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Shaping
God-First Lives
in a Me-First World

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Stories to Celebrate, Learn, and Grow

It is time to look back and reflect on how God has guided the Stewardship Ministries Department around the world during recent years. Our editorial team has invited each division and attached fields of the General Conference to share a piece of their God-led story—one key initiative their territory has implemented, to shape God-First lives in a Me-First world. Join us in celebrating what God has accomplished through our global community of stewardship educators, learn and grow through their narratives.

The submissions we received were truly inspiring, and we are excited to share them with you through this special issue of the

Dynamic Steward magazine. For each article, we have added a short excerpt that connects the featured initiative to an element of the Stewardship Ministries Department Strategic Orientation document for 2022–2025*. We have also included a message from Elder Ted Wilson, the President of the General Conference, and a word

of thanks from Elder Marcos F. Bomfim, the world Stewardship Ministries Department director.

Overall, this issue serves as a valuable tool kit of tested stewardship practices to nurture our membership in faithfulness and strengthen partnership in God's mission. As I read through these submissions, I had a renewed conviction that the reality within our church is not fixed—positive changes are possible, even in dire circumstances, when intentional and well-guided actions are implemented. We pray that as you read of these initiatives and their outcomes, you will be inspired to adopt, adapt, or build upon

them. We believe that, through the action of His Spirit, these stories will trigger new ideas about what can be done to better disciple our members in stewardship.

Many of the articles highlight the outcomes of these initiatives, with several reporting increases in monetary giving. The report of the GC treasurer during the 2025 spring executive committee has confirmed growth in tithes and offerings over the past years, with a consequential growth in offerings during 2024. We have good reasons to praise God as more resources are now available to support His final mission locally and globally.

However, one important dimension is often missing in our publications: We seldom tell how these actions and initiatives have transformed participation rates in giving. It is not out of unwillingness, but rather that information about participation rates is inconsistently reaching our contributors. Our bottom line as a spiritual entity is not financial income; it is about growing a community of believers who trust God and put Him first. Collectively, in the future, we can work to tell more complete and compelling stories of God's transforming grace.

As we see the day approaching, let us sharpen each other in developing even more effective ways and means to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24).

Aniel Barbe
Editor

Footnote

*View the 2022 - 2025 Strategic Orientation document here: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/strategic-orientation-2022-2025.pdf>

“Our Vision: People putting God first.”

Extract of
Stewardship
Orientation
Document (SOD)
2020–2025



LISTEN



The Blessing of Stewardship

ELDER TED N. C. WILSON

Christian stewardship is an important biblical concept meant to permeate every aspect of our lives. Through faithful stewardship, we acknowledge that everything we have belongs to God—He is our Creator, our Redeemer, our Provider, and the Lord of our lives.

Stewardship is one of God's greatest blessings to His creatures since it reminds us that we owe everything to God and tests our loyalty to His promises concerning tithes and offerings. However, stewardship not only involves our financial approach to God and life, but it also has to do with the use of our time, talents, physical bodies, and abilities—all part of complete Christian stewardship. This is why we must put God first in all we do. As stewards of what God has given us, we are to maximize our blessings for the mission God has entrusted to us.

The blessings promised in Malachi 3:8–12 are so tangible and practical, as so many of us can attest since we see what God has done for us, our families, and His church. Faithfulness to God in every respect is a key factor in Christian stewardship and its blessed results.

Thank you to each stewardship educator, church leader, and church member who has invested in nurturing the God-first culture. Personally, it was a privilege for me to encourage Christian stewardship as a departmental director of stewardship in what was then known as the Africa-Indian Ocean Division. While later serving in the Euro-Asia Division as an administrator, it was a privilege to strongly nurture Christian stewardship education and see the marvelous, heaven-blessed results in increased financial stewardship because church members better understood and accepted their spiritual obligations and opportunities to partner with God.

I would like to express a great thank you to all for your faithfulness in supporting God's mission, and your personal stewardship relationship with the Lord, again, not only with finances, but in time, talent, physical bodies, and abilities.

What a privilege to look to the future as the Lord opens the way to broaden our stewardship education through weekly local church presentations as well as the use of internet/video explanations as constant reminders of all of the great blessings involved in the God-first culture of Christian stewardship. Practical testimonies should be frequently used as a tool for excellent stewardship education, helping people realize the great benefits of following God's instructions, which result in blessings beyond our imagination.

What a privilege to partner with God through comprehensive Christian stewardship practices. As we read in *Counsels on Stewardship*:

*Every good thing of earth was placed here by the bountiful hand of God as an expression of His love to man. The poor are His, and the cause of religion is His. The gold and the silver are the Lord's; and He could rain them from heaven if He chose. But instead of this He has made man His steward, entrusting him with means, not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others. He thus makes man the medium through which to distribute His blessings on earth. God planned the system of beneficence, in order that man might become like his Creator, benevolent and unselfish in character, and finally be a partaker with Christ of the eternal, glorious reward.**

When Jesus returns to take us to heaven, we will experience the eternal blessings and results of Christian stewardship that we have practiced here on this earth. Christian stewardship, in all its beauty, is a wonderful sign of even greater things to come!

Elder Ted N. C. Wilson is the President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

References

*Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1940), 15.



LISTEN

I'm Not Working for You!

ELDER MARCOS F. BOMFIM

Antonio Fragoso, an elder in my first pastoral district on the outskirts of Sao Paulo, Brazil, was a devoted man of God. Despite his age, he worked tirelessly and voluntarily for the Lord. We became close friends, and when I decided to express gratitude for his faithful work, he reacted firmly: "Please, don't thank me. I'm not working for you!"

His words resonate with me as we close this quinquennium. Who am I to thank those who labor for the Lord? Yet, from a human perspective, I want to recognize those who allowed Him to use them to advance the God-first culture worldwide.

I will begin with the stewardship directors. They received a call from God to work as His representatives in this peculiar and challenging ministry, so crucial in the time of the end! They invite God's people to sacrifice, to put their eyes beyond the veil, their hearts in heaven, and God first here. They don't expect recognition beyond God's approval, and realize they also need what they promote to others.

Another group to be recognized is composed of church members and leaders who decided to experience the blessings of the coming age and seal a covenant with God by sacrifice. Like the Israelites, they voluntarily chose to leave Egypt. They have come to the desert, as it were, surrendering their worldly financial security to rely on God's sustaining power—just as He provided for His people in the wilderness. They desire to know Him more and live by faith, and God has granted them this experience.

The final group is constituted of those who are with us in the office. Johnetta B. Flomo has blessed this department for nearly 25 years, handling many responsibilities. Though she rarely sees the direct impact of her work, Aniel and I constantly witness how often we are commended for results made possible by her dedication.

Aniel Barbe has also offered his ministry to advancing the God-first principle. Even while completing his PhD, his vision, devotion to God,

editorial skills, wisdom, and spirit of service have greatly blessed the department and its staff.

We must also acknowledge the steadfast support of GC officers Ted Wilson, Ertan Köhler, and Paul H. Douglas, along with GC Vice President Billy Biaggi, the Stewardship Ministries advisor. Their guidance was invaluable as Aniel and I worked to revise stewardship-related sections of the General Conference *Working Policy* and Church Manual. Special thanks to Paul H. Douglas, GC Treasurer/CFO, who dedicated long hours to this work and fostered a global partnership between Stewardship Ministries and Treasury—a collaboration that continues to bear fruit.

LOOKING AHEAD

The great challenge we face now is engaging the new generations in God's work. Who will equip parents to raise children who put God first—in daily devotion, family worship, Sabbath observance, relationships, service, stewardship of their bodies, and finances? These habits must be instilled before children leave home, ensuring a lifelong commitment to God.

Besides the dream of having a worldwide offering plan (like what is in place for tithes), another crucial need is promoting Promise, a biblical yet countercultural approach to giving. What if every member understood that offerings are as much a divine requirement as tithes (e.g., Malachi 3:8)? What would happen to their spiritual lives and the mission of the church if every member gave a determined proportion of their income regularly and systematically instead of a random, sporadic portion, based on fleeting emotions? Who will take up this call to promote Promise offerings? Let us say together: "Here I am. I will go."

Elder Marcos F. Bomfim serves as the General Conference Stewardship Ministries Director.



LISTEN



Spiritual Revival and Stewardship

EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION

PASTOR EDISON NSENGIYUMVA

Since the inception of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD), the LORD has blessed us with tremendous membership growth, for which we bless His name. However, the availability of financial resources has been one of our major challenges. Ellen G. White's words aptly describe our reality: "Only a small amount of means flows into the LORD's treasury to be appropriated to the saving of souls, and it is with hard labor that even this is obtained" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 4, p. 483). The Stewardship Ministries Department bears the responsibility of addressing this challenge. In recent years, we realized that prioritizing spiritual revival may be the right approach to reversing the dire situation.

TRANSFORMED HEARTS

One should never underestimate the value of revival in deepening faithfulness among God's people. During times of revival, when individuals return to God and turn away from other gods, one of the most significant reforms often occurs in the area of giving. People reflect on their lives and commit to putting God first, prioritizing Him and His work above all else.

As an example, during King Hezekiah's revival and reformation efforts, the temple was repaired, worship services were restored, Passover was celebrated again, and Levites were reinstated to ministry. During this same revival season, the king decreed that the people of Jerusalem bring their tithe to the house of God. As a result, "as soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps" (2 Chronicles 31:5, 6). Revival impacts giving—it brings faithful giving!

Similarly, the Bible records in the book of Acts that after the believers in the apostolic church were filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, they acknowledged that what they had was not their own. "All the believers were together and

had everything in common (Acts 2:44). Ellen G. White comments on the prevailing spirit of generosity in the early church: "This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were 'of one heart and one soul.'" She adds: "One common interest controlled them—the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. The love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused, was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth" (*Acts of Apostles*, p. 70). Acts of generosity emerge from the transformation of hearts due to the actions of the Holy Spirit.

REVIVAL INITIATIVES

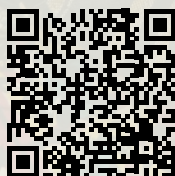
Recognizing the impact of spiritual revival on members' faithfulness and support for the mission, the Stewardship Ministries Department of East-Central Africa Division (ECD) has decided to intentionally collaborate with others to call for revival. We believe that helping our members strengthen their connection with God will have a positive effect on their stewardship. Among other actions, we adopted the annual Stewardship Revival Week, which invites members from all over the world to pause, pray, examine, and resolve to put God first in several key aspects of their lives.

