



Calendar of Offerings

World 2023

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

March 11 Adventist World Radio	April 8 Hope Channel	May 13 Disaster and Famine Relief
July 8 World Missions	September 9 World Mission Budget (Unusual Opportunities)	November 11 Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERINGS FOR 2023

First Quarter East Central Africa Division March 25	Second Quarter Inter-European Division June 24
Third Quarter Trans-European Division September 30	Fourth Quarter West-Central Africa Division December 30

SABBATH WITHOUT DESIGNATED OFFERINGS (DIVISIONS)

There are six Sabbaths in 2023 that do not have designated offerings. Each division committee is to designate these offerings for use in their division, union, or conference. Hence, they are labeled "Division" offerings in the calendar. These Sabbaths are:

January 14	February 11	June 10
August 12	October 14	December 9

SUMMARY OF OFFERINGS

General Conference	6
Division	6
Conference/Union	12
Church	<u>28</u>
Total:	52

*Program provided by the General Conference

+Worldwide offering

Calendar of Offerings, World 2023

For those divisions following this offering plan.

01	Outreach/Church Budget	JANUARY
	Division	7
	Church Budget	14
	Conference/Union	21
		28

02	Outreach/Church Budget	FEBRUARY
	Division	4
	Church Budget	11
	Conference/Union	18
		25

03	Outreach/Church Budget	MARCH
	Adventist World Radio	4
	Church Budget	11*+
	Conference/Union	18
		25

04	Outreach/Church Budget	APRIL
	Hope Channel International, Inc.	1
	Church Budget	8*+
	Conference/Union	15
	Church Budget	22
		29

05	Outreach/Church Budget	MAY
	Disaster and Famine Relief (NAD only)	6
	Church Budget	13*+
	Conference/Union	20
		27

06	Outreach/Church Budget	JUNE
	Division	3
	Church Budget	10
	Conference/Union	17
		24

Calendar of Offerings, World 2023

For those divisions following this offering plan.

07	Outreach/Church Budget	JULY
	World Mission Budget	1
	Church Budget	8*+
	Conference/Union	15
	Church Budget	22
		29
08	Outreach/Church Budget	AUGUST
	Division	5
	Church Budget	12
	Conference/Union	19
		26
09	Outreach/Church Budget	SEPTEMBER
	World Mission Budget (Unusual Opportunities)	2
	Church Budget	9*+
	Conference/Union	16
	Church Budget	23
		30
10	Outreach/Church Budget	OCTOBER
	Division	7
	Church Budget	14*+
	Conference/Union	21
		28
11	Outreach/Church Budget	NOVEMBER
	Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)	4
	Church Budget	11*+
	Conference/Union	18
		25
12	Outreach/Church Budget	DECEMBER
	Division	2
	Church Budget	9
	Conference/Union	16
	Church Budget	23
		30

About the Author

CHARLOTTE ISHKANIAN

grew up on a small farm in Oregon, United States. Her family was not financially well off and taught her to be careful with money. She attended the University of Oregon, where she earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree. On her graduation day, she chose to skip her graduation to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Soon after her graduation, she accepted a call to work at the General Conference for Liberty Magazine. It was quite a transition to move across the country far from her family. She married three years later and eventually had three children. She enjoyed working part-time in various editorial positions while raising her children, and then returned to full-time work as assistant editor of the Adult Bible Study Guides.

In 1993 she assumed the position of editor of the Mission quarterlies for adults, teens, and children, and the "Inside Stories" that appear in the Adult Bible Study Guides. Her children were teens and young adults and didn't mind caring for the home in her absence as she traveled to 150 countries around the world to gather stories of how God led in people's lives. She estimates that she wrote about 2,500 mission stories. After serving as editor of Mission for 20 years, she retired from the General Conference but continues to accept writing assignments.

Throughout her life Charlotte has loved worshiping through giving, even when there was little money available. God has, in return, taught her a lot about trust and giving. He indeed has never failed in providing for her and her children, especially after her husband's early death while her children were still in Adventist schools.

One of her favorite texts is "my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19 NKJV).

"The most wasted of days
is one without laughter."

— E.E. Cummings



**Charlotte
Ishkanian**



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES