Christmas Greetings from NAD President Dan Jackson – The North American Division wishes each one of you the brightest, safest and most blessed Christmas ever. May our hearts glow with the true bling of Christ's amazing love and the outpouring of His Holy Spirit and our Creator! Here's a video message from Pastor Jackson.

Changes at NAD – Sean Robinson (photo), Association Secretary in the Texico Conference, will be joining NAD to be Adventist Community Services Director of Disaster Response.

Dennis Plubell, Director for Secondary Education/Accreditation, is leaving NAD to be Vice President for Education in the North Pacific Union.

George Johnson, NAD Director of Communication, has accepted an invitation to be the Director of Integrated Marketing and Public Relations for Oakwood University.

MISSING – Pray for the safe return of Taleka Patrick, Oakwood University alumnae and graduate of a dual MD/PhD program at Loma Linda University, before starting her residency in the Borgess and Bronson Methodist Hospitals in Kalamazoo, Mich. She is the beloved daughter of Pastor Patrick and his wife, Irine, who have recently retired from ministry with Greater New York Conference. Taleka hasn't been seen since December 5. MORE. Funds are being raised for the search effort. #FindTaleka

Please renew earnest prayers for our faithful Adventist Pastor Antonio Monteiro and Bruno Amah in Togo, who, unless God grants us a miracle, will spend a second Christmas in jail after being falsely accused and imprisoned. Please encourage and try to motivate your members and friends to pray for them, to sign the petition, and send greetings to them. Share the petition, and these new 60 sec spots on Facebook and in church newsletters and bulletins: English; Spanish; Portuguese. Please remember to send encouraging greetings to them at Union du Sahal, BP 2157, Lomé, Togo, and let them know you are praying for them.

Miracle at Gate 213 update – Email addresses for NBC station managers as well as air dates and times for all the stations that will be showing Miracle at Gate 213 are posted on the Miracle at Gate 213 Facebook page and will be updated as more information is received. There is still a December 18, 2013 Special Days

December Focus: Christian Hospitality

January Focus: Friendship

Evangelism

Jan 4, Day of Prayer

Jan 19-25, Religious Liberty Week

Helpful Special Day Websites and Resources

Offerings

Jan 25, Religious Liberty

Sample Offertory Readings

What's a “Building Block?  ■ Retention of Young Adults

Watch: “Retention of Young Adults"

■ Retention of Young Adults to the Church through a revitalized campus ministries program along with Spirit-filled Church activities that engage their interest and energies.

http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=84ac041b8b705798057dab6f2&id=722b37ba18&e=3075540be8[12/19/2013 1:32:30 PM]
need for people to email the stations to ask about the show times. For some listings it says "Christmas Liturgical" as a placeholder for the time slot because they did not know it would be a family drama when they put the block in months ago. In addition, there is a Behind the Scenes video with Academy Award-Winner Louis Gossett Jr., Grammy Award-Winner Deniece Williams, and *Days of Our Lives* super couple Bill Hayes and Susan Seaforth Hayes. It's on the Facebook page and people can also watch it on YouTube.

**Adventists in the News**

- [Loma Linda University Health Disaster Response Team Joins... in Philippines](#)
- [Florida Hospital Tampa Employees Organize Mission Trip](#)
- [Oregon trail inspires a fundraiser](#)
- [Adventist, FDA pledge more collaboration](#)

**Announcements**

**Remember the NAD-wide Day of Prayer, January 4.** PDFs of bulletin inserts and a poster are available on the NAD Prayer Ministries website to use in your churches over the next two Sabbaths to draw the attention of your members to the Day of Prayer. Listen to a sermon by Dr. Frederick Russell entitled "Second Degree Faith" which may give you inspiration and illustrations for your Day of Prayer sermon on January 4.

**The North American Division offices will be closed** along with the General Conference offices for the dates of December 23-27, and January 1. There will be no *NewsPoints* until January 8.

**Resources**

**On Sale - Transforming the City (8 DVD set)**

*Urban Ministry in the New Millenium,* with over 30 hours of video of the best in Adventist leadership, will help equip pastors, church administrators, and lay leaders on every level who are looking to acquire innovative skills and unconventional tools for leading congregations in community development. The set includes segments from people such as

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**Upcoming Events:**

- Dec. 23-26 & Jan. 1, NAD/GC offices closed
- Jan. 8-18, Ten Days of Prayer Conference
- Jan. 9-12, NAD Prayer Conference
- Jan. 12-15, NAD Ministries Convention
- Jan. 24 - Feb. 2, NAD Health Summit
- Mar. 16-23, Adventist Community Services Convention (cruise)
- Mar 28-30, Children's Leadership Conference
- June 2-6, Nonprofit Leadership Certification-I Program
- June 25-27, PSI Conference on Philanthropy
- Aug. 6-9, ASI International Convention
- Sept. 8-10, Risk Management Conference
- Sept 19-21, Atlantic Union/NAD Adventist Single Adult Ministries Convention
- Sept 22-25, Nonprofit Leadership Certification-II Program
- Sept 25-28, NAD Women's Convention

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as Barry Black, Monte Sahlin, Charles Bradford and Mark Finley. Regularly: $79.95; Now: $19.95. MORE

Did you know you can start your life over again?
Fundamental Beliefs video #15 from My Way to Jesus

Just "Click" to share your beliefs: The Fundamental Beliefs videos and other updates are shared on the My Way to Jesus Facebook page and from there onto the NAD Facebook page. Both updates link back to www.MyWaytoJesus.com, NAD's "seeker site." The site offers options such as sending a prayer request, enrolling in the Discover Bible Course, watching a beliefs video, and a connection to Adventist Information Ministry where people can chat with someone about spiritual issues or things that are troubling them. "Like" these pages on Facebook, and then share the updates with your friends.

Share the Beliefs videos on your own website: Just go to www.vimeo.com/channels/didyouknow for the entire video series and click on the "Share" button in the upper right corner of a specific video for the embed code, to share on social media or email to a friend.

REACH: Alignment within the Church
Our diverse church family enriched and unified by our love for Christ and our ability to relate effectively with others so that the world will know us as a people of love

Does 20 years of writing mission and conversion stories and roughing it in jungles, flying low over civil war and guerrilla-threatened areas, lodging in primitive conditions, and so much more, qualify as a REACH ministry? You decide. Read the Spectrum interview with Charlotte Ishkanian, retired editor of our Adventist Mission Quarterly, who grew up in North America, about how she used her writing ability and dependence upon God to help her communicate and work with people of many cultures in sharing inspiration for mission with church members all over the world. She watched as the formerly North American-based mission

Dec 22-28, Please pray for the Texico Conference with 69 churches and 11,138 members.
Dec 29-Jan 4, Please pray for Bermuda Conference, with 11 churches and 3,835 members, and for Northern New England Conference, with 59 churches and 5,266 members.

Share This Newsletter
outreach of the Church changed to "from everywhere to everywhere." As someone who probably has met more missionaries than anyone in the denominational work, Charlotte's responses to the interviewer's questions will inspire and encourage and hopefully, build confidence in the way our mission donations are used, and in the people we send to do mission. MORE
Loma Linda University Health Disaster Response Team Joins with Adventist Development and Relief Agency to Help in Super Typhoon Haiyan Recovery Efforts in Philippines

digitaljournal.com/pr/1639958

Loma Linda, CA (PRWEB) December 13, 2013

A disaster response team from Loma Linda University Health (LLUH) has just returned from deployment to the Philippines where they helped in recovery efforts in the wake of Super Typhoon Haiyan.

The team members spent three weeks in the Philippines as part of a joint effort between LLUH and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to bring on-the-ground relief to typhoon survivors and lend technical expertise needed for recovery.

The team members include: Jesse C. Bliss, director and disaster response coordinator, Loma Linda University Center for Public Health Preparedness; Brett McPherson, emergency management supervisor, Loma Linda University Health Environmental Health and Safety; and Demetria Safaee, an alumna of the Global Epidemiology program at Loma Linda University School of Public Health.

The LLUH team partnered with ADRA to conduct assessments and coordinate ADRA's response program in some of the hardest hit areas of the typhoon, which struck the central part of the Philippines on Nov. 8.

More than 5,000 people were killed and more than four million remain displaced in the wake of the Super Typhoon Haiyan, considered one of the strongest storms in history.

“Our hearts are heavy from the devastating loss of life and incredible destruction caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan to the Philippines,” said Dr. Richard Hart, president of Loma Linda University Health. “We are very proud of our partnership with ADRA to assist in the monumental task of helping the Philippines and the Filipinos get back on their feet.”

LLUH has a long tradition of global outreach and partnership. Since 2010, LLUH has established a presence in Haiti to coordinate public health emergency response and provide clinical services to people impacted by a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake that hit that country.

Photo Caption: Disaster relief teams from Loma Linda University Health and Adventist Development and Relief Agency conducted extensive relief work to help the survivors of Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. In the photo, the relief teams pose for a picture with residents of Isla Gigante South, a Haiyan-affected community in the municipality of Carles, on Panay Island, Philippines.

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About Loma Linda University Health (LLUH) Loma Linda University Health includes Loma Linda University's eight professional schools, Loma Linda University Medical Center's six hospitals and more than 900 faculty physicians located in the Inland Empire of Southern California. Established in 1905, LLUH is a global leader in education, research and clinical care. It offers over 100 academic programs and provides quality health care to 40,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year. A Seventh-day Adventist organization, LLUH is a faith-based health system with a mission "to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ.”

CONTACT: Herbert Atienza; Phone: 909-558-8419; E-mail: hatienza(at)llu(dot)edu

Read the full story at http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/12/prweb11417971.htm
Florida Hospital Tampa Employees Organize Mission Trip

http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1636585

(PRWEB) December 11, 2013

Employees of Florida Hospital Tampa, as an expression of their mission to “Extend the Healing ministry of Christ,” are partnering with Insouciance Abroad, as they to embark on the first in a series of corporate-sponsored medical mission trips. While in San Ignacio, Belize participants of the mission trip will be lending their medical skills to the La Loma Luz Adventist Hospital by day and hosting community- and health-oriented radio programs on Faith FM radio in the evenings. Faith FM is the largest radio station reaching all of the 334,000 citizens of the country. Listeners can tune in by visiting http://www.faithfmbelize.com.

Insouciance Abroad is proud to be partnering with Florida Hospital Tampa, its dedicated staff and the mission they embrace. Belize is only the first in a series of mission trips, to destinations such as the Dominican Republic and Nepal that Vice President of Mission, Peter Bath hopes will become annual trips. Dr. Bath adds, “We are delighted to have Insouciance Abroad facilitate these trip as they not only attend to the minute details, they also come up with very creative and helpful suggestions that greatly enhance the experience!” For more information on Florida Hospital Tampa, their Office of Mission, upcoming mission trips or how to contribute to these trips, please contact Kristi Hale-McElroy at (813) 615-7129. Insouciance Abroad is an innovative group travel Logistics Company focused on organizing travel and tours for educational, music, church, and corporate groups both domestically and internationally. Each trip is customized to fit the group’s needs. Insouciance Abroad offers the ideal solution to planning music tours, school trips, and mission trips. For more information about Insouciance Abroad or this tour, please contact Peter Lombard directly at (888) 626-2927.

About Florida Hospital Tampa
Florida Hospital Tampa is a not-for-profit 475-bed tertiary hospital specializing in cardiovascular medicine, neuroscience, orthopaedics, women’s services, pediatrics, pulmonology, oncology, endocrinology, bariatrics, wound healing, sleep medicine and general surgery including minimally invasive and robotic-assisted procedures. Also located at Florida Hospital Tampa is the renowned Florida Hospital Pepin Heart Institute, a recognized leader in cardiovascular disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment and leading-edge research. Part of the Adventist Health System, Florida Hospital is a leading health network comprised of 23 hospitals throughout the state. For more information, visit http://www.FHTampa.org.

Read the full story at http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/12/prweb11412904.htm

Read more: http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1636585#ixzz2nwuca5os
Oregon trail inspires a fundraiser

Paradise Adventist Academy eighth-grader, Carter Nash donated money for North Korean orphans when he bought a lunch at a school fundraiser Tuesday. (Thomas Chickos/Contributed)

A rough ride through the California and Oregon trails prompted some local students to help orphans in North Korea.

Paradise Adventist Academy 8th grade teacher David Vixie takes his class out on the trails every year to give the students a sense of the hardships the early pioneers faced.

The food on the trails was less than stellar, Vixie said, and it gave the students a feeling of what it was like to be in want and in need. As such, the eighth grade class decided to hold a fundraiser to help others who may be in want and in need as well, Vixie said.

"The motto is 'buy a lunch, safe a life,'" said eighth-grader Evan Fisher, who was behind the counter ready to serve up the tasty meal featuring potstickers, Asian sauce and other traditional foods from the region. The students hosted a Korean-inspired meal for the school. A large plate went for $5 and a regular plate went for $4.

"People are dying down there," said eighth-grader Cesar Rodriguez, who was also behind the counter. "They need food and clothes. We thought if we get this going we could help them. We won't be able to help everybody, but it's one step at a time."

Fisher and Rodriguez said they know the orphans are doing without necessities and it was similar to being on the trail without access to modern food or clothing.

Vixie said the fact that the two countries "aren't the best of friends" makes the gesture all that more poignant.

He said fundraising also gives the students a chance to help, without expecting something back.

Vixie said it is something special when helping someone without expecting something in return.

He said the orphans probably won't even know who helped them and probably don't have the ability to say "thank you" to the students.

"To give to those who can't say 'thank you' comes from a special place in the heart," he said.

The trail trip put the students in a spirit of empathy, and they know what it feels like to go without, Vixie said. Paraphrasing Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," Vixie said the Christmas season is when "want and need are mostly keenly felt."

A student's mother, who did not want to be identified, has long donated to the Korean American Adventist Relief Agency. She suggested the idea to Vixie.

The money is not given directly to the North Korean government, Vixie said.

The agency, based in South Korea, works with North Korean authorities to make sure the food, clothing and other supplies go straight to the orphanage, he said.

The agency is located at 619 South New Hampshire Avenue, Los Angeles, Ca, 90005, for those who wish to donate.
Adventist, FDA pledge more collaboration

Washington Adventist Hospital and a division of the Food and Drug Administration have pledged to work together on public health projects, a loosely defined deal designed to illustrate the benefits of the hospital's proposed relocation next to the agency.

The Adventist Healthcare subsidiary and the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research agreed to find opportunities for joint research projects, chances for FDA personnel to participate in hospital care and to work together in educational programs.

Officials want the deal to underscore the upside of Washington Adventist moving, which is pending with Maryland regulators.

In official filings, Adventist executives say the move is primarily about bolstering the hospital's chances to thrive in a more accessible, larger campus, but have tried to make a key selling point of the potential benefits of blending traditional clinical hospital operations with high-end federal research. They signed a similar deal with the FDA in 2009.

"We believe continued cooperation with the FDA will further our commitment to provide the best possible health care to the communities we serve," said hospital president Joyce Newmyer.

In October, the hospital tried for the second time to obtain Maryland regulatory approval for the move.

The decision won't likely come until late next year.

Ben Fischer covers health care and law.
DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN START YOUR LIFE OVER AGAIN?

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings.

ROMANS 6:1-6
What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

COLOSSIANS 2:12, 13
having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

ACTS 16:30-33
He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized.

ACTS 22:16
And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

ACTS 2:38
Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 28:19-20
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Charlotte Ishkanian recently stepped down from her travel-fueled job editing the Adventist Church’s Mission quarterlies, because of health reasons. In this exclusive interview, she reflects on her career with Mission and shares some insights about the places she has been and people she has met.

Question: You recently stepped down as editor of the Mission quarterlies for adults and children as well as the “Inside Stories” that appear in the Adult Bible Study Guides. How long did you serve in that role?

Answer: 20 years. It was never supposed to be that long, but, well, time flies when you’re having fun.

Question: What did you like best about editing Mission?

Answer: The people I met along the way are incredible! Whether a successful businessman in Portugal or a woman with a pan of vegetables on her head in Cameroon, they exhibit God’s incredible love through their lives.

One couple moved to a poor village, where the wife was the only one who could read. She began teaching first the children, then the adults to read and sign their name. She taught them using the Bible, and in teaching them, she led many in that village to Christ. Her husband worked with the men in the fields, hoeing and harvesting as he told them stories of Jesus. What a difference this simple couple has made in the lives of an entire village!

Question: What did you find the most challenging part of the role?

Answer: There are challenges on all levels. Travel isn’t fun. The mission editor goes to places tourists never visit. The roads are bad (think of spending hours riding in the back seat of a four-wheel-drive vehicle on roads that are so rutted it feels like a four-hour workout). And accommodations often are rudimentary. I’ve slept in African huts with a sheet for a door, in bare-bones dormitory rooms with pillows as hard as Jacob’s rock, four-legged night visitors that help themselves to anything edible, and “roommates” that skitter across the floor or the ceiling.

But it’s always the best that the locals can afford, and I remind myself that the next day I leave, but they live with these challenges all the time. I remember one “upper room” (a room above the local field office) that I got to by crossing between two buildings on a narrow wooden plank, was startled in the shower by one of the largest roaches I’d ever seen, and awoke to a shrill shriek that sounds as if someone was being strangled! (It turned out to be a rather large lizard’s call.)

Question: You traveled all over the world to collect the stories that went into the quarterlies. How did you track down stories? How did you verify their accuracy? What criteria did you use in deciding which stories to include?

Answer: Most of the people I interviewed were there at the invitation of my counterpart in the local church headquarters. These leaders know their people, and their testimonies were so inspiring. Occasionally I’d stumble onto a great story on my own, but usually the people came to me. Probably 25 percent of the stories I heard were never printed. Some simply didn’t meet the criteria; others were people who just needed to talk to someone who didn’t know them. And some simply didn’t ring true. In that instance, I would ask the people who knew that person to verify their story. If I wasn’t satisfied, I didn’t use the story.

Criteria for the mission reports were that they be mission oriented, relate in some way to a current or past Thirteenth Sabbath Offering project or to the ongoing mission work of the church. Children’s stories were a little freer. Kids have taught me so much about sharing God’s love with others. Their stories are inspiring, and the tie to mission can be a bit looser. Children’s mission is about going, giving, and praying. The “going” can be to a family member or a neighbor; the mission field doesn’t have to be far from home. In fact, it should be wherever we are.

Question: What was the most remote place you ever traveled?
Answer: That depends on what you consider remote. I’ve been to a small Adventist school in the Sahara Desert, outside Khartoum, Sudan; to the heart of Mongolia where a Global Mission pioneer was working to establish a group of new believers; to unnamed villages in China; and an orphanage on the tip of Myanmar. But everywhere I go are believers, and suddenly they don’t seem so remote.

Question: Where did you like the best?

Answer: I think my favorite trip was to South Sudan. I had just left Israel (the 2002 war was about to break out), and I flew into Uganda. Missionaries Carl and Bev Koester picked me up, and we drove to northern Uganda (a dangerous trip in its own right, as the Lord’s Resistance Army controlled much of the region). From there we took off in the mission’s little Land Rover and crossed into Sudan. We took the “main road” (a one-lane dirt road) through Southern Sudan to Maridi, where we have an Adventist school. The civil war was still raging in parts of Sudan, and we had no communication by phone. We were on our own. The only vehicles on the “road” in South Sudan were trucks carrying aid materials and four-wheel drive vehicles, most of which were also NGO and aid vehicles.

Sudan is named for its vast swamps, called “sudd.” And when the road crossed these swampy areas, the trucks often became bogged down. The drivers hacked new roads around the blocked area, but they, too, became too rutted or blocked by other vehicles. The drive, which may have taken only a few hours in any other country, took two days on a good trip. But we felt God’s presence throughout the trip.

Question: How many air miles did you collect?

Answer: As far as I can determine, I flew well over 1.3 million miles. But before someone comes asking for miles, let me say that well over half of it was on obscure airlines that didn’t offer mileage—or anything more than a seatbelt. And more than once I flew in small cargo planes that could be reconfigured to hold seats. Our baggage was squeezed in between bolted-down seats, and there was no such thing as “cabin pressure,” so we had to fly low. That’s not a bad thing, unless you’ve just learned that the guerrillas had begun fighting in the region you’re flying over, and you know you’re within range of their artillery.

Question: There must have been many cultural hurdles you had to jump as you listened to people tell their stories. Did meanings sometimes get lost in translation?

Answer: Translation was always a big factor. And yes, meanings did sometimes get lost in translation. Often I’d realize it when things started not making sense. We’d have to go back over points until I could figure out what I’d misunderstood or what the translator had misinterpreted. Most often the translators were simply local workers who knew enough English to struggle through the translation. That’s when God steps in and provides insight, and speaks to hearts when words won’t work. I saw that happen many times.

Question: Were there some stories you found it very difficult to adapt for a worldwide audience? What did you have to do to make the stories equally meaningful to a reader from Scandinavia, a reader from southern Africa, and a reader from North America?

Answer: Yes, some stories were difficult to tell to a worldwide audience. And I’m sure I failed more than once. But because I, too, was unfamiliar with a culture, I tried to explain what I’d want to know that would help me (and I hoped others) know to understand the story. And God’s stories seem to flow through no matter what the culture.

One issue I recall was the difficulty Europeans and Americans have with dreams and visions. I realized that in certain cultures (such as Russia), dreams and visions are an integral part of their lives. And God uses what’s important in a person’s cultural understanding to speak to them. I avoided mentioning the dreams and visions in stories where the person couldn’t relate their dream directly to the mission story they were telling. But if it was directly bound to the story, I used it. The same is true of people who were miraculously healed or who died and came back to life. These are foreign to many of us, so I did my utmost to verify the details and left the rest to God.

Question: Did you find stories of people leaving the church in disillusionment, as well as people finding God and joining the church?

Answer: Because the local church leaders arranged for the interviews, I didn’t meet many ex-Adventists during interview times, but I did
encounter some on my own. Most had left disillusioned and disappointed, many over the way other Adventists had treated them or a loved one. It’s sad when we’re our own worst enemies, when we allow our words or attitudes to drive people away from Christ. I discovered that a listening ear was all that some needed to gain the courage to try God again.

**Question:** Did you find places where it seemed that the “missionaries” were benefiting more from their mission than the locals? Or places where evangelists or missionaries or global mission pioneers did more harm in the local community than good?

**Answer:** The “traditional” missionaries, or IDEs, I met in my travels (and there are only about 1,000 full-time interdivision employees compared to many more “local” workers now), were fiercely dedicated to their assigned missions. They work hard (much harder than most locals) to fulfill their commission. I never met one who wasn’t sensitive to the culture in which they were working — not one.

I realize that no matter how hard we try, when we seek to work in a culture into which we weren’t born, we’ll always be “third culture” — neither here nor there. But when I saw patients lining up in a modern (by their standards) eye hospital in Zambia for cataract surgery, I saw the trust, the gratitude on people’s faces when they were treated kindly, attentively. I can’t crawl into their skin, so I don’t know what they were thinking about these doctors and nurses who worked as much as 16 hours a day to help people who couldn’t pay and weren’t asked. I don’t know how they responded to the kindnesses other than the open gratitude they expressed.

But not once did I hear a comment expressed about how the locals weren’t doing for themselves, weren’t following “health rules,” etc. Instead, the missionaries gently taught the people (or taught women from the villages how to teach the people) how they could have a better, more healthful life by doing certain things for themselves: building latrines away from their gardens, placing their children under mosquito nets at night, etc.

I haven’t met every missionary or every Global Mission pioneer. But the vast majority are self-sacrificing, hard-working, people-loving Christians who seek to be Jesus’ face and hands and feet and heart to those who don’t know Him yet.

After a long enough time working somewhere, it is no longer “overseas,” but home. And this is something I would want everyone to understand: We don’t have to “go over there” to be missionaries. We need to be missionaries right here where we are. Even missionaries “over there” are sharing their faith with their neighbors. They’ve just had to enter a new culture, learn a new language, suffer with the people to do it.

As for short-term mission trips and student missionaries, that may be somewhat different. Often students have things other than self-sacrificing sharing of the gospel in mind when they sign up for a 10-day mission trip. Most, if they’re honest, want to see another part of the world, “save souls,” or just have an adventure. They usually come back changed, and that’s good. Whether the locals have benefited from their visit varies with the project they’re working on. But the young people usually have.

**Question:** How did the Adventist concept of mission change and evolve during your years working on the quarterlies?

**Answer:** I began working as mission editor just after Global Mission was established, so seeing that program grow to thousands of volunteers working for Christ in their own or in neighboring countries has been astounding. I’ve interviewed dozens of them and been amazed at how God has blessed their efforts.

More traditional missionaries (IDEs) continue to make a big difference around the world. While doctors and nurses still save lives in some of the most primitive places in the world, other IDEs teach at Adventist universities. They provide the quality of training that may be difficult for locals to get without their work.

And every IDE I’ve met has several projects on the side — not to earn more money for their own pockets, but to lead others to Christ. One IDE, the wife of a computer professor at Valley View University in Ghana, teaches community health. She and her husband take students into the neighboring villages and towns to provide simple health assessments, medical treatments, and referrals that these people wouldn’t get if the missionaries didn’t lead out in doing it. Often these secondary ministries are every bit as important as their primary assignment.

May I add here that we often hear the phrase, “from everywhere to everywhere.” It’s true. We have missionaries from Kenya serving in Ghana and Cameroon, missionaries from Brazil serving in Cambodia and Mozambique, and so on. We’re not a North American-based mission outreach anymore. In fact, there are missionaries from other lands serving in North America right now.

**Question:** Do you feel that the Adventist church still has some way to go in getting the balance right between proselytizing on the one hand and helping people while respecting their local culture on the other?

**Answer:** That’s a tough one. I guess it depends upon who’s defining “proselytizing” and “respecting local culture.” My mind immediately
goes to Benin, a small country in western Africa that is known for its voodoo (vodun) worship. Religion is such an integral part of every fiber of their lives. When someone becomes an Adventist Christian, it means that he/she must give up their voodoo practices. This often means breaking with family traditions and risking being cursed for their decision to follow Christ. When a child becomes sick, the relatives put incredible pressure on the family to consult the witchdoctor. They may even kidnap the child to take it to the witchdoctor, and most surely spells will be cast. While some Christian denominations have syncretized their beliefs with those of voodoo, new Adventist believers cannot follow Christ and still take part in what are deeply cultural practices. They must choose. The culture is centered on voodoo. Leaving that faith means leaving much of their culture behind.

**Question:** What are the most important lessons you feel you learned during your years as Mission editor?

**Answer:** Wow, how does one answer? This position gave me a 20-year study in cultural anthropology, faith-building, generosity, and humility. I often explained to people that while other General Conference workers came to their area to teach (or to administer), I came to learn. And that was an amazing experience.

I learned that we in the developed world have so many options that aren’t available to many; when we’re ill, we go to the doctor. They may not have that option. So they pray. And their faith is strong. God often steps in and heals without medicine. They live by faith, where we often try to “fix” things ourselves, asking for God’s help when we can’t do it ourselves.

People with nothing would give me everything — a meal that would have fed their family, a lovely piece of cloth or another memento to take with me. It was often hard to accept their gifts, for I knew that I should be giving to them. They taught me to give with an open hand and an open heart. They taught me to be Christ-like. That’s a lesson I’m still working on.

**Question:** Will you miss it?

**Answer:** Yes. Perhaps not the travel, not the long drives on bad shocks on rutted roads, but I do miss the people, hearing their stories, being revived by their faith. Imagine the joy we’ll have in heaven when we meet again!