Soon, we felt the need for a second revival week with locally prepared materials to address specific needs in our context. This second revival week is scheduled for the first quarter of each year. These two revival weeks have assisted in nurturing members' spirituality and resulted in a God-first lifestyle.

The initiative of having two revival weeks with a stewardship perspective was warmly welcomed by church leaders at all levels and greatly appreciated by our church members. The laity play a key role in its implementation as they are at the forefront in incorporating these two weeks into their local church calendars and ensuring proper organization for church members. These revival weeks have helped members better understand that giving is an adequate expression of one's spirituality. As a

"Members are nurtured spiritually, with a focus on the God-First principle."

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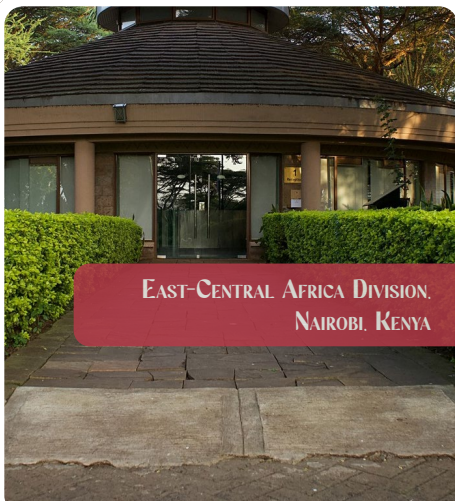
result, more church members are now returning tithe and faithfully giving their offerings.

We have witnessed several members who are now practicing back tithing, returning the tithe they had not given in the past. These revivals have also inspired remarkable acts of faithfulness, such as the story of a wealthy Maasai man named Abraham from the Northern Tanzania Union Conference who gave a tithe of 100 cows. Following the stewardship revival weeks, more cattle keepers passed their livestock under the shepherd's staff, marking the tenth animal as holy to God. Crop farmers are doing the same with their harvest.

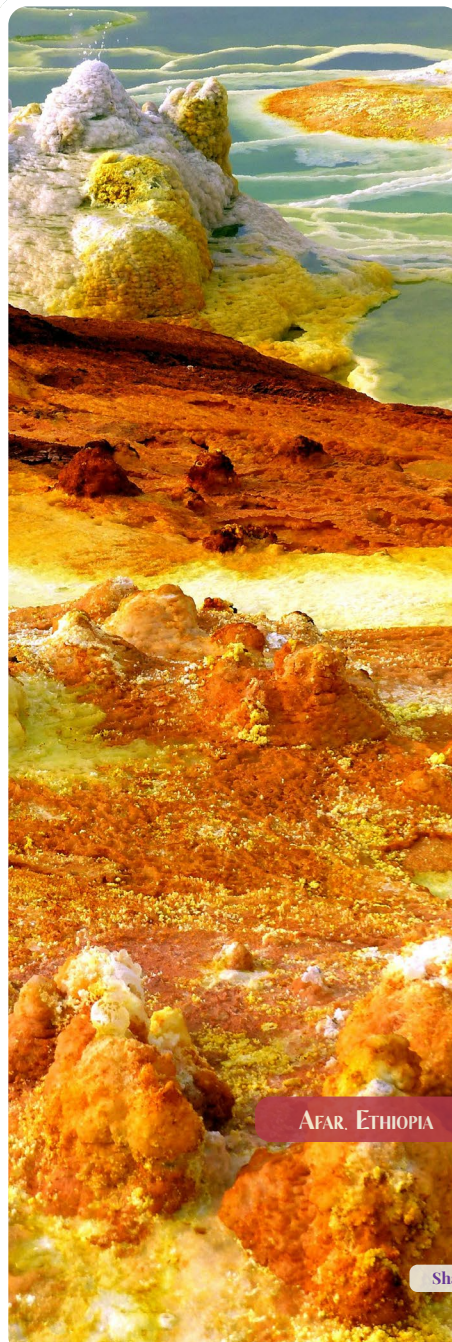
The ECD territory consists of countries with low-income economies. The emphasis on growing spirituality through the revival weeks has played a significant role in addressing the challenge of low-income economies in our region. Since 2022, the ECD has become a net contributor to the global financial support of the world church. This is possible through the expanded donor base for tithers and offering givers. In 2024, the estimated participation rate for tithing was 41 percent of membership. God's Spirit is actively working in our members, and they are readily channeling their God-given resources to support local, regional, and global missions. Our territory is now more aligned with these words of Ellen White: "[The LORD] has placed in the hands of His servants the means wherewith to carry forward His work in home and foreign missions" (*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890).

As we near the final days before Christ's return, the need for revival is more pressing than ever. We must encourage ongoing revival programs, revival weeks, and other initiatives in our churches to ensure that our members' hearts are revived by the power of the Holy Spirit. I am convinced that we will witness even more of what we are already observing: "When they shall arouse and lay their prayers, their wealth, and all their energies and resources at the feet of Jesus, the cause of truth will triumph" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 4, p. 475).

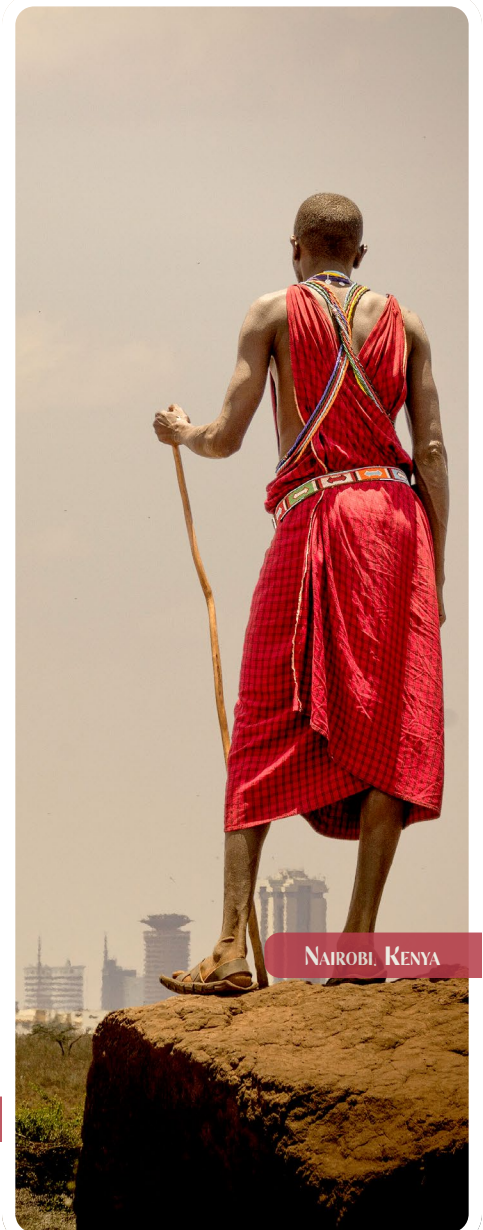
Pastor Edison Nsengiyumva is currently serving as the East-Central Africa Stewardship Ministries Director, Nairobi, Kenya.



2023 SRW Sermon Videos— STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL WEEK—GOD FIRST



AFAR, ETHIOPIA



Education in the Local Church

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

PASTOR ROBERTO HERRERA

The Inter-American Division (IAD) has established three priorities for the 2020–2025 quinquennium: strengthening the spirituality of our church members, ensuring the spiritual health and integral growth of each local congregation, and promoting the self-reliance of our local fields.

To achieve these priorities, division leadership has focused on empowering local congregations. We believe that by giving adequate attention to local churches, we can achieve significant outcomes such as an increase in the number of baptisms, a higher retention of members, financial growth of the church, and strengthened church ministries. As part of our work plan for our congregations, we agreed to focus on spiritual growth and strengthening the doctrine of biblical stewardship within the local church. This emphasis has become central to our work in Stewardship Ministries. It resulted, among other initiatives, in the publication of a series of six books during the 2020–2025 quinquennium.

ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP PUBLICATIONS

We recognize that when our members are exposed to teachings grounded in God's Word, they are more likely to grow spiritually and become more faithful and productive. With this in mind, the division has made a significant investment in producing, printing, and distributing a free book each year. Below is a brief description of each publication:

1. *The Church, Its Finances, and the Mission* (2019)

This book answers the question: How does the church obtain, manage, and invest money? It provides clarity on the sensitive issue of church

finances and contributes to trust and confidence among our members. The authors are Roberto Brown, Ismael Castillo, Nolwin J. Guilarte, Roberto Herrera, Winston Hiciano, and Filiberto Verduzco.

2. *This Is How He Sees Us* (2020)

In a world where value is often determined by the market, this book teaches that we are not just numbers or a cumulative body mass; we are part of a story that reveals the marvelous plan that God has for each one of us. People (members) are the most valuable resources in the church, and they must be cared for spiritually. The sense of being loved and belonging are primary motivations that lead humans to repentance and faithfulness. The

author is J. Vladimir Polanco.

3. *Learn from Me* (2021)

The book outlines God's plan for His children to enter into an intimate relationship with Him and experience spiritual growth. It is based on the example set by Christ's life, introducing Jesus as the model for spirituality, obedience, generosity, service, and faithfulness. The authors are Alejandro Bullón and Roberto Herrera.

4. *Faithful to the Task at Hand* (2022)

Inspired by Ellen G. White's call for God's people to "inaugurate a sound financial system" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 211), Filiberto Verduzco explains how Adventist congregations and institutions can develop a solid financial system. The aim is to generate and manage resources to properly finance evangelistic projects, have solid pastoral care, purchase missionary materials and publications, and build churches.

"All segments of the church membership, including prospective members, should receive adequate training in regular and systematic giving."

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5. Put to the Test (2023)

Hermes Tavera-Bueno explores the decisions made by some biblical characters of the Old Testament, particularly their choices regarding eternal values. Among other benefits, this book invites readers to consider and respect the boundaries that God has set for humanity.

6. Prosperity (2024)

Ricardo Casado, the author of *True Prosperity*, a successful entrepreneur and faithful servant of God, uses personal experiences to share invaluable lessons to demonstrate inner peace, healthy relationships, and communion with God. He also invites the readers to reexamine their priority and discover Jesus anew as they commit to Him.

INVESTING IN THE ACCESSIBILITY OF RESOURCES

We acknowledge that producing quality resources by our publishing house alone is not sufficient to impact our members' lives unless we address the issue of accessibility. Our focus has been on empowering our local congregations, and to enhance accessibility, we invested in the following:

- » Two printed copies of each book for all 24,000 churches and companies.
- » A personal copy of each book is provided to local church pastors and officers.
- » Each book is translated into the three main languages of the division: Spanish, English, and French.
- » Study guides, PowerPoint presentations, and videos were created to facilitate the content transmission.

» Unions are encouraged to personalize their plans for using the materials and find ways to facilitate the distribution of books to church members.

» All the books are available in digital format, in the three translated languages, and on the division's interactive platforms for free downloading.

LIFE-CHANGING OUTCOMES

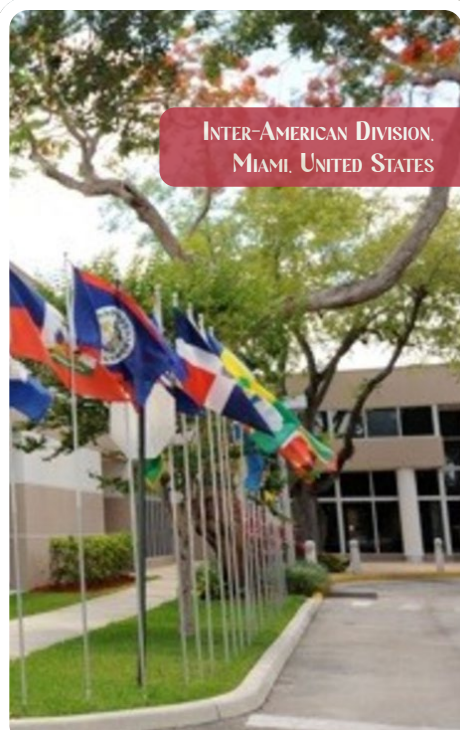
As of the third quarter of 2024, the IAD comprises 25,151 churches and local congregations. At the end of 2024, we observed some substantial growth in key faith and finance metrics for the period 2020–2024: Tithes grew by 41 percent, offerings grew by 46 percent, and tithe/offering ratio improved by 45 percent. When comparing current performance with the previous quinquennium (2015–2019), both tithe and offerings have grown by 27 percent, and mission offerings have increased by 31 percent.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the initiative of Annual Stewardship Publications is focused on local churches. We aim to create a lasting Christian stewardship impact at the most crucial level of the entire Adventist system—where God works with individuals to transform them into faithful stewards. He blesses them with talents, treasures, time, and influence. As we move forward, the IAD projects itself as a territory that continues to focus on local congregations and will invest even more to effectively support them.

Pastor Roberto Herrera is the Stewardship Ministries Director for the Inter-American Division, Miami, USA.



Annual stewardship books printed for local churches over the past five years.



Making Stewardship Fun and Friendly

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

NAD STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES TEAM

The Bible makes it clear: Guiding the next generation in faith and values is a sacred duty (Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalm 78:1–7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). Yet, for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the task of discipling preteens and teenagers remains a significant challenge—especially when it comes to practical topics like stewardship.

So how do we teach stewardship—of time, talents, treasure, and the temple of our bodies—to young minds in a way that's both engaging and transformative?

A TIMELY OPPORTUNITY: THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL PATHFINDER CAMPOREE

One answer came during the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming. Although international in scope, the event was hosted in the North American Division (NAD), and the majority of attendees were from this territory. Recognizing the moment, NAD Stewardship Ministries, with support from the General Conference Stewardship team, took this opportunity to offer stewardship education in a format designed for youth. Their approach centered around teaching the **Stewardship Pathfinder Honor**—a curriculum that balances both theory and practice.

MAKING STEWARDSHIP REAL AND RELATABLE

Teaching stewardship to youth demands more than lectures—it requires interaction, creativity, and real-world application. The Stewardship Honor includes four pillars: **Temple, Talents, Time, and Treasure**. Each topic was taught using a dynamic mix of videos, PowerPoint slides, discussions, worksheets, interactive activities, and even small incentive-based gifts, which linked to additional web content for participants who answered questions. (Check it out at <https://www.nadstewardship.org/pathfinder-bible/>.) The small gifts encouraged participation in the discussions. During the Talents segment, some Pathfinders showcased their talents by singing or reciting poems, or drawing, making the sessions even more dynamic.

Excitement peaked when we displayed the different pins participants could earn. The Pathfinders eagerly followed the fill-in-the-blank worksheets, answering questions and watching videos to understand the stewardship message

better. Our multimedia approach not only held the attention of hundreds of Pathfinders but also helped them connect biblical stewardship to their everyday lives.

A key strength of this program was its emphasis on **whole-life stewardship**—the understanding that everything we are and have is entrusted to us by God. By framing stewardship this way, young people were invited to see themselves not just as future church members but as current stewards of God's mission.

PRACTICING WHAT THEY LEARN

To meet the practical requirements of the Stewardship Honor, each Pathfinder needed to engage in at least four hours of community service using their unique talents to benefit others. With limited mobility at the camporee, this could have been a major obstacle. But thanks to collaboration with event planners, pre-arranged local service projects allowed youth to meet the requirement meaningfully and efficiently.

This practical component is essential. When young people see how their skills and efforts can make a real difference, stewardship becomes less about duty and more about joyful service.

ADAPTING TO THE UNEXPECTED

Teaching in a large, noisy arena came with its share of logistical hurdles. From building makeshift classroom walls with clothes racks and curtains to battling dust clouds and thunderstorm-related floods, the experience showed the importance of flexibility. Captions were added to videos to overcome sound challenges, and class spaces were divided to accommodate simultaneous sessions for two speakers. This setup allowed for closer interaction with the Pathfinders, enhancing their engagement with the stewardship message of giving our best to God.

In short, reaching youth often means leaving the pulpit and entering their world—a world that may be loud, unpredictable, and messy. But it's in these spaces that stewardship becomes tangible and deeply personal.

BERMUDA



LISTEN

LASTING IMPACT

Despite the challenges, the response was overwhelming. Originally prepared for 900 participants, the team had to print an additional 150 worksheets due to high demand. Ultimately, **between 900 and 1,000 Pathfinders attended** the class sessions, and **209 completed** the community service component, earning their Stewardship patches on-site. The spiritual impact of the camporee was profound, with the Holy Spirit moving powerfully among the young participants. We are deeply thankful to our talented and passionate volunteers.

More importantly, the camporee as a whole saw **1,215 baptisms**, with each new believer receiving a commemorative bag that included a Pathfinder Bible sponsored by the NAD Stewardship and Education Departments. This Bible featured a special emphasis on stewardship, emphasizing the Pathfinders' role as the next generation to support the church's mission, planting seeds for lifelong growth in this vital spiritual discipline.

"If children and youth had been properly instructed in this age of the world, what honor, what praise and thanksgiving, would flow from their lips to God!"

(White, Counsels on Stewardship, p.297)

THE CASE FOR EARLY STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

What this experience taught us is that young people want to learn. They are curious, capable, and ready to be challenged, especially when education is experiential and tailored to their stage of life. Stewardship education doesn't just prepare youth to support the church in the future; it equips them to live faithfully right now.

Reaching new segments of the church often requires stepping away from our usual positions of ministry and thinking beyond traditional church settings. It calls for **creativity, collaboration, and courage**. By partnering

with youth departments and stepping into their spaces—camporees, clubs, classrooms—we make stewardship real, relevant, and relational.

LOOKING AHEAD

Teaching the Stewardship Honor at Gillette proved to be an adventure filled with unexpected challenges and memorable experiences. This has opened our eyes to some exciting possibilities. As a result, NAD Stewardship Ministries is working to make the Pathfinder Stewardship Honor materials available online so that local churches, clubs, and families can continue the work. We encourage leaders at every level to prioritize stewardship education for youth. The Stewardship Ministries Department of the NAD is now working on making our teaching materials available online for anyone who would like to teach the Stewardship Honor in their own settings. Creativity, partnership, and flexibility are essential for effectiveness in discipling the younger generation.

The path isn't always smooth. But as Gillette showed us, the results are deeply rewarding. When we teach stewardship to the next generation, we aren't just handing down a concept—we're raising faithful and mission-minded leaders for today and tomorrow. Done well, it not only trains good financial managers—it forms faithful, purpose-driven disciples.

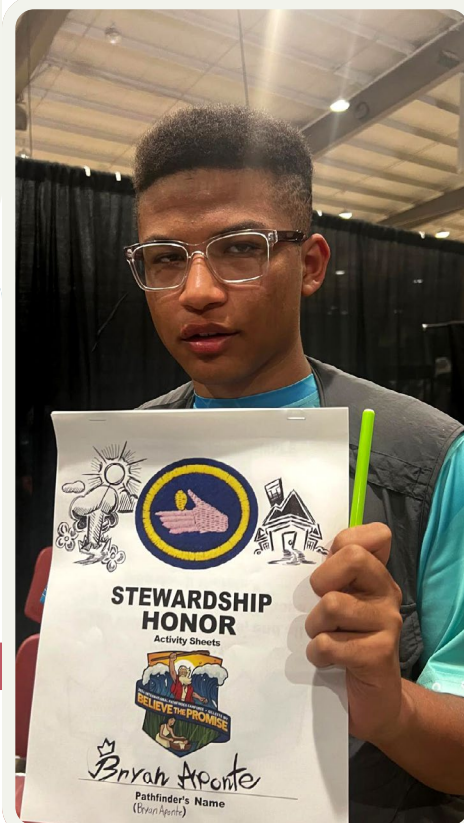
Stewardship Team, North American Division



Handbook used during the 2024 International Pathfinders Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming, to teach the Stewardship Honor.



Michael Harpe, NAD Stewardship Director, teaching the Stewardship Honor to Pathfinders.



Stewardship Publications in Local Languages

NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

PASTOR KIM (JAMES) NAK HYUNG

Both the Bible and Ellen G. White's writings affirm that we are created and redeemed as stewards. Therefore, nurturing a God-first lifestyle as the foundation for a holistic approach to stewardship helps church members more clearly see the connection between their spiritual growth, personal worship through giving, and personal witness in mission.

There are many ways to promote stewardship education but making it truly effective is a profound skill. To achieve this, the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) has focused on publishing stewardship books that promote stewardship principles. We believe that through reading these materials, our church members will be inspired and nurtured. As they engage with these teachings, the Holy Spirit will lead them to make gradual and consistent lifestyle changes.

FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHTS

Since 2021, the Stewardship Ministries Department of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, under the leadership of Pr. Kim Nak Hyung, has launched the Publishing Stewardship Books Project.

Several factors led to the initiation of this project. First, we noticed that the General Conference Stewardship Ministries Department's website contains many excellent stewardship resources, and we felt compelled to make these valuable resources available to our local church members. Second, we observed that many local church members have a vague and unclear understanding of stewardship. To address this, it was essential to provide resources that offer a clearer perspective on stewardship. Third, translating these materials into local languages would help members feel more connected and better comprehend the concepts and principles of stewardship in our church.

By providing books that members can read and as a reference, we enable them to consult and review the materials when needed, thus

enhancing the effectiveness of the Stewardship Ministries Department.

PRACTICAL INITIATIVES

The NSD Stewardship Ministries Department holds an annual meeting at the beginning of each year with stewardship directors from various regions. During this meeting, the division requests that each regional director select one stewardship book from the resources available on the General Conference (GC) Stewardship Ministries Department's website. The chosen book should align with the specific needs of their region and serve as the focus for promoting stewardship ministries throughout the year.

Once the regions report their selected book titles to the NSD and receive approval, the division coordinates with the GC to obtain the printing rights and editorial files. After receiving the relevant materials, the NSD shares the files with local unions or conferences. These local entities then translate the book into their respective languages, edit and format it for publication, and print the books, which are distributed to local churches.

Typically, unions or conferences rely on local Adventist publishing houses to print these books. If no Adventist printing facilities are available in the region, they seek assistance from external printing companies. To further support this initiative, the NSD provides financial support, offering a 50 percent subsidy on the total printing costs.

Once the books are printed, unions or conferences organize dedication ceremonies for the new materials. The purpose of these ceremonies is to seek God's blessings on the books, praying that every reader will be filled with the Holy Spirit, gain a deeper understanding of stewardship, and transform their lifestyle to wholeheartedly support the church's mission. These dedication events are the highlight and most touching moments of the project.



THE MIRACULOUS IMPACT OF THE BOOK PRINTING INITIATIVE

Since 2021, approximately 15 books have been printed and translated into nine languages. By God's grace, four new countries joined the NSD territory in 2024, and these new territories were also involved in the project. For example, in Sri Lanka, stewardship books have been translated into two local languages. As they were new to the division, the emphasis was on laying a foundation for understanding the biblical principles and significance of stewardship. To begin this journey, they were encouraged to print *Counsels on Stewardship*. Thanks to God's guidance, this book is now available in Nepali, Pakistani, Bengali, and Sinhala.

This project has allowed us to witness God's wonderful works in many ways. By encouraging entities to print books that meet their specific needs, we've seen a growing diversity in the types of books being produced. Some regions, in addition to printing books for adults, have also printed stewardship literature for children. We are grateful to God that church leaders are promoting stewardship education among children, ensuring that the stewardship message reaches people of all ages, including the elderly, adults, youth, and children.

Furthermore, through the printing of stewardship books, members have developed a habit of reading spiritual literature. Many members, who may have seldom read the Bible or stewardship-related books in the past, have been encouraged by the book printing initiative, under the guidance of pastors, to develop a love for reading.

More astonishingly, through this program, believers have not only gained a deeper understanding of their responsibilities as stewards and a clearer comprehension of the

meaning behind tithe and free will offerings but have also been moved by the Holy Spirit to willingly and joyfully practice what they have learned. As a result, members have become passionate about giving to support the growth of the church and hasten Christ's second coming. The book printing project has not only benefited church members but has also deeply inspired local pastors and stewardship leaders. The heartfelt stories of faithful contributions from church members have encouraged and motivated these leaders to work even harder in the ministry of evangelism.

"For the community at large, the church should provide education in the management of personal finances, creation of wealth, and other relevant topics."

SOD 2022-2025

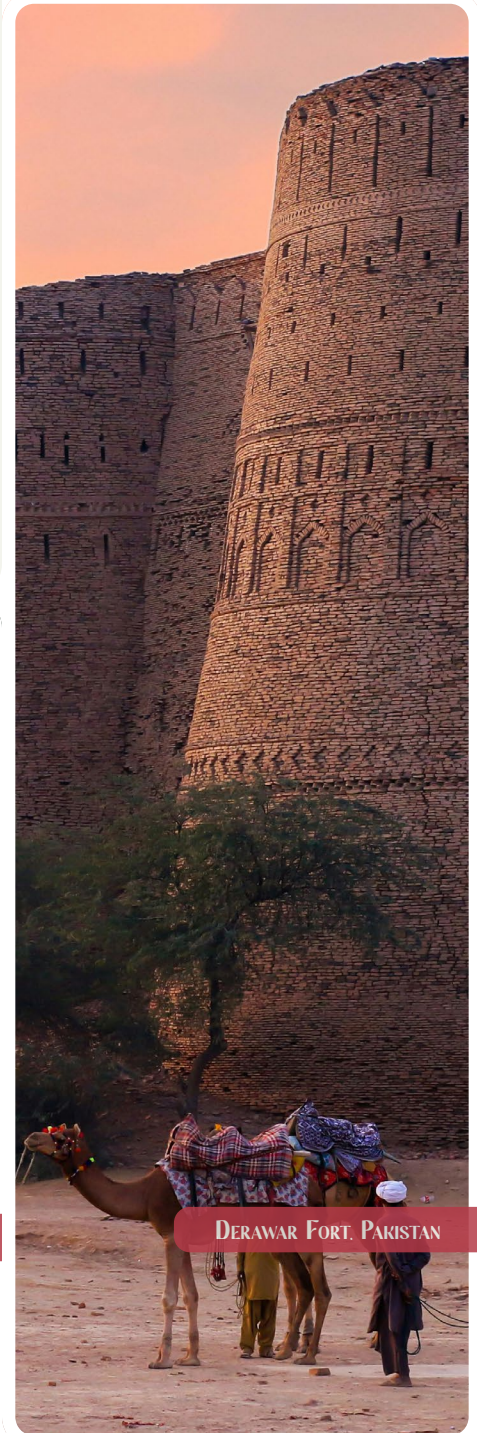
The results of the Publishing Stewardship Books Project have exceeded our expectations.

Stewardship is a vital ministry of the Adventist Church, particularly in its role of supporting the church mission. It also provided a way for Christians to live out their testimony. The book printing initiative has proven to be immensely valuable, yielding positive results. While the translation process presents its own difficulties and challenges, we are reminded that when we pray and present our needs to God, He grants us peace and blessings beyond our understanding.

Pastor Kim (James) Nak Hyung serves as the Stewardship Director for the Northern-Asia Pacific Division, Seoul, South Korea.



Lerato and Her Money Questions printed in Korean language.



DERAWAR FORT, PAKISTAN



NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION.
GYEONGGI-DO, REPUBLIC OF KOREA



TAIPEI, TAIWAN

Growing in Christ—Discipling New Members

SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION

PASTOR JOSANAN ALVES, JR.

As Christian stewardship leaders, we need to pay special attention to a very important group in the church, namely, the new converts. According to Ellen White:

*After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. The zeal of many ministers seems to fail as soon as a measure of success attends their efforts. They do not realize that these newly converted ones need nursing—watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey to Satan's most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with. These souls need the meat apportioned to every man in due season. No wonder that some become discouraged, linger by the way, and are left for wolves to devour. Satan is upon the track of all. He sends his agents forth to gather back to his ranks the souls he has lost. There should be more fathers and mothers to take these babes in the truth to their hearts, and to encourage them and pray for them, that their faith be not confused.”**

“The new converts should be fully enlightened as to their duty to return to the Lord His own.”

—Ellen G. White,
Counsels on Stewardship,
p. 106

get personal attention. We dedicate 18 years to raising our children, yet we are not able to spend six months helping new believers begin to understand what spiritual life is all about.

To address this issue, the South American Division (SAD) created a project called Growing in Christ, which consists of a seven-week program in which new members are guided through spiritual habits that will strengthen their communion with God, relationships with other members, and commitment to the mission. This material functions like the Sabbath School quarterly, where each day, for seven weeks, the new member will study one page. Each week, they will meet in a Sabbath School class at church to review the week's content.

GOALS OF GROWING IN CHRIST

The project Growing in Christ has five major goals:

1. Fulfill Jesus' command expressed in the biblical imperative of making disciples.
2. Facilitate the spiritual growth of church members.
3. Increase the number of missionaries.
4. Improve the preparation of new converts.
5. Fight stagnation and dropout.

HOW DOES GROWING IN CHRIST WORK?

The process is quite simple and receives practical support from two church structures, namely small groups and Sabbath School, in terms of their relational and cognitive aspects:

- a. **Relational Aspect.** Each new member-disciple should connect with other members-disciples by participating in a small group.



QUITO, ECUADOR



LISTEN

- b. Cognitive Aspect.** The Sabbath School should establish a special class to review the content studied over the seven weeks. After this period, a graduation ceremony is held for all participants of Growing in Christ, and the new member joins a regular Sabbath School class.

CONTENT OF THE MATERIAL FOR EACH WEEK

Week 1 — Teach about grace, justification by faith, and how to remain firm in the faith while growing in holiness. The following aspects of communion are presented in a practical way: how to study the Bible, how to pray, and how to conduct personal and family worship.

Week 2 — Emphasize the remnant aspect of the Adventist prophetic movement. Teach about our distinctive doctrines.

Week 3 — Teach how to witness and use spiritual gifts to fulfill the mission. Discuss practical aspects of witnessing in the family, at work, school, etc.

Week 4 — Provide an overview of how the Adventist organization works and how members can get involved in church ministries. Present Adventist institutions and communication channels run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Week 5 — Explain why we are not Congregationalists. Present the practical aspects of returning tithes and offerings and the church's commitment to financial integrity. Introduce the South American Division's member giving application known as 7me.

Week 6 — Practical guidelines on the Adventist lifestyle.

Week 7 — Present the tension between the Christian worldview and the secular worldview and how to protect oneself from influences and ideologies that attempt to weaken faith.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

The role of the local church stewardship director focuses on five areas:

- a. Ensure that every newly baptized member is enrolled in the Growing in Christ class. This class takes place at the same time as the Sabbath School quarterly study.

- b. Organize the Growing in Christ class. It should function like a Bible class, meaning it must be permanent and cyclical. New converts can enroll at any time, regardless of the lesson that is being reviewed in the study series.
- c. Develop a visiting program for the participants of the Growing in Christ class.
- d. Organize a meaningful graduation ceremony at the end of each quarter for those who complete the seven weeks of the Growing in Christ program.
- e. Ensure that each one who is participating in Growing in Christ is actively involved in a small group and enrolled in a Sabbath School class.

We have created a support website available for both students and instructors of the Growing in Christ classes. It provides a variety of materials such as PowerPoint presentations, videos, and texts to enhance understanding of each week's topic. Additionally, we offer versions of Growing in Christ not only for adults but also for children, teenagers, and young adults. Check crescendoemcristo.org for material in Portuguese and crecimientoen Cristo.org for material in Spanish. Do not hesitate to reach out to the Stewardship Ministries Department of the SAD if you are interested in having the materials in your local languages.

We believe that caring for new members is a responsibility for everyone, and as the leaders of Stewardship Ministries, we are called to do our part through the Growing in Christ program. We have already witnessed significant results among new members in terms of faithfulness, church retention, and engagement in the mission. We praise God as we see this project spreading throughout all regions of the South American Division.

Pastor Josanan Alves, Jr. serves as the Stewardship Ministries Director of the South American Division, Brasília, Brazil.

Reference

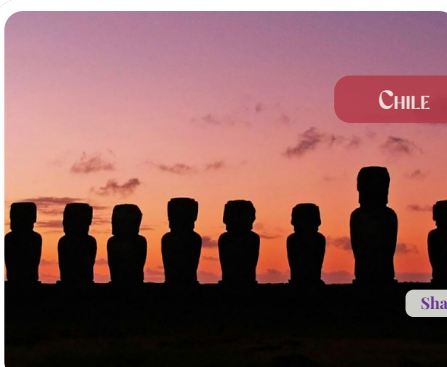
*Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 341.



A graduation ceremony for those who completed the Growing in Christ discipleship class.



Graduation ceremony for Growing in Christ discipleship initiative.



Diversifying Modes of Giving Through Giving in Kind

SOUTHERN AFRICAN-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION

DR. MUNDIA LIYWALI

After several years as the Southern African-Indian Ocean Division (SID) Stewardship Director, it became clear that we need to increase participation in giving, enabling entities across our division territory to access more resources to fulfill their mission. I noticed that the focus of the church has largely been on teaching members to return tithe and offerings in monetary form, with little or no emphasis on giving in kind. Having seen how in-kind giving significantly increased participation in Zambia while I served as stewardship director there, I felt it was pertinent to introduce and promote the concept across the division territory.

SAVUTI, BOTSWANA

THE BENCHMARKING EVENT

To inspire and educate on giving in kind, we organized a benchmarking event in the Southern Zambia Union Conference from May 27–30, 2024. The participants included division officers, the vice president in charge of stewardship, the secretary in the stewardship department, all union presidents, union CFOs, union and conference stewardship directors, all union secretaries in the stewardship department, and two frontline pastors from each union. The division sponsored this project with a budget of \$60,000.

The two conference stewardship directors hosting the benchmarking event identified farmers in advance whose cattle and farm products would be counted. When members heard about this, they were very excited, and many volunteered to have their cattle counted. Unfortunately, time and distance prevented the delegation from visiting all who had volunteered.

The benchmarking event started with a keynote address by the division president, Dr. Harrington Akombwa, followed by a presentation by the division stewardship director on the purpose of the benchmarking. One of the hosting conference CFOs then outlined the process for collecting in-kind tithes and offerings that they adopted in their territory.

The main steps are as follows:

1. The conference purchases and distributes empty grain bags to each district. The bags are then given to churches, who pass them to members while keeping an accurate record of the number of empty bags collected and the number collected later.
2. At harvest, members fill the bags with their tithes and offerings.
3. The conference collects the filled bags and sells them to companies that purchase such commodities.
4. Receipts are sent to the churches according to the number of bags they have sent.
5. The proceeds from the sale of the bags filled with in-kind offerings are divided into two. Fifty percent is sent back promptly to the local churches.

A similar process is followed for animals given as offerings and tithes. Local conferences have cattle holding pens where animals given are kept until sold. Calves are kept until they grow large enough to be sold at a better price. After the sale, a receipt is given to the giver, indicating the price at which the animal was sold. It is this honest, accountable, and transparent manner the conference exhibits that has won the confidence and trust of the members.

AN INSPIRING OUTCOME

Following the training sessions of the benchmarking event, we spent three days in the field counting cattle for tithes and offerings. Due to the distance between farms, we managed to count animals for only six farms. The total number of cattle given for tithe was 91, and for offerings, 76. Each animal was marked with blue paint on its head for tithe and on the back for offerings. Additionally, one farmer gave 88 50-kg bags of maize (corn) as tithe and the same amount as offerings.



LISTEN

After the benchmarking event, 196 more cattle were donated, bringing the total number to 363. Along with the cattle, 482 goats and 39 sheep were also given. Furthermore, 1,081 50-kg bags of maize were donated, bringing the total to 1,169 bags. This faithful and bountiful giving took place during one of the worst droughts the union territory has faced in many years, further confirming the great potential of in-kind giving to everyone in our division territory.

During the benchmarking event, we met a farmer who was not a church member but decided to participate in the cattle counting after hearing about the exercise. Although some of his cattle were kept by other people, he chose to include them in the count. For example, if he had given eight cattle to somebody, the count would begin at nine. Similarly, if another person was keeping six cattle, the count would begin at seven. He ended up returning 27 cattle as tithe and another 27 as offerings.

REFLECTION

Following the benchmarking event, all our unions agreed to teach giving in-kind alongside traditional cash giving. We realize that, in seasons with normal to above-normal rainfall, we can expect more people to participate in in-kind giving across the division territory. Past experiences and the benchmarking exercise have taught us how to make this alternative mode of giving more effective.

Among the key precautions, ensuring accountability is paramount. From the local church to the conference, everyone involved should be able to account for what has been received. The disposal of in-kind giving should be done transparently. Those responsible or involved in the process should never purchase the goods themselves, nor should they sell the items at below-market prices. Members should receive receipts reflecting the monetary value of what they donated once it has been sold.

"Goal: Each year, an additional 2% of the local church membership, at the start of the year, is participating in tithing and regular and systematic offerings."

SOD 2022-2025

Additionally, pastors and stewardship directors at both conference and union levels should invest time in supporting this initiative. One way to do this is by paying regular visits to farmers, especially when they are preparing their fields, to pray with them and plead with God for good rainfall, to protect the fields, and a bountiful harvest. This will ensure that they won't forget God at harvest time. As church leaders, we should not only show up during harvest time for the counting when we were not there throughout the year. Livestock farmers should also have their animals prayed for.

Promoting and teaching God's people to give in kind is a powerful way to increase member participation. Experience has shown us that it is often easier for farmers to give in kind than to give money after selling their products. It might appear costly for the conference to collect and dispose of in-kind donations, but the growth in faithfulness and the net income generated far exceed the expenses incurred.

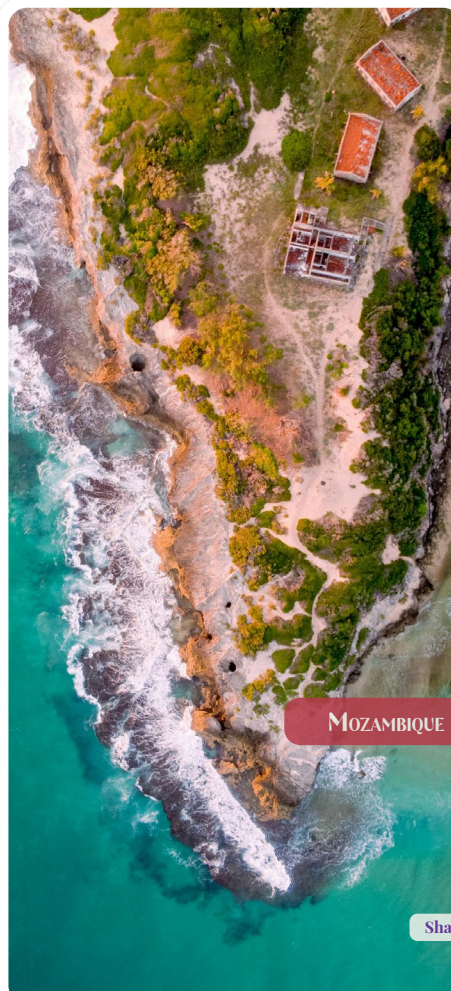
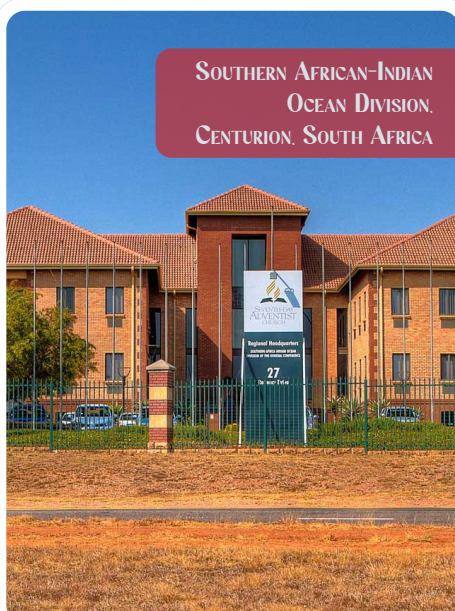
Dr. Mundia Liywalii serves as the Stewardship Director for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Pretoria, South Africa.



Cattle loaded on truck after being counted as tithes and offerings.



An exercise of "Tithing in Kind," Zambia.



STEWARDSHIP & TREASURY



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

**A partnership to nurture
a God-first lifestyle!**

GOD FIRST

ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES



A 13-LESSON PARTICIPATIVE WORKSHOP FOR CHURCH LEADERS



Mobilizing Partners for Mission

God's Vision ... His Provision

Prepared by the Stewardship Ministries
Department of the General Conference
of Seventh-Day Adventist





SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION

ELDER JULIAN ARCHER

WHO IS SISTER BETSY?

Hi, folks. I'm Sister Betsy, the adrenalin-loving granny who thrives on extreme sports and living life to the fullest—just like Jesus said we should in John 10:10! I also have a deep passion for supporting frontline mission work at home and around the world, so I want to help you put God first through the practice of Systematic Benevolence. What is Systematic Benevolence? I'm so glad you asked!

Systematic Benevolence, or “Sister Betsy,” as the Adventist pioneers affectionally called it, is a method of returning tithe and giving God offerings that focus on intentionally and systematically dedicating a percentage of our income as offerings for God’s essential mission work around the world.

Sister Betsy appeals to our minds and our hearts. It’s a love-fueled, faith-based response to God’s goodness, and it’s changing the lives of people who take God at His word and welcome Sister Betsy into their giving plans.

The biblical Sister Betsy model of proportional tithe and offerings has its origins throughout the Bible and was promoted by early Adventist pioneers to help support frontline gospel workers. It was a system of preplanned, intentional, and proportional giving by members that allowed God’s church family to grow rapidly.

Ellen White wrote, “This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And he desires us to give regularly and systematically. . . . After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, ‘as God hath prospered you’” (*The Review and Herald*, May 9, 1893).

We know that we are invited to take God at His word when He says, “Test me in this” (Malachi 3:10). God wants us to test Him, to try His promises, and to watch Him bless our lives as we faithfully return full tithes and offerings to His storehouse.

A biblical study of Systematic Benevolence reminds us that after returning God’s 10 percent tithe to Him, systematic givers set aside a specific percentage of their income for God’s

offerings. For some people, this might be 3 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, or more. The key biblical principle for calculating offerings for God is that we are to give as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1–15).

IS SISTER BETSY STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

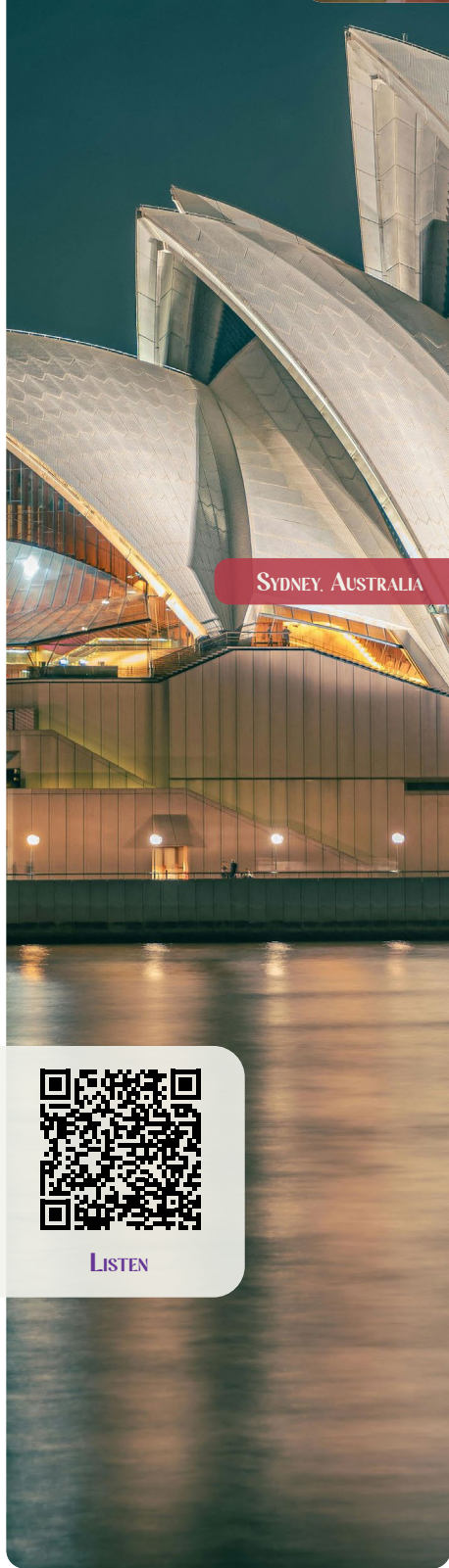
Yes, more than ever, and here’s why. All mission activities, from local church outreach to massive, nationwide evangelism initiatives, are made possible through our mission offerings. However, even in some places, while *local* church offerings have been growing, *mission* offerings have been declining.

In 1930, for every \$10 North American Adventists returned in tithe, they gave an additional \$6.45 (64.5 percent of tithe) to mission offerings. By 2008, that number had dropped to just 36 cents (3.6 percent of tithe), which is almost 18 times less than in the 1930s.

The data for places like Australia and New Zealand is only slightly better, with mission offerings in 2021 equating to 4.8 percent of tithe,* which is still less than half a percent of personal incomes being given to mission offerings. As you can imagine, this severely limits the resources available for fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, 20, both at home and around the world.

In 2023 the South Pacific Division Stewardship Department ran an Australia & New Zealand Offering Survey and received more than 2,000 responses. Many members told us that they felt a need to return to systematic and planned giving to mission, but needed more guidance and inspiration.

*“Our Mission:
Inviting people to
trust God as Owner
and Provider, and to
partner in his final
mission through
regular and systematic
giving.”*
SOD 2022–2025



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



LISTEN

Giving systematically and sacrificially, out of our comfort zone, requires a leap of faith. How could we encourage members to show God that they love Him more than earthly comforts? How could we inspire them to exercise greater faith in our Provider God and take that leap?

“FLYING” ACROSS

Prayerful meditation on these above challenges led us to welcome back Sister Betsy. We discussed the concept at stewardship advisory and finance meetings, and slowly, Sister Betsy’s fun but mission-minded character emerged.

Through a series of print and electronic advertisements and social media posts, Sister Betsy is now “flying” across our division, encouraging members in their financial stewardship journey. She has become a mascot for all sorts of stewardship communications.

Her main message is that by carefully setting aside a prayerfully decided percentage of our income for church mission offerings, together we can provide all the resources needed for God’s frontline mission work at home and around the world.

OUTCOMES

Although “she’s” nearly 170 years old, Sister Betsy was only welcomed back to the South Pacific Division in July 2024, so we don’t yet have data on her most recent impact. However, we do know that mission offerings are increasing strongly and that Sister Betsy has been well-received across all age groups.

We would love to see Sister Betsy welcomed back right across the world church, so please feel free to download, edit, modify, translate, and use any of her resources at <https://stewardship.adventistchurch.com/sister-betsy/>.

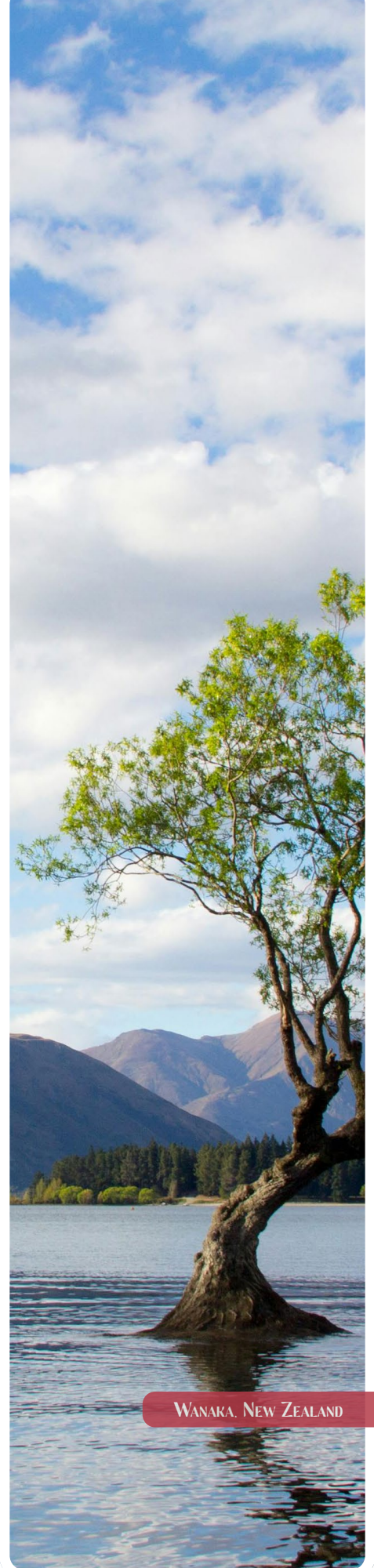
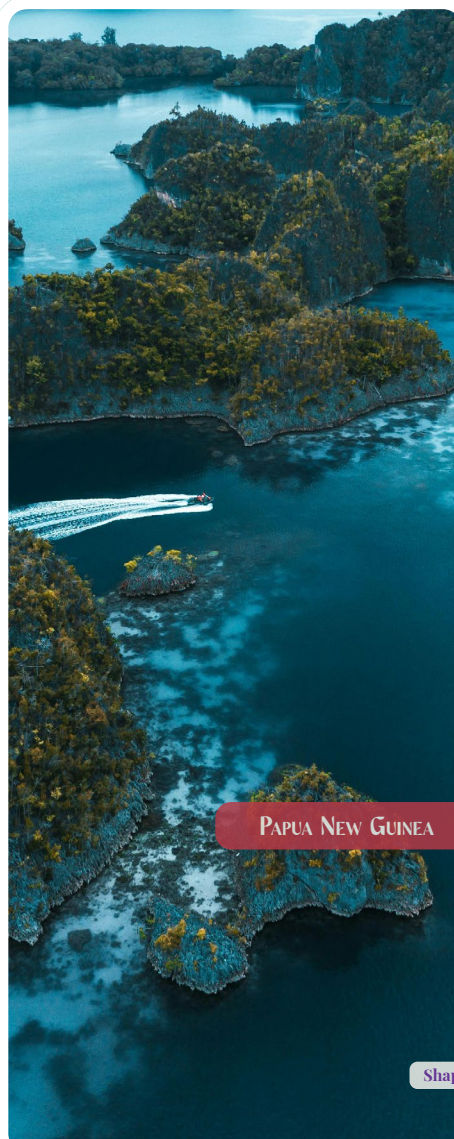
“Thank you for prayerfully considering joining me in setting aside a regular part of your income to systematically support frontline mission.”

Sister Betsy

Elder Julian Archer serves as the Stewardship Director for the South Pacific Division, Sydney, Australia.

References

* Annual Statistical Report (2021 Data), Office of Archives, Statistics & Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



Stewardship Certification Programs for Local Church Leaders

SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION

PASTOR SUNDERRAJ PAULMONEY

Local church pastors and lay leaders shape the culture of their local congregations, including the God-first culture. Through their attitudes, reflections, decisions, and actions, they initiate, maintain, transform, and pass on this culture. Their practices are deeply informed by their convictions. Therefore, if we nurture the right convictions in our local church leaders, it might have a meaningful impact on how our members embrace a God-first lifestyle.

"Provide Training of Trainers (TOT) for stewardship educators."

SOD 2022-2025

God is the Owner and Provider; He handed over the world to Adam and Eve as His managers; through sin, humans lost their rulership over planet earth; Jesus, the True Steward, restores in humans the capacity to serve as God's managers; and through a close relationship with God, humans can live in obedience and experience the joy of faithful stewardship. Stewardship encompasses all aspects of life; it is the Christian life in action.

However, we have observed that church leaders at various levels, as well as members, have a limited understanding of stewardship. For many, stewardship is seen as only financially supporting the church through tithes and offerings. A more comprehensive perspective of stewardship was needed, so we decided to run a Stewardship Certification Program, mainly targeting local church leaders.

OUR FIRST STEWARDSHIP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

A division-wide Stewardship Certification Program was held from February 21-23, 2023, at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre in Bangalore, India. Over a hundred delegates, including union, conference, and section counterparts, as well as treasurers and frontline pastors, attended the certification program. Elder Aniel Barbe, the Associate Stewardship Director of the General Conference, served as the main resource person. This first certification program was inaugurated by Pastor Ezras Lakra, President of the Southern Asia Division. Other resource persons were Elder Riches Christian, Pastor LeRoy Samuel, Elder Edwin Stanley, and Pastor Paulmoney.

Our training program emphasized the foundational elements of biblical stewardship:

Another area of emphasis was trust-building and developing a culture of faithfulness within the church. Some of the topics covered were: "Created and Redeemed as Stewards: Rediscovering Our True Identity," "Trust: An Accelerator to Faithfulness," "Stewardship in the End Time," "Building a Culture of Faithfulness and Partnership in the Local Church," "Signs of Ownership and Lordship," "God-First Principles," "Stewards from the Cradle," "The Wisdom of Managing Money," and "Nurturing Faithfulness Through Home Visitations."

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE STEWARDSHIP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

At the end of the Stewardship Certification Program, attendees were awarded certificates of participation. The knowledge gained has impacted many of the stewardship counterparts and treasury personnel. It helped to develop a correct understanding of stewardship. Participants went back to their respective fields and began implementing what they learned. Union and section stewardship directors are actively monitoring and supervising the process. The adequate stewardship concepts are now promoted in every local church and in all our educational institutions.

ZANSKAR, INDIA



LISTEN

The people of the Southern Asia Division speak different languages in different states; therefore, it is difficult to invite the leaders, pastors, and laity to one place and have them teach the principles of stewardship. After the stewardship directors of unions, conferences, sections, regions, and educational institutions were adequately trained, they went back to their respective units, and, in turn, they will teach the members in their vernacular language. As of today, we have offered the Stewardship Certification Program in the major languages of India.

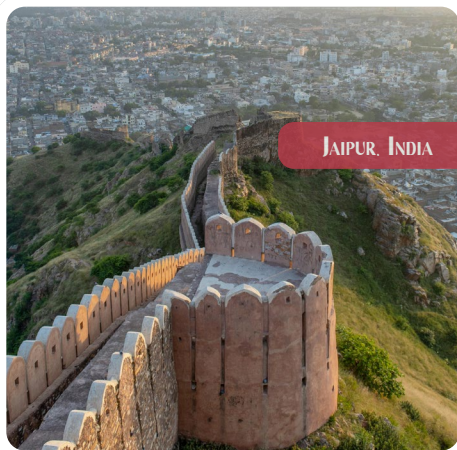
As a result of organizing the Stewardship Certification Program, we have seen growth in spiritual maturity reflected in members' giving of offerings and returning tithe in churches whose leaders participated in the program. For example, by the end of 2023 and 2024, we observed a great difference in tithes and offerings in Bangalore. When we compare the tithe in 2023 to the tithe in 2024 at the English-speaking church in Bangalore, there was a growth of 28 percent, and offerings for the same church at the same period had also increased by 24 percent.

As we aspire for more positive changes, it is critical to further invest in nurturing the right convictions and appropriate knowledge of stewardship in those leading in local churches.

Pastor Sunderraj Paulmoney serves as the Stewardship Ministries Director for the Southern Asia Division, Hosur, India.



Participants at a Stewardship Certification Program in Bangalore, India.



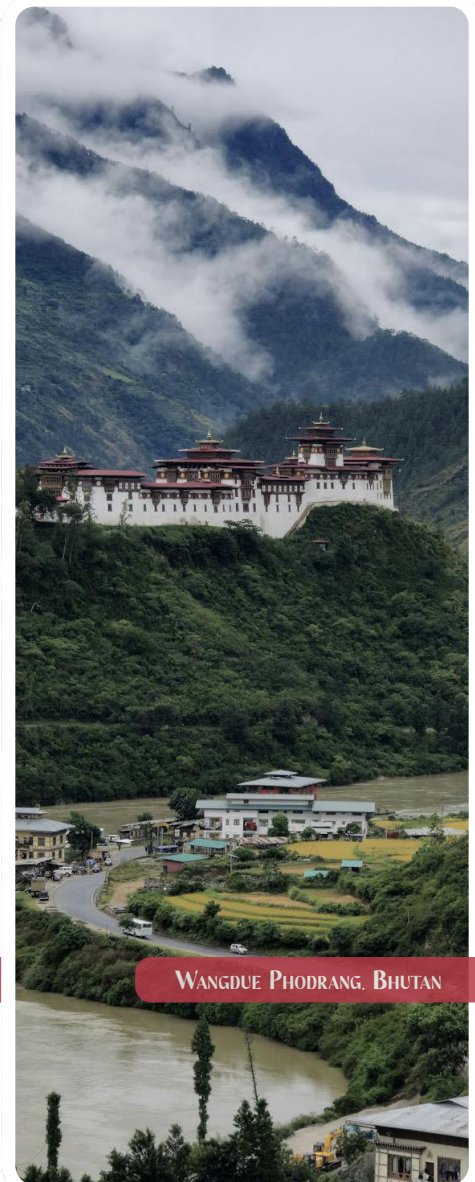
JAIPUR, INDIA



SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION,
TAMIL NADU, INDIA



MALDIVES



WANGDUE PHODRANG, BHUTAN



Reinforcing the Implementation of the Combined Offering Plan

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

PASTOR FRANCIS AMER

In our spiritual journey, giving is a profound expression of gratitude, obedience, and dedication to God's work. The Combined Offering Plan (COP) was adopted by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) in 2002. Its objectives were to simplify the practice of giving offerings, to amplify the effects of offerings on mission, and, foremost, to emphasize the practice of offerings as an act of worship to God.

SINGAPORE

Recently, we acknowledged the need to reinforce the implementation of the COP for better results. It was evident that the COP, although a giving plan with great benefits, was not necessarily impacting offering participation and influencing members to give at a higher level. We intentionally invested in educating members about the importance of regular and systematic giving for offerings, teaching about offerings being a proportion (percentage) of income, and encouraging members to consider giving an offering that is higher than the tithe. We did this by starting a pilot project at the Southwestern Philippines Union Conference (SwPUC).

THE ESSENCE OF REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC GIVING

Through education, we wanted our church members to understand that the COP rests upon regular and systematic giving. Previously, the focus was only on applying the distribution formula for offering funds. It was used as an accounting tool. One way of achieving our new approach to implementing the COP was to study 1 Corinthians 16:2, which instructs, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." This study will

highlight the principles of regularity, planning, proportionality, and solidarity that should characterize our giving pattern for offerings.

We considered that when systematic giving becomes a habit of generosity, giving becomes a natural and joyful part of our financial routine. This discipline supports the church's mission and cultivates a generous spirit within church members, reminding us of the continuous blessings we receive and our responsibility to share them.

EMBRACING PERCENTAGE-BASED OFFERINGS

While tithing, or returning 10% of our income, is a foundational practice of Christian stewardship, we reminded members that tithing was only a starting point. Additionally, members were discouraged from giving their offerings as an amount but to give in proportion; as their income increased, a corresponding increase in giving was appropriate. The biblical mandate for this teaching comes from Luke 12:48, which underscores this principle: "From everyone who has been

given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

By embracing proportional giving, we acknowledge the varying blessings everyone receives. Those who have been blessed with more can contribute more significantly to the church's mission, ensuring that resources are available for all ministries and initiatives. This approach meets financial needs and strengthens



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"In compliance with the 2002 GC Spring Council vote, the GC Stewardship Ministries Department will encourage the adoption and application of the Combined Offering Plan by the divisions, explaining the plan and showing its advantages."

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the sense of community and shared responsibility among church members.

THE PILOT PROJECT

We selected organized churches in the SwPUC for the reinforced implementation of the COP. The desired goal was for more than 60% of the church members to practice regular and systematic giving for at least six consecutive months. We decided to conduct an evaluation yearly for motivation and encouragement.

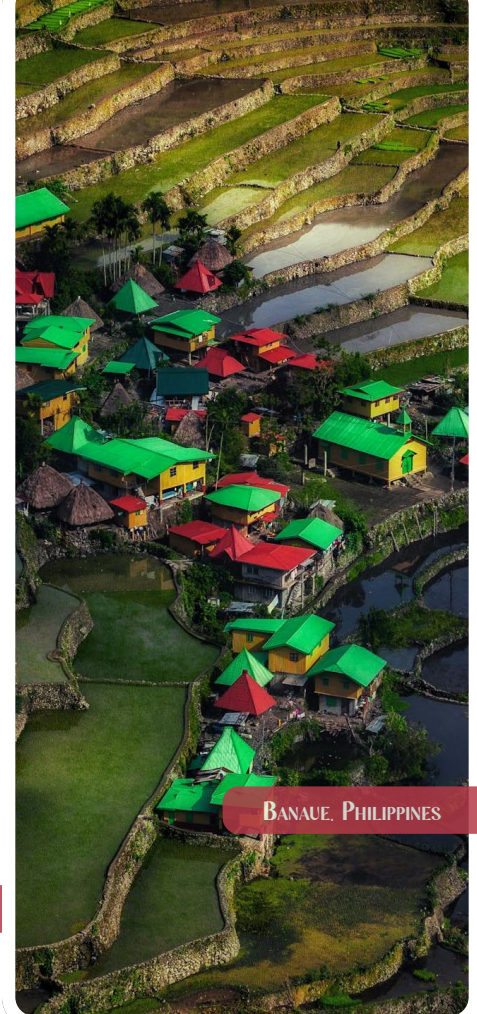
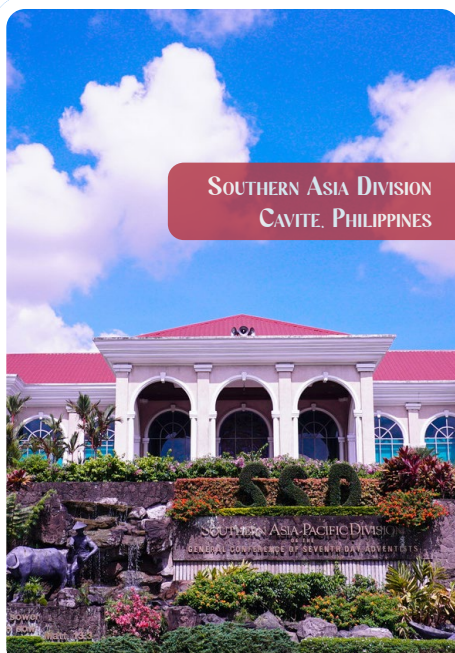
As a result of this new emphasis, we now have approximately 40 churches in the SwPUC that are practicing regular and systematic giving, where members are giving offerings as a percentage of their income and giving more offerings than tithe.

THE PATH FORWARD

The adoption of the COP has brought significant blessings to the SSD, which we continue to enjoy. It was helpful for givers and those managing offering funds. Nonetheless, only adopting the COP has seldom changed the reality of participation in giving offerings. You can even experience a decline in giving! When we intentionally reinforced adequate stewardship education at the local church, we started reaping the full benefits of the COP.

Today, we are on track to change the reality of offering participation across our all-division territory. Learning from our experience in the SwPUC, we are committed to helping more members understand that following the COP implies, at a personal level, embracing fully the principles of regular and systematic giving, where members are giving offerings as a percentage of their income, and following God's prompting even when it means giving more offerings than tithe.

Pastor Francis Amer serves as the new Stewardship Ministries Director of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division



Down With Cinderella: Prayer, Partnership, and Social Media

TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION

CATHERINE ANTHONY BOLDEAU

Shortly after I accepted the role of Stewardship Director at the British Union Conference (BUC) in June 2024, a colleague told me that stewardship is seen in the territory as a “Cinderella movement.” Astounded, I asked the person to repeat their comments so that I was clear that I had not misheard.

“It’s a ‘Cinderella movement’—the poor relation in the system, not a particularly exciting role.”

On visiting churches, many of the members reiterated these sentiments and then added, “You’ve only come here to talk about money.” My young adult daughter also asked me, “So, what exactly are you meant to do in your new job?”

CORPORATE REALITY CHECK

As I began to immerse myself in my new role, I discovered that stewardship was the one item that would get moved or deleted from an agenda (until the “next meeting”). As I probed deeper, I discovered that for 20 years, stewardship at the union level was an administrative function—distributing information from the higher organizations to our conferences and missions.

As the first female non-clergy stewardship director, my appointment was viewed as “unusual” by some church leaders.

METAPHORS AND MOTTOES

With the Cinderella metaphor of “undeservedly neglected or ignored” looming large in business meetings and church settings, the Father invited me to reflect on the stewardship motto: “God first.” Each morning, I would rise at 3 A.M. and pray and invite God to lead my life, work, and witness, particularly in my new role.

His peace came over me, and with the God-first motto daily ringing in my ears, I was able to move from a mild despondency at the task of leading the stewardship work in the United Kingdom and Ireland to an inherent joy and excitement. I longed to fulfill the Stewardship Department’s vision of “[inviting] members to trust God as the owner and provider and to participate in His final mission through regular and systematic giving” not just of people’s finances but of their hearts, but I didn’t know how.

BREAKTHROUGH AND COLLABORATION

One day, during a powerful morning worship focused on the significant benefits of prayer, led by BUC Women’s Ministries Director Sharon Platt-McDonald, God whispered to me, “Why not collaborate with her to invite our members to trust God as owner and provider?”

Our initial discussions focused initially on creating a weekly “short” that could be uploaded to BUC TV, our YouTube channel. This short would be around five minutes and be recorded in our onsite studio. However, after further prayer and reflection, we agreed that it would be more beneficial to create a 90-second reel on a biweekly basis based on key spiritual stewardship topics, and so Tuesday Talks was born.

STEWARDSHIP AND SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA

One of the primary benefits of using social media is to significantly increase our engagement with our followers and to extend our reach with new audiences, to build brand awareness. Reels are also favored by the Instagram algorithm and are more likely to be seen by new audiences.

NETHERLANDS, NEDERLAND

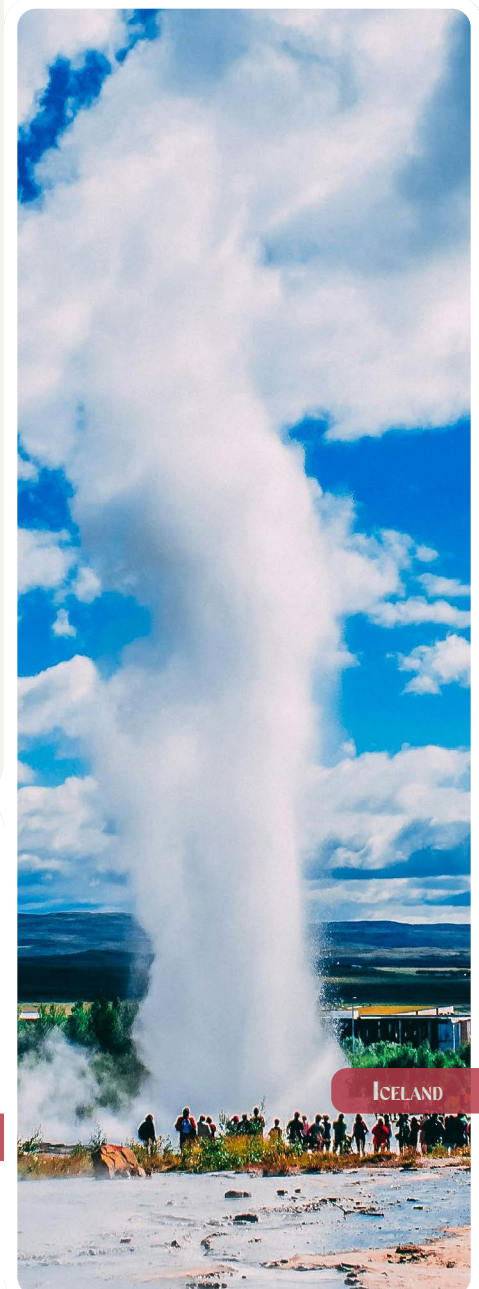


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On this week's Tuesday Talks, the partnership between Stewardship and Women's Ministries, Sharon Platt-McDonald explores how you... See more



Sharing stewardship content on social media in partnership with the Women's Ministries Department.



ICELAND

» The reels provide a platform for further projects on Facebook and Instagram, such as a Stewardship Facebook and/or Instagram LIVE.

» The reels create resources for use by members in their local churches.

FUTURE

The social media algorithms change, and it is imperative that our branding and messaging keep abreast with these changes. In addition to this, it may be beneficial to collaborate with other departments such as Sabbath School, Ministerial, Youth, and Family Life to ensure that our messaging is targeting a wider and more diverse audience.

CONCLUSION

In the fairy tale, we meet Cinderella on her knees scrubbing the floors. And although she bemoaned her challenging existence, she did her job faithfully and to the best of her ability. I, too, found myself in an unpleasant situation, brought to my knees. But in doing so, I was able to commune with my heavenly Father and humbly ask Him to be the guide of my life as I put Him first. I was reminded to “trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6, NKJV).

Sometimes, the Lord invites us to “get down” with Cinderella, to take the broom and sweep the floors, to mop the grime and remove the stains. He points out the areas in our lives that need a polish, and we find ourselves at His feet, ready and willing to do His will.

Catherine Anthony Boldeau serves as the Stewardship Director at the British Union Conference, in the territory of the Trans-European Division. Her union covers the UK and Ireland.

“Prepare and share social media postings.”

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The BUC has over 6,000 followers on Facebook and 851 on Instagram, but our social media channels are underutilized in engaging our members, potential followers, and stakeholders with key messages.

In addition to creating 90-second reels on Facebook and Instagram, we ensure that each post is accompanied by the relevant hashtags #GodFirst, #AdventistStewardshipMinistries, and a hashtag appropriate to the topic that is presented. In addition to this, Tuesday Talks are also a regular feature in the BUC's weekly newsletter, BUC News, which has 7,000 readers worldwide.

OUTCOMES

» Spiritually, we have engaged with audiences around the topics of prayer, healing words, and priorities, with the God first motto and the Adventist Stewardship Ministries logo displayed in the first three seconds. We use them again at the end of the reel.

» Comments received, both on the Facebook and Instagram pages, together with the verbal conversations, have suggested that there is a growing number of our members who are beginning to engage with the Stewardship motto of God first in their lives.

» Several of the reels have had over 800 views on Facebook.

» There is a heightened awareness of the role of stewardship in the BUC territory.

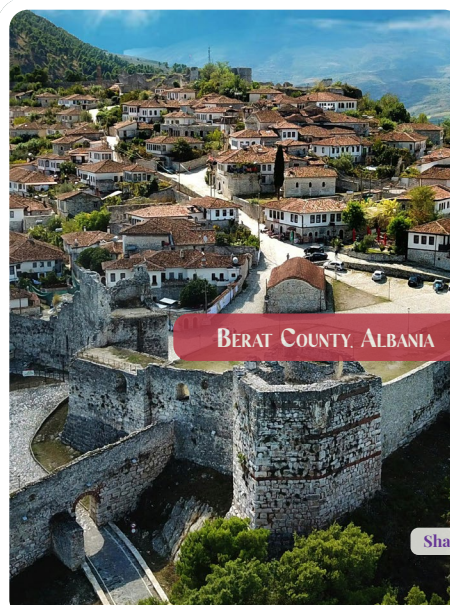
» The contemporary nature of the reels has attracted a small but growing youth audience.

» The reels are filmed, edited, and have graphics created by a young graduate who is now a part-time employee of the Stewardship Department.

» We have created a collaborative approach to Stewardship Ministries with Women's Ministries and the Media Department.



TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION.
ST ALBANS. UNITED KINGDOM



BERAT COUNTY. ALBANIA

Growing Faithfulness During Wartime: Offertory Devotional Videos

UKRAