



Tithe & Offerings Readings 2018

MISSION STORIES

**by
Charlotte Ishkanian**

**for
Adventist Mission**

Stewardship Ministries
South England Conference



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CHARLOTTE ISHKANLAN



Charlotte Ishkanian loves mission and mission stories! For 20 years she worked for Adventist Mission, editing the church's Mission quarterlies for adults, teens, and children, as well as the "Inside Stories" appearing in the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide in many languages.

During her 45-year career at the General Conference she also worked on the staff of Liberty magazine, the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, and several other publications in a number of departments.

Now retired and living in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, she enjoys spending time with her two grandchildren, who live nearby, and ministering to several refugee families in her neighborhood. Asking Charlotte for a few more of her travel stories, she shares these highlights:

"During my time at the GC, I traveled well over a million air miles and uncounted miles by land and boat, and interviewed about 4,000 adults, teens, and children. I fell in love with a lot of these people and carry them close to my heart even today. We seldom spoke the same verbal language, but we often understood the heart language, and it was beautiful. Below is a picture of Mukandimau, a Himba (Namibia) grandmother who welcomed me into her mud-and-thatch home and showed me how Himba people live today. No teacher ever taught me more in such a short time as this wonderful woman did!

"I've had some interesting adventures through the years, such as the time a rowboat owner in the Philippines let his rowboat move while we were boarding from a larger boat, and I ended up on my back in the mud on the bottom of the boat—in my Sabbath clothes! Or the time in Brazil when I was working on a mission story while returning from a day of interviews. Our driver hit a speed bump while driving about 60 miles an hour, wrenching my computer from my hands. It flew into the air, but I managed to catch it before it hit anything (or anyone). Sometimes we traveled on a wing and a prayer, such as the

day I received a travel advisory from the GC warning us to avoid travel to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo—just as I was boarding a flight over that very area. Our plane doubled as a cargo plane, so our luggage sat between seats and in a mesh “cargo hold” in the back of the passenger area. Because the plane wasn’t pressurized, it had to fly far lower than passenger planes would normally fly—and right over the region where guerrilla soldiers were fighting. It was one flight I was mighty grateful to see end! And in South Sudan the swamps often all-but halt traffic on the unpaved roads through the region. Sometimes the ruts formed by the trucks and four-wheel vehicles that traverse the region reach up to 9 feet high. As we made our way west to our only Adventist school there, we came to a line of trucks on the dirt road. Our driver, a missionary, got out to find out what the problem was. We knew that if we couldn’t get to our school by sundown, we would not be safe on the road. He reported back that a truck had approached a log bridge at a speed that was too high, and when he stepped on the brakes the logs rolled off and into the ravine below. The truck was literally hanging by its chassis. The missionary returned to the scene with the two young African men who were with us, and they began recruiting other truck drivers to help put the bridge back together. Two hours later we were on our way. (Normally, it would have been totally up to the driver who had caused the incident to figure out how to make it right, and the trucks would have remained in that line for days—or weeks.)

“Throughout all the adventures, God was always with us, and we met beautiful, faithful people who wanted nothing more in life than to honor God and introduce others to Jesus.”



Charlotte and Mukandimau

06 January 2018Outreach and Local Church Budget

AZERBAIJAN—Ibrahim, age 9, and his mother share God’s message of love in a land where Jesus isn’t worshiped as God. One day on a bus Ibrahim asked the driver, “How many days did it take God to create the earth?” The driver didn’t know. “Six days,” Ibrahim said. “If you want to know more about what God does, you can buy a book from my mom called God Gives Us Peace.”

Others on the bus heard Ibrahim’s comment and asked about the book. Mother usually sold the book, but she let Ibrahim give each passenger a copy. As they got off the bus, he saw several passengers reading the book. One person asked him, “How do you know so much about God?” And Ibrahim answered, “My mother and I read the sacred writings together.”

Appeal: The church’s publishing houses and literature evangelists such as Ibrahim’s mother help spread the gospel in difficult areas. Your offerings help millions learn more about the Savior we love. Today’s offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we are privileged to know so much about You. Thank You that by returning Your tithe and giving our offerings, others can hear Your message of love.

MADAGASCAR—Martial studied for the ministry in a charismatic seminary. When he graduated, he took with him a library book he had neglected to return. He was given a church to pastor. One day he began reading the overdue library book, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*—(on our 28 fundamental beliefs). He began to question what he had been taught at the seminary and what he was teaching his congregation.

He told his congregation what he had learned about the Bible and that he could no longer pastor a Sunday-keeping church. He invited his members to join him in honoring the seventh-day Sabbath. But he didn't know where a Sabbath-keeping church worshiped.

An Adventist learned that Martial had accepted the Sabbath. He visited Martial and his family and told them about an Adventist congregation that worshiped not far from their home. The family began attending the Adventist church, and in time were baptized.

One day Martial shared the library's book with a fellow seminarian. "I hope the library's book will do for him what it did for me," Martial said.

Appeal: Our hearts are warmed by the ways God uses to lead someone to Jesus. By returning God's tithe and giving regular offerings, we help make their conversion possible. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for the privilege of sharing in Your mission to reach the world for Jesus.

20 January 2018

Local Church Budget

AUSTRALIA — Fay lived with her grandparents and nine cousins in rural Australia. Life was difficult, but they trusted God for their needs. Grandpa got a job on a ranch several hours away from home. Before he left, he gave Grandma all the money he had. But it wasn't enough to feed 10 hungry children.

Grandma called the children together to pray for a miracle, then they set out walking to town.

Along the way one of the girls kicked a dusty envelope. Grandma picked it up and found a \$10 bill inside, but no identification. "Look, children!" Grandma exclaimed. "God has sent us money for food!" They thanked God for His gift and then hurried to the little store. Grandma bought powdered milk, flour, and some fruit.

When they arrived home, the family again thanked God for His faithfulness and for the lesson in trust He had taught them all.

Appeal: We can trust God to provide our needs when we are faithful in returning His portion to Him. Today's offering goes to Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Lord, You are ever faithful. Help us to be faithful to You as we return Your tithe and give our offerings to further Your work.

JAPAN — God used a homework assignment to lead me to Jesus. Like most people in Japan, I was not a Christian. But my shorthand professor encouraged students to attend lectures and take shorthand notes to practice. I saw an advertisement for a seminar in town and decided to go. I didn't know that the seminar was an evangelistic series.

I attended every seminar. After all, it was homework. When a girl asked if I would like to study the Bible, I agreed. I became convinced that God exists and that He loves me and wants a relationship with me. The Bible course led me to the Adventist church.

A young man from work visited my home and saw the Bible course on my bookshelf. He asked if he could study the Bible lessons. I agreed and offered to take him to evangelistic meetings. I went with him, and God drew us both into His family. I thank God for reaching me through a homework assignment!

Appeal: God does indeed have a thousand ways to reach people for Jesus. Returning a faithful tithe and giving regular offerings help support God's mission and the church's outreach around the world. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, reach many with Your tithes and our offerings today.

03 February 2018Newbold College Offering / Local Church Budget

BHUTAN — Bhutan is one of the most isolated countries in the world. Only a few Christians live there. But God is working.

Tepa learned about Jesus from an Adventist couple and became one of the first Bhutanese Adventists in the world. He was forced to leave Bhutan, but his passion for his countrymen has not faded. His son, Praveen, shares that passion. Praveen teaches in a Bhutanese school near the border with India. He quietly teaches his students about Christ. Some have accepted Jesus as their Savior and return home to share God's love with their families. Praveen printed copies of *The Great Controversy* and gave them to Bhutanese people. One man read *The Great Controversy* and shared his discoveries about God with his neighbors. Several are preparing for baptism.

Some Bhutanese Christians have been imprisoned for sharing their faith. So, lay members meet in India to learn how to share the gospel. Today nearly 700 Bhutanese have joined the Adventist Church. But most of the people in Bhutan still live and die without hearing of God's love or Jesus' sacrifice for them.

Appeal: Our offerings support the work in Bhutan and elsewhere through training schools and literature. Let's give so these people can hear the message of God's love. Today's offering is for Newbold College and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, stretch our funds and our hearts to meet the needs of those who are searching for You around the world.

GERMANY — Ute [OOH-teh] thought Christians were weird and weak. Then Frank, her neighbor, invited Ute's daughter to attend Pathfinders. Her daughter went, and she loved it.

Then Frank invited Ute to a Pathfinders program at the church. She hesitated, but went for her daughter's sake. She expected to meet strange people; but they were warm, friendly—and normal. Ute started attending church and tried reading the Bible for herself. But when she couldn't understand it she searched online for help to understand what she was reading. She discovered the Voice of Hope Bible correspondence course. She enrolled, and completed each Bible lesson with growing enthusiasm. She was delighted that someone personally answered her many questions.

"I have learned so much about God," Ute says. "I have discovered that I have a loving heavenly Father who will help me through life's bumps. Things aren't perfect," she says, "but Jesus goes with me into 'battle' and has promised never to leave me."

Appeal: We never know whom we will meet who needs to know Jesus. Our offerings help us be prepared with literature and Bible study guides that can make a difference in someone's life. Today's offering is for Outreach Projects and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, guide us to people who need to know You, and guide our offerings to where they will make a difference in someone's life.

17 February 2018Local Church Budget

NIGERIA — Moussah worked for the government, and his wife was a teacher; but they hadn't been paid in weeks. Moussah's wife had just given birth to a boy, and Moussah wanted to give God a thank offering on Sabbath. But he had only a few coins. He gave the coins to his children for offerings, but he felt sad that he had no thank offering for God.

A deacon tapped him on the shoulder. "A man wants to see you outside," the deacon said. Moussah followed the deacon outside and recognized the man. But why was he at church? He wasn't an Adventist. Moussah greeted the man, and they walked a few steps away. Then the man pulled out some bills and gave them to a shocked Moussah. "I didn't forget that I owed this to you," the man said. But Moussah had forgotten. He thanked the man and hurried back to church.

Moussah counted out a tithe on the money the man had given him, and then pulled out more bills for a thank offering.

Things got easier after that, but Moussah will never forget how God had provided an offering just in time.

Appeal: Giving an offering is always a blessing. Today's offering is for the Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, You never cease to amaze us. Bless Your tithe and our offerings today and the purposes for which they will go.

EASTER ISLAND — For years Maria was the only Adventist on Easter Island. She prayed for ways to share her faith with the 3,000 residents. A friend suggested she lend her audiotapes from Voice of Hope to the local radio station to rebroadcast. When listeners wanted to know more about the Bible, Maria gave them Bible study guides from the Voice of Hope in Chile.

Then Maria prayed for a church on the island. A pastor visited, and Maria begged for help getting someone to come and teach those who wanted to know more about God. The pastor sent his wife, and in a month 30 people had joined Maria's Bible study group.

Today Easter Island has an Adventist church. And Maria's own son is studying theology with plans to return to Easter Island to lead the church his mother helped to plant.

Appeal: Maria had big dreams for her little island, and God brought her dreams to reality. Returning God's tithe and giving our offerings faithfully makes God's dreams a reality as well. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for allowing us to be the means to make dreams of evangelism come true around the world. Bless us and those who will learn of Your love through our giving today.

03 March 2018Outreach and Local Church Budget

AZERBAIJAN — Ana wept quietly on the bus ride to the city graveyard. A woman sat down nearby and whispered comforting words to Ana “There’s hope, even in death,” she said. “Jesus will come again.” The woman gave Ana a card with an address on it and told her about a church where she could go to learn more.

Ana had never been inside a Christian church before, but she and her daughter, Gunel, went. They hesitated at the door, but a church greeter welcomed them warmly.

After the service, Ana described the woman she had met on the bus, but no one knew anyone matching the description. “Perhaps you have met an angel,” the pastor said.

Ana and Gunel began studying the Bible with the pastor, and in time they were baptized into the Adventist Church. Now they host a small-group meeting in their home. Their lives have been changed by a woman who whispered words of comfort and invitation to Ana on a bus.

Appeal: God has thousands of ways to bring people to Himself, including whispered words. Faithfully returning God’s tithe and giving our offerings support outreach in many ways. Today’s offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: ather, bless us as we become channels of Your gifts and Your love. May we reach those who need to meet You.

UNNAMED REGION — In some regions it's dangerous to send a missionary—or even to become a Christian. In such places media such as radio or the Internet may be the only means to reach people with the gospel.

Adventist World Radio received an e-mail from Amin, a 19-year-old youth living in one of these regions. Amin asked for a Bible so he could learn about Jesus. AWR sent him an Internet link to a Bible in his language. A few weeks later Amin responded, "Every day I read the Bible. I've accepted Jesus as my Savior."

Two months later Amin e-mailed again saying his family had learned of his new faith. "My father took my computer and threatened me if I follow Jesus. The police threatened me and called me a terrorist for following Jesus. I may be taken to prison soon. Pray for me. I love Jesus and am ready to die for Him."

That was the last message Amin sent. Only God knows what happened to him.

Appeal: Adventist World Radio, one of the church's media ministries, continues to shine the light of truth into the darkest of places around the world. Your faithful stewardship benefits these ministries too. Today's offering is for Adventist World Radio and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we don't always know the sacrifices believers make for their faith. Bless them as they share their faith, and bless us as we give to support Your work around the world.

17 March 2018

Local Church Budget

CUBA — Hector couldn't back his cement truck close enough to the building site to pour the cement into the foundation forms. He watched a line of men, women, and children approach his cement truck carrying cooking pots and buckets. He realized that they planned to hand carry tons of cement to the building site!

"What kind of building is this?" Hector asked in amazement. When he learned that it was an Adventist church, Hector wanted to know more. A member gave him a Bible, and soon he was spending all his free time reading it. He shared with his family what he was learning about God, and soon the family began attending the Adventist church. Eventually they were baptized.

When Hector lost his job because of the Sabbath, he was invited to share his faith in another town. Within a year 20 people were attending a house church, and the number continued to grow.

Hector has moved to another town to plant a church. "We must do everything we can to help people be ready to meet Jesus," Hector said. Because of dedicated lay people like Hector, God's work in Cuba is moving forward rapidly.

Appeal: Our tithes and offerings support God's work in more than 200 countries. Your faithfulness in returning God's tithe and giving offerings will help our church reach out to others here and around the world. Today's offering goes to the Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for sharing with us so that we can in turn share with others. Bless our giving today as it works to bring many to Jesus.

ECUADOR — Jordy's family has suffered much, but 12-year-old Jordy feels blessed. His mother has a painful disease and can't walk, and his father lost his job because taking care of his wife takes much of his time. "When we can't see how we'll manage, we give our worries to God and let Him handle things. I know He won't forget us," he says.

Jordy doesn't like to dwell on his family's problems. He wants to talk about how God has blessed them. When a pastor asked him to preach in church, he wasn't sure he could do it. But he prayed and God blessed him. "It changed my life!" he says. Now Jordy loves to tell others what God can do in their lives. "I want everyone to know that God loves them and has a plan for their lives. I tell them that they are God's children; they just don't know it yet." Jordy has dedicated his life to God and he invites us to do the same.

Appeal: When we allow God to control our lives completely, giving to His cause becomes a joy. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, give us the spirit of trust and joy that Jordy has, to live for You. Bless those who will benefit from today's offerings.

31 March 2018

Local Church Budget

INDIA — Mary worked for a wealthy woman. When Mary learned that the pastor who had baptized her was holding meetings in town, she invited her employer to attend. The woman went, and when the evangelist gave an altar call, the wealthy woman accepted Jesus as her Savior.

She told the evangelist, "I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior tonight, not because of the eloquent words you spoke, but because of the influence of Mary, my faithful worker. Her life is adorned by acts of kindness and unselfishness and love for others. When my daughter died, Mary comforted me and read Bible promises that gave me hope of life beyond the grave. It was Mary's sweet, Christian life that has led me to the foot of the cross of Christ." Mary is a true evangelist, for she lives the gospel.

How many people would find Christ at the foot of the cross if we lived more like God's humble servant Mary?

Appeal: Our love for God is reflected in our actions and attitudes, including how willingly we reach out to others who need to know Jesus. Our offering today will reach out to our local community through our Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we love You and want to serve You in every way. Bless us as we bless others through our generosity today.

CHINA — Pan lives in the mountains of southwestern China. He loves to sing. One day he heard singing inside a building and stopped to listen. He was invited inside and discovered an Adventist church. Members gave him a songbook and some tracts.

One day, Pan was so engrossed in reading a tract that he forgot about his sheep. When he looked up, the sheep were gone! Pan searched for the sheep as rain clouds gathered. Then he remembered that God knows everything—even where his sheep were. He knelt and prayed. When he opened his eyes, his flock surrounded him. Pan returned to the village and told everyone about God's miracle.

Pan's faith in God grew, and he was baptized. He went from village to village establishing house churches. Hundreds have been baptized because of Pan's witness.

God has a thousand ways to reach the hearts of searching souls. For Pan it was his love of music.

Appeal: God could reach every soul on earth Himself, but He wants to involve each one of us in His mission—Total Member Involvement. When we faithfully return God's tithe and give freewill offerings, we help take the message of God to every person on earth. Today's offering will help fund Outreach and our Local Church Budget.

Prayer: God, thank You for giving us a place in Your mission field. May these offerings help to further Your work.

14 April 2018

Global Mission Offering and Local Church Budget

BULGARIA — Antonia and her sister Silvia of Sofia, Bulgaria, have long dreamed of creating a nonthreatening setting where they could reach out to people and make friends for Jesus.

Inspired by Jesus' command to be the salt of the earth, they launched the Salted Café in their home city. It combines a café, juice bar, and bakery with a Christian library and bookstore and a venue for social events. Beautiful posters share Bible texts that encourage and inspire customers while a pastoral team presents Bible topics, cooking classes, and relationship seminars.

"We want to follow Jesus' example of mingling with people and meeting their needs and only then inviting them on a journey with God," said Silvia.

Openly Christian and friendly, the Salted Café is listed on major tourist Web sites for vegetarian and vegan food. It is also a doorway for clients to taste and thirst for more of the gospel.

Appeal: Urban Centers of Influence, like this café, serve as a platform for putting Christ's method of ministry into practice. Our faithful offerings today for the World Mission will help more people around the world meet Jesus through Urban Centers of Influence.

Prayer: Jesus, we know that all heaven is smiling when we put into practice Your method of ministry. Inspire us to give generously to help fund more Centers of Influence around the world.

PHILIPPINES — Roberto is a baker who hungered for a closer walk with God. When two Christian laymen visited Roberto's home, Roberto offered them the use of a room in his home to hold Bible studies. Then he invited customers and friends to attend the Bible studies.

Roberto felt peace as he studied with the laymen. When he learned that Sunday was not the Sabbath day, Roberto decided to keep the Bible Sabbath. But his wife objected. "Saturday is our most profitable day," she pointed out. "How will you pay the loan if you close the bakery on Saturdays?" But Roberto was determined to obey God. He closed the bakery on Sabbath, and to his wife's surprise, they made more money in six days than they had made in seven.

Roberto prayed for God's leading and was baptized. In time his wife gave her life to Christ as well. "God has blessed us as we follow Him," Roberto says.

Appeal: God asks us to give Him our lives and a portion of our income. Knowing what He has done for us, can we do any less for Him than obey? Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for promising to bless us as we obey You. Bless these, Your tithe and our offerings, to further your work at home and around the world.

28 April 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

NEW CALEDONIA — The tiny South Pacific island nation of New Caledonia lies 1,000 miles east of Australia. The easternmost island in New Caledonia is Mare. It is home to about 6,000 people.

A pastor visited the island to hold a series of evangelistic meetings sponsored in part by outreach funds from the world church. Some 200 people from across the island attended the evangelistic meetings. Following the meetings, a new group of believers began meeting on Sabbaths to prepare for baptism.

The island's mission is preparing to build a chapel so that these tender new seeds of faith can grow strong and root deeply in one of the farthest corners of the world. The new believers on the island of Mare in New Caledonia thank you for helping them discover God's plan for their lives.

Appeal: Part of our offerings, given regularly throughout the year, help to establish or further God's mission in places such as New Caledonia. Let's continue to give systematic, percentage-based offerings on our income, so that more people around the world can hear the message of God's love. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for a church that cares for every corner of Your vineyard. Give us generous hearts to reach those who have not yet heard that Jesus is coming soon.

FIJI — Mere started a children’s Bible club in a village where no Adventists lived. The club grew so large that they had to move to a larger building. Susi attended the Bible club until her grandmother wouldn’t let her go anymore. But Susi often sneaked away and listened through the windows.

Then Mere could no longer go to the village to hold the Bible club meetings. She wondered what happened to the children she had taught. Years later Mere visited the village, which now has an Adventist church. She heard a young woman say, “When I was little, a woman held a Bible club for children. My grandmother wouldn’t let me attend, so I stood outside and listened. I remembered what this woman taught us, and when Adventists came to hold meetings, I joined the church. My husband and children are Adventists today.”

After church, Susi told Mere that most of the children from the Bible club were Adventists. Mere rejoiced as she realized that her Bible club had planted many seeds that grew into a beautiful harvest for God.

Appeal: We never know how a person’s life can be changed by something we say or do. Our offerings speak for us to people around the world. Today’s offering is for Outreach and the Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, speed Your tithes and our offerings to those who need to hear of Your love.

12 May 2018

KENYA — Cheporai and her husband have three little girls and one baby boy. Like all parents, they want what's best for their kids. But unlike most, they didn't know if they would be able to feed their children today. A severe drought has killed the garden that supplied their food and the cows and goats that supplied their income.

Cheporai shares the pain any mother would feel. "I really feel hurt when the children cry for food. I am helpless. There is nothing worse than not being able to feed your children."

ADRA was able to help Cheporai and her little ones with an emergency food supply, but there are millions more people in East Africa who are facing famine and need help right now. Just like the natural disasters that ADRA responds to, hunger can devastate families and communities in a short amount of time, and the most vulnerable are children like Cheporai's precious little ones.

Appeal: We are blessed to share today's offering with ADRA for Disaster and Famine relief. Many wait to give until a disaster hits or when lives are already being lost to famine, but today is your opportunity to prevent a tragedy from becoming worse.

Prayer: Dear Father, we turn our eyes to You today. You are our hope in times of distress and our strength when we feel that we alone are not enough.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA — Each week Pastor Rao took the tithes and offerings from his churches to the mission office. As he made his way along the narrow road, four men jumped out wielding weapons. “Give us your money!” they demanded.

“This is God’s money,” the pastor warned.

“Give it to us!” the robbers ordered.

The bandits grabbed the money bag and fled. Pastor Rao reported the theft and asked the office staff to pray that the thieves would repent.

The next week as Pastor Rao walked the same road, the thieves appeared carrying a bag. One man thrust the bag at him and said, “Here! Take this money! When we tried to buy some beer, our hands shook so much that we couldn’t open the bag.”

“God loves you,” Pastor Rao said. “He has a better life planned for you.” The men eventually gave their hearts to God and were baptized. Today they are living the better life that Pastor Rao described to them.

Appeal: If we withhold God’s tithe from Him, we are as guilty of theft as these thieves. Let’s always return to God what is His and give our offerings freely in addition. Today’s offering goes to Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, bless those who give their best to You, and bless those who will hear about You because we’ve been faithful.

HAITI — Roseline felt rich. She had three cows, and the cow she had dedicated to God was about to give birth. Then God's cow was stolen.

On her way to town to report the theft, Roseline met her pastor. "God's cow has been stolen," she said. "Please pray that the thief will return her, because she belongs to God." The pastor agreed.

The next day Roseline hurried to the pastor's house. "God's cow is back home!" she said, excited. "The thief brought her back. He said that something about that cow troubled him, and he couldn't stand it. So he brought the cow back! He even apologized for taking her. I told the man that the cow belongs to God, and God was troubling the thief." Then Roseline hurried to town to report that the cow had been returned.

God's cow gave birth to a healthy calf, and when the calf was old enough, she sold the cow and gave the money to God.

Appeal: Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, but God's people there give generous offerings. We must do no less. Today's offering is for Outreach and the Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we return what is Yours and we give to You our hearts and our offerings of lovUse them to bless thousands here at home and around the world.

AUSTRALIA — Ryan looked forward to his seventh birthday and his party—not for the gifts he would receive, but for the money his friends would give him for his family’s mission project.

Ryan’s family was going to Vanuatu [van-oo-AH-too], an island nation in the South Pacific, to tell people about Jesus, and they needed books and literature to share. He would buy those supplies with his birthday money. After his birthday, Ryan and his mom went shopping at the Adventist Book Center. They bought a suitcase full of books, pamphlets, and Bible study guides for Vanuatu.

Ryan’s family held two one-week series of meetings for children. More than 100 children came—and some brought their parents. The people were so happy to receive the books and materials that Ryan’s family gave them.

Ryan was thrilled. “I know now that even though I’m just a boy, I can do lots of things for Jesus!”

Appeal: Our offerings support mission outreach, including literature in many languages, for people around the world. Today’s offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: God of all creation, give us a sense of the need to finish Your work and what we can do to support outreach in every land and every language.

BULGARIA — Tatiana was a physics and astronomy professor who was convinced that God doesn't exist.

Then her brother became a Christian and tried to convince her to give God a chance, but she refused to listen. He mailed her Bible studies and literature, but she refused to open the envelopes.

One day Tatiana decided to read what her brother had sent so she could show him the errors of his beliefs. She opened several envelopes and read through the lessons. They aroused her interest, so she filled in the study sheets. She found herself looking forward to receiving each lesson.

She began reading the Bible and visited the little Adventist church in her city. For the first time in her life Tatiana experienced the presence of God. She and her brother talked about her experiences, and the two prayed together. Stubborn Tatiana realized she had fallen in love with Jesus.

Appeal: A praying brother and literature provided by the Adventist church had helped Tatiana find Jesus. Imagine what God can do with your offerings! Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget to help our local church reach out to our community.

Prayer: Father, thank You for using our humble offerings to work miracles around the world. Bless them and those who will hear about You because we've given as You've asked.

CAMBODIA — The villagers living around Spirit Hill planted their rice crops as usual. The rice grew quickly in the fertile soil. Then cut worms invaded the area, eating the tender roots and killing the plants. The once-green rice fields were dry and brown—except those belonging to Mr. Ee. His rice stood green and healthy.

“How did you keep the worms out of your rice?” the people asked him. Ee told the people about the living God who has power to keep evil away.

When Ee harvested his fields, he had twice as much yield as other years. He took his rice tithe to the church, along with several families who wanted to learn about Ee’s God.

The seeds of truth sprouted in other villages as well, and two Branch Sabbath Schools opened as a result of Mr. Ee’s God-protected rice. Today an Adventist church stands on a hill in Ee’s village, a testimony to God’s faithfulness.

Appeal: God is faithful to us. Are we faithful to Him? Today’s offering is for the Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we praise You for Your faithfulness and ask that You will bless Your tithes and our offerings so they may help finish Your work.

**Sabbath
25**

23 June 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

BENIN — A small group of believers worshiped in a fishing village in Benin—until a thief joined the church. Francis, the thief, had led a gang of bandits. One Sabbath, some Adventists on their way to a Bible study met Francis. They shared their faith with him and offered to study the Bible with him. Francis agreed, and in time he began attending the church.

When some villagers saw Francis in the church's canoe, they hauled him off to jail. The believers, however, urged the authorities to release Francis. The police agreed, but warned Francis that if he broke the law, he would be thrown into prison.

Francis' gang wanted Francis back and even threatened to steal the church's canoe unless Francis came back to the gang. But Francis demanded that they leave the Christians alone.

Francis was baptized and became a leader in the church and a trusted worker in the village. The church grew after Francis became an Adventist.

Appeal: Your mission offerings helped this congregation build a simple church that shines as a light to a dark community leading others like Francis to the love of God. And your offerings continue to make a difference in the lives of thousands every day. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for showing us the thousands of ways You use our offerings to reach others for God. Bless these offerings to help finish Your work around the world.

INDIA — The mission needed 50 lay evangelists to share God’s love, and Sang volunteered.

“But Sang,” the pastor said, “you can’t read or write. How will you take notes during the training program? How will you give Bible studies?”

“My daughter, Susi, will take notes for me,” Sang answered. “I will memorize the Bible studies.”

The pastor agreed, and Sang and Susi completed the training program. They were assigned to a village.

The two visited every home in their new village, praying for people and sharing God’s love. A month later Sang asked for a pastor to conduct evangelistic meetings. Surprised, the pastor visited the village and saw many interested people. Meetings were scheduled, and Sang brought the people with whom he had studied. At the close of the meetings 100 new believers were baptized. Sang rejoiced that God had used him, an illiterate man, to build up His kingdom.

Appeal: od can use anyone to share His message with others. The only requirement is a willing heart. God uses His tithe and our offerings to spread His message too. Today’s offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for trusting us to spread Your message of redemption around the world. Bless our efforts and our offerings that they may complete Your work on earth.

07 July 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

MADAGASCAR — “God is more powerful than your spirit,” the visitor said. Ravel eyed the younger man doubtfully. Ravel had served a spirit power for more than 50 years. He used his powers for good and had thought they were from God.

Ravel attended the evangelistic meetings. He wanted to learn for himself where his powers came from. Soon he was convinced that his power was not from God. With help from the pastor, Ravel prayed that God would overpower the demon spirits and send them away, then he invited the Holy Spirit to enter his home and bless him.

Word spread quickly that Ravel had given up his spirits and become an Adventist. From that day on, Ravel has served only God. He prays that God will use the time he has left to lead others out of darkness and into God’s light.

Appeal: God’s tithe and our offerings help bring God’s light to darkened souls around the world. How much light are you willing to bring to those who still live in darkness? Today’s offering is for Outreach/Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we dedicate our lives and our goods to You and ask You to use these offerings to bring light to many.

CHINA — Lai and Ping are church planters in rural China where many villagers are steeped in local traditions. They met Mei, a local woman, who asked them, “Who is Jesus, and what is a Christian?” Lai and Ping patiently taught Mei about the Creator God who loves her and came to earth to save her from her sins. Mei’s heart rejoiced to learn about God’s love. But her husband objected to her desire to worship God. He hit her, yelled insults, snatched her Bible from her, and blocked the doorway to prevent her from going to a worship service. Mei prayed that God would soften her husband’s heart. Just then a man came to the house to see her husband, and Mei hurried out the door to worship with the small group of believers.

Mei’s husband is still strong in his traditional beliefs, but he now allows her to worship God. Meanwhile, others in the village have joined Mei in accepting Jesus as their personal Savior.

Appeal: Adventist frontline workers such as Lai and Ping often work under difficult conditions. Faithfully returning God’s tithe and giving regular, percentage-based offerings on our income will help take the message of Jesus’ love to the unreached corners of the world. Today’s offering is for the World Mission Budget and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for faithful frontline missionaries. Bless them and those they can introduce to Jesus because of the offerings we give.

21 July 2018

Local Church Budget

BELGIUM — Paul loves Adventurers, but his father refused to enter any church, so Paul's uncle took him. Paul's mother began taking Paul to see what he was learning. She praised the leaders for the values they were teaching her son.

When Paul's mother couldn't attend Paul's investiture program, she asked her husband to take him. In spite of his promise to never enter a church, Paul's father attended the investiture program. He was impressed with what the children were learning and began taking Paul to Adventurers. And when his wife asked to take Bible studies, he didn't object.

Paul's father told the Adventurers leader, "I still don't believe, but what you're teaching these children is a good thing."

Appeal: God works in the hearts of parents through the lives of their children and programs such as Pathfinders and Adventurers. Our offerings are helping to make this possible. Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for showing us how You can reach people through our children. Bless this offering and those who will benefit from it.

CAMEROON — Salomé believes in returning God's tithe and giving offerings to Him as well. She planted 11 rows of lettuce—one row for tithe, a half-row for offerings, and the rest to use or sell. She watered and weeded and prayed over her garden.

At harvest time, God's lettuce was larger and healthier than hers. And she sold God's lettuce for far more than her own. Salomé sensed the devil tempting her to refigure her tithe based on total sales instead of His designated rows. But she determined to give all the money from God's lettuce to Him.

The next season she again planted her garden exactly as she had done before. But this time God's lettuce was smaller than hers. Salomé realized that God was blessing her for her faithfulness to Him. She gave God His portion—plus a big thank-you offering from her portion of the harvest.

Appeal: God blesses us when we're faithful to Him. Let's never cut short our blessings by shortchanging God. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: God, You bless us in so many ways. Thank You for allowing us to return Your blessings through Your tithes and our offerings.

GAMBIA — Peter was a Global Mission pioneer planting a church in a remote community. He and his wife lived among the people, ate with them, helped the young men herd their cows and milk them.

Peter taught the villagers to read, write, and do basic mathematics. Then he bought Bibles to use as textbooks. The villagers were thrilled.

One day the religious leader of that community told Peter, “No one has helped our village as you have. I have two sons. The son on my right hand will become the next religious leader. The son on my left is for you; make him a Christian.”

Today most of the villagers are Adventist Christians. And one of the leader’s sons became an Adventist pastor. Peter used Jesus’ methods: He mingled with the people, loved them, and helped them. As friendships developed, the people accepted the message of the Bible. The methods used by Jesus still work today.

Appeal: Our regular offerings help strengthen the church around the world. Today’s offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, make us sensitive to the needs of those around us and generous with our time and our material blessings so that many others will meet You.

MIDDLE EAST — A Hope Channel viewer in a difficult-to-reach region sent a message to the station’s Web site saying, “Hope Channel has comforted me during my time of mourning. I especially appreciate one program that introduced me to Jesus. I also learned about the Holy Spirit. I didn’t know there was a Holy Spirit before. Now I know that He is the One who comforts me. I know that He is with me wherever I go.

“I live among people who don’t believe in Jesus. If they learn that I have accepted Jesus as my Savior, they may kill me. In spite of that, I feel happiness and peace. I have found a treasure that I will never give up. I used to be so afraid, but now I am not afraid of anything.”

Appeal: The Adventist Church blesses the world through many forms of outreach—education, community services, radio and television, and many more. Many of these outreach ministries receive support from our offerings. Let’s give generously for the Outreach and Local Church Budget offering today so that others can hear that Jesus loves them and is coming soon.

Prayer: Father, we are so blessed to know You and to experience Your love. Thank You that through the offerings we give today searching souls will find Jesus.

18 August 2018

Local Church Budget

USA — Dina grew up in a Jewish home and wanted to raise her own children in the Jewish faith as well. But when she took her children to the local synagogue on Sabbath, one of the synagogue leaders told Dina that her children’s fidgeting disturbed the service. Saddened, Dina decided to stay home for worship on Sabbath.

Then a friend told Dina about the Adventist Messianic Center in town. Dina had never heard of Adventists and was not sure what a Messianic Center was, but she decided to visit. She and her children were warmly welcomed.

Dina was impressed with the message that Rabbi Jeff presented. Dina wanted to know more about the Scriptures, so she joined a Bible study class. “Now I know that Yeshua [Jesus] is the Messiah,” she said. Dina was baptized into the Beth-El Shalom congregation of Seventh-day Adventists. “I thank God that I now know Yeshua as my Savior,” Dina says.

Appeal: Our faithful offerings reach out to searching hearts wherever they are. Today’s offering focus is our Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Lord, use our offerings to reach someone for Jesus. Bless those who give You their hearts as well as their offerings.

MYANMAR — Thang is a teacher in a village so isolated that people must walk for days to reach the nearest road. The villagers are animists. Thang considered himself a Christian, but he didn't know much about the Bible.

Thang's only contact with the outside world is his shortwave radio. One day he discovered Adventist World Radio. As he listened, the love of God touched his life. Thang began sharing what he was learning with his students. He taught them songs and told them stories about Jesus that he had learned on the radio. The children told their parents, and parents asked to know more about God. Thang's enthusiasm for God bubbled over. He wrote a letter to the radio station asking for someone to come and teach the people more about Jesus. While the villagers wait, Thang's radio and the Holy Spirit continue to be their teachers.

Appeal: God has a thousand ways to reach hungry souls with the gospel of Christ. God's tithes and our offerings support evangelism in every form around the world. Today's offering goes to Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for allowing us to have a part in Your great work. Use our gifts today to bring searching souls to Jesus.

01 September 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

HONDURAS — Julia Rodrigues thanked her friend Tina for a copy of Signs of the Times that Tina had given her. Julia couldn't read, but she asked her husband to read it to her, and he agreed. Tina visited the couple and read the Bible to them. Eventually the couple and their daughter were baptized. They were the only Adventists in their village.

Julia memorized the Bible lessons and visited door-to-door searching for people interested in studying the Bible. In time 30 people with whom she had studied were baptized.

Julia continues to hike the mountain trails searching for those who need to respond to God's call. She still doesn't read, but she invites people to follow along in their Bibles as she quotes texts and guides them through the truths that she loves.

Through her persistent prayers and hard work, Julia's church in her little village in Honduras continues to grow.

Appeal: Let us give so that people like Julia can continue to find Jesus. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, give us a desire to share Your message as Julia does. Help us to be generous with our time and our funds so that others can know the truths we know and love.

UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITIES — Following a massive, nationwide evangelistic campaign in Rwanda more than 110,000 people responded to God’s message of love by being baptized. This unprecedented response left church leaders with a daunting problem: they didn’t have enough churches to house the new believers or the money to supply the need. Failure to meet this urgent need would mean that many new believers might drift back to their former lives.

When God presents unexpected mission opportunities such as Rwanda’s unprecedented response to the gospel, the church must act quickly to meet the need. The Unusual Opportunities Fund was established to respond rapidly to these unique opportunities. Just one month after the meetings ended, work started on 1,000 new church buildings—but many more are needed!

Appeal: Will you do your part to speed up the work of the gospel through faithful stewardship? Today’s offering will fund Unusual Opportunities projects through the World Mission Budget.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, we know You love a cheerful giver. Move us, we pray, to respond with speed to Your call to give generously to further Your work.

SOMALIA — Awil fled war-torn Somalia and lived as a refugee in a nearby country. One day his brother came to visit him, and Awil learned that his brother had become a Christian. Awil knew almost nothing about Christianity and listened with interest to his brother's testimony. His brother left to visit the family in Somalia, but he was killed in crossfire at the border.

Awil was devastated by his brother's death. Among his brother's belongings he found a Bible. He began reading it and became convinced that the Christians' God is the true God.

One day Awil heard a Somali-language Christian radio program. He began listening regularly and requested a Bible correspondence course offered by Adventist World Radio. In time he was baptized.

Awil began producing radio scripts for the Somali-language broadcasts. He is eager to see the joy on his brother's face when he learns that the Bible he left behind on his ill-fated trip to Somalia became the means by which God touched Awil's life.

Appeal: God can use anything—and anyone—to lead someone to Christ. Our faithful returning of God's tithe and giving of offerings fund hundreds of outreach ministries around the world. Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, help us to give as willingly as Jesus did when He gave His life for us.

UKRAINE — An Adventist woman visiting her neighbors, pressed the doorbell at one home. An angry woman opened the door and shouted, “Why did you ring my doorbell?”

“I’m sorry,” the woman apologized. “I came to give you this literature and encourage you. May I pray with you?”

The angry woman relaxed and invited the visitor inside. Inside the house the visitor saw another woman sitting on the floor amid several open bottles of pills. She realized that these two women had planned to commit suicide! The visitor shared her faith in Christ and encouraged the women to give their troubles to God.

The once-angry woman said, “I think God sent you to my door. Please pray for us.”

The visitor prayed with the women and assured them that no problem was too great for God. The three women parted as friends, rejoicing in God’s perfect timing.

Months later the Adventist woman learned that these two women had given their hearts to God and now share their faith with others.

Appeal: God calls us to give our time as well as our money to share His love with others. Today’s offering goes to the Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, as You’ve blessed us, use us to bless others through our gifts of time and material blessings.

BRAZIL — Fernando lives in a ghetto in Brazil. He was often in trouble at school and in the neighborhood. Once on a dare, he grabbed onto the back of a moving truck, but he fell off and almost died. Many people said Fernando was a lost cause.

Then a neighbor invited Fernando to attend Pathfinders. Fernando went, and he loved it! Soon his mother noticed that his behavior was improving. The school called less often with problems. His mother was pleased. But when Fernando asked to be baptized, his mother hesitated. That night Fernando's mother had a dream that showed her that God was working in her son's life and she must not stop him from following God.

Not long after his baptism, the boy whom many called a "lost cause" led his parents to the Lord. Pathfinders had changed Fernando—and his whole family—forever.

Appeal: Pathfinders and other youth-oriented activities of the church are proven and successful outreach tools to win—and help keep—our young people on the path God has laid for them. Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, bless Your tithe and our offerings and the purposes for which they are given.

FIJI — While holding evangelistic meetings in Fiji, Pastor Suka found that attendance was far lower than the team had expected. Then he learned that meetings coincided with a popular television program. The team prayed that God would reach the people with His message.

The next evening Pastor Suka noticed people running back and forth between nearby houses. Later he learned that the public-address system was interfering with local television reception, and the people trying to watch the TV show were hearing the evangelistic meetings instead. The people were more puzzled than angry. Pastor Suka checked the audio system and found it was operating properly.

The same thing happened the next night and throughout the evangelistic series. With no competition from television, people began attending the evangelistic meetings. When people from nearby villages heard about the television sets broadcasting the meetings, they also came.

As a result of God's "interference," almost 100 people were baptized in that area.

Appeal: God has many creative ways to bring people to Christ. Our offerings help make mission possible. Today's offering is for Outreach projects and our Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, we stand amazed at the ways You bring people to Jesus. Bless our offerings today so that many more in our community and around the world can hear Your call to "follow Me."

13 October 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

CHINA — When Lin became a Christian, she began inviting people to her home to study the Bible and worship. Her group had grown to nearly 100 and caught the attention of the police, who threatened them with prison. Half the group's members stopped attending, but the others refused to leave.

The police jailed Lin without filing charges. She was not allowed to have a Bible, so her husband wrote Bible texts on a blanket and sent it to her. Lin shared her faith with other prisoners, and soon so many prisoners accepted Jesus as their Savior that the police released Lin early so she could not convert them all!

Soon Lin's group of believers was meeting in her home again. While officials have not changed their stance toward house churches and small groups, they have learned that jailing Lin will not stop her, for even in prison she will share her love for God with others.

Appeal: We can share our faith by going to others, by praying, and by giving. Today's offering is for Outreach Projects and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for giving us a part in the Great Commission. Help us to share our testimony with others and our resources with You for Your work.

GHANA — Rafael was a new believer when some coworkers asked him to drive them to a funeral 225 miles away. Rafael agreed. Before they left, Rafael prayed for safety. But his companions laughed.

The journey took them on rough roads, and Rafael prayed often. His friends mocked him. Suddenly the car jerked off the road. The right front wheel had come off!

The men couldn't find parts to repair the car, so they lifted the car and pushed the wheel back into place. Rafael tied the wheel on with nylon rope. Again he prayed for safety, and this time the men did not mock him. They started slowly down the road.

They never did find a mechanic who could fix the car, so after the funeral the men drove home—some 350 miles on a rope and many prayers.

Rafael's companions no longer mock him. Some even discuss religion with him. God's miracle strengthened Rafael's faith and showed others the power of God and the effectiveness of prayer.

Appeal: We may smile at the way God touches some hearts and leads people to Himself. He asks us to partner with Him by returning His tithe and giving generous offerings to support His work around the world. Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, give us faith to know that we can trust You to be faithful to us as we obey Your voice.

27 October 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

RUSSIA — Jodie and Greg taught English in northernmost Russia. Alexander, one of their students, openly argued for his belief in logic rather than God. One day as he and Jodie walked past the Adventist church being built nearby, Jodie commented, “The snows are late this year. The believers are praying that God will hold back the snows until the roof is on.” Alexander insisted that it was mere chance that the snows were late.

Jodie responded kindly, “I am praying that God will hold back the snow to prove to you that God really exists—and that He cares about us.” The snows held off for two more weeks until the roof was completed. The next day two feet of snow fell.

“OK, you win,” Alexander responded. Jodie smiled and said, “No, God won.’

Months later Alexander was baptized—in the same church that God had protected from the snows.

Appeal: God is always faithful. Are we? Our faithful returning of God’s tithe and giving regular offerings support the work of God throughout the world. Today’s offering goes to the Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for inviting us to be part of Your mission to the world through Your tithe and our offerings. Bless those who will learn that You love them accordingly.

CAMBODIA — Sayorn earned \$15 a month working long hours in a garment factory. When she became a Christian and learned that God asks His followers to return to Him 10 percent of their income, she asked God for help. “If You want 10 percent of my earnings, Lord, please find me a better job.” And God did! Her wages increased as she faithfully returned His tithe.

Her job required her to work seven days a week. When she learned about the Sabbath, she panicked. She was paid by the piece for her work and didn’t know how she could survive if she lost so much of her earnings. She decided to work on Sabbath, but her needle kept breaking, and she earned nothing that day. She asked God to forgive her and provide her with work that allowed her to have Sabbaths off! He answered her prayer, and she now earns more in six days than she did in seven.

“God is so good,” she says. “We must tell everyone that He cares for us!”

Appeal: Our offerings help do just that—tell everyone that God is good and wants the best for us. Today’s offering is for Global Mission and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for testimonies like Sayorn’s, for helping us conquer by obeying You. Bless our offerings and Your tithe today, to further Your cause.

10 November 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

NIGERIA — Onifade (O-ni-FAH-deh) and three of his friends are Global Mission pioneers in a city in southwestern Nigeria. Each day they work in different parts of the city where they meet people, share food when they can, and help those who are ill or injured to get medical care. And then they tell the people that Jesus has sent them to love and serve them in His name. They face challenges that make their work difficult and wish that they had more Bibles and literature, as well as basic medical and agricultural skills to help the people.

God is blessing their efforts to make friends for Jesus. When they arrived in this city, only a handful of Seventh-day Adventists worshiped there. But by following Christ's method of ministry, they've raised up a strong group of believers.

Not everyone is happy to see Christians in their midst. Pray that God will bless these pioneers' efforts and that people will see God's love through them.

Appeal: Your sacrificial gifts will supply Global Mission pioneers like Onifade with much-needed support to reach the communities in which they work. Today's offering is for Outreach and Local Church Budget

Prayer: Father, our Global Mission pioneers continue to make great sacrifices to be laborers in Your field. Their needs are great. Please bless our sacrificial offerings to help equip pioneers such as these to reach even more people with Your love.

INDIA — Ram loved to read. One day he found a book that changed his life. It told exciting stories of how the world began and described a God unlike any he had ever known. It was the Bible.

Ram told friends about the Bible, but few had ever heard of it. Some even said it was a book by foreigners trying to force people to change religions. Curious, Ram asked around and found no missionaries in his town. Then a stranger approached his store. Ram asked if he was a missionary.

“Yes,” the man replied, introducing himself as Ravi. Ram told him of his discovery and his search for God. Although Ravi lived a distance away, he offered to return and visit Ram and teach him more. In time Ram accepted Jesus as his Savior. He was eager to close his shop and teach others about his new friend, Jesus. Today Ram is a Global Mission pioneer shepherding a small group of new believers not far from his former shop.

Appeal: Faithfully returning God’s tithes and giving our offerings helps support pastors and lay workers such as Ravi and Ram in previously unentered areas around the world. Today’s offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: God of love, we thank You for allowing us to have a part in Your mission to save the world. Bless our gifts to You so they will further that work.

24 November 2018

Outreach and Local Church Budget

PAPUA NEW GUINEA — For weeks, warriors from two villages had terrorized a certain mountainous area, burning houses, destroying crops, and killing people.

A village located between the warring tribes suffered the most. Fearing for their lives, the villagers fled the area. But Alo, a young Adventist, stayed behind to guard the precious little Adventist church.

One day Alo heard an advancing war party. He could see their lighted torches as they approached the church. He knew the warriors planned to burn the church. Alo fell to his knees, praying for God's help.

Suddenly the sky darkened as a huge cloud of bees swarmed toward the warriors. The warriors fled into the bush, swatting wildly at the stinging bees.

Word spread throughout the highlands of Papua New Guinea that the warring bees had saved the Adventist church. The believers returned and held a praise service. "God sent His angels in the form of bees to save our church!" they proclaimed!

Appeal: God will fight for us when we honor Him by returning our tithes and giving our offerings. Today's offerings will go to the Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for fighting for us. Help us to trust You with every part of our lives.

CAMEROON — Moïse was single and lived with his mother. He drove taxi in Cameroon to earn a living. An Adventist friend often talked to him about God. As Moïse began to understand the importance of the Sabbath, he quit driving his taxi on Saturdays. He went to church and evangelistic meetings, where he gave his life to Christ.

Moïse's mother objected when he said he wanted to become an Adventist. And when he was baptized, she ordered him to leave her home. Moïse moved out and gave up driving a taxi to become a literature evangelist. His passion for sharing God's message with others was contagious, and when his mother saw how God was changing his life, she began attending the Adventist church.

God called Moïse to prepare for the ministry. He is studying at Cosendai Adventist University in Cameroon, a new university that benefits from the church's offerings.

Appeal: In Africa and around the world newly established Adventist universities need our support to grow strong. Our faithful offerings help further the work of God through education as well as evangelism. Today the offering goes to Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: ather, give us a vision for what You want us to do to help Your work through our offerings and our prayers.

08 December 2018

INDONESIA — “I will never permit you to become a Christian!” Sofyan’s [SOHF-yahn] father yelled at him.

A friend had invited Sofyan to attend church, and Sofyan had agreed to go. The pastor read John 3:16 and spoke about God’s love. God loves me! Sofyan thought. He wanted to know more! Sofyan attended church until his father found out and sent Sofyan across the island, far from his Christian friends.

Sofyan read his family’s traditional holy book for comfort. He was amazed to read that the seventh day is the holy day of God. Excited, Sofyan searched for Christians who kept the seventh day holy. Finally, he found a man who kept the Sabbath. Sofyan asked the man many questions until he was satisfied that he had found people who worshiped God and kept holy His Sabbath day. Sofyan studied the Bible with the man and asked for baptism. Sofyan is preparing to become a pastor and teach his own people more about God, and His Son, Jesus.

Appeal: The Holy Spirit speaks to hearts around the world. Our offerings help provide the means to teach them more about God’s message of truth and love. Today’s offering is for Outreach projects and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, lead us to those in our community who need to know Your message of love, and send our offerings to those we may never meet this side of heaven.

15 December 2018

CHILE — René and José traveled to an isolated area in Chile to share God's love with the people there, and they hoped to plant a church. One day the men stopped to rest beside the road. René pulled out his guitar, and the men started singing.

A woman approached them. "You are an answer to my prayer!" she said, tears in her eyes. "This morning I prayed that God would send someone to tell me about Jesus, and He sent you." A few minutes later another woman joined the group. "Pray for me too," she said.

The men made many friends in the area. They began meeting in an orchard to teach and pray. So many came that they needed more benches. More people joined the group for worship. As winter approached, a woman opened her little house for meetings. Today some 25 people worship together in that village. Of these, 12 have been baptized. And it all started with a vision and a song.

Appeal: God has thousands of ways to reach those who are searching for Him. He asks us to partner with Him through prayer and by faithfully returning God's tithe and our offerings. Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, give us a vision of what You can do with our offerings and Your tithe.

22 December 2018

INDIA — Singh and his wife had worked for days planting 2,500 cabbage plants in their garden. The ground was so dry that almost immediately the cabbage plants began to wither. Without rain there would be no harvest.

The couple wondered which gods would answer their prayers for rain to save their cabbages. Then Singh heard someone say that the Christians' God is all-powerful. So the couple prayed to this unseen God for rain.

That night it rained. The next day they discovered that the rain had fallen only on their cabbage patch and nowhere else in the village. Singh determined to follow the Christians' God, but he didn't know how to worship Him. When Singh met an Adventist pastor, he asked him, "What must I do to be a Christian?" The pastor showed the couple what it means to follow Christ, and both were baptized.

Other villagers noted the miraculous rain, and some have asked to know more about the God who listens and answers prayers.

Appeal: God invites us to test His faithfulness as we return His tithe and our offerings of love. Today's offering goes to the Outreach and Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Make us ever faithful, Father, in returning to You what is Yours and expressing our gratitude with our offerings.

29 December 2018

NETHERLANDS — Kingsley was a Christian, but something was lacking in his life. He asked God to show him His truth. Kingsley has an Adventist friend, who invited him to church; but Saturday was a busy workday for him. Once, while visiting his friend's house, Kingsley found a red Bible. He opened it and found a section with questions and answers. He wanted a Bible like this, but his friend told him that he got it while attending evangelistic meetings.

Kingsley wasn't interested in attending meetings. When his friend invited him to an evangelistic series some weeks later, however, Kingsley went—but only to get the Bible. He learned so much during those meetings and discovered what had been missing from his life. He didn't get the Bible he'd wanted, but he got something so much better. He found God's truth. And when the pastor learned that he had wanted one of the red Bibles, he got one for him. "I treasure that Bible," Kingsley said, "but I treasure my Lord even more."

Appeal: Our offerings help fund outreach around the world and here at home. Someone is waiting to hear God's call, and we can make it happen. Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

Prayer: Father, thank You for the joy of giving and the thrill of sharing Your love with others in our community.

PURPOSE FOR THESE READINGS

These readings are meant to provide a spiritual framework and create a worshipful atmosphere for giving on Sabbath worship service before the offering is taken up, helping stewards, givers and donors to know how their faithful giving supports the gospel work at the Local Church, the South England Conference, the British Union Conference and Adventist missions globally through the General Conference.

This material may also be downloaded online from <http://sec.adventist.org.uk/departments/stewardship> or www.adventiststewardship.com on the resources page.

You can download the new Dynamic Steward app for Apple and Android for Stewardship materials. Each week's reading will also be posted on www.facebook.com/Dynamicstewards.

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GC-TED SCHEDULED SPECIAL OFFERINGS

03 February.....Newbold College Offering
10 March Adventist World Radio Offering
12 MayDisaster and Famine Relief Offering
08 SeptemberMission Offering (Unusual Opportunities)
10 November Annual Sacrifice Offering (Global Mission)

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERINGS FOR 2018

Inter-American DivisionMarch 31
North American Division.....June 30
Northern-Asia Pacific Division September 29
Southern-Asia Pacific Division December 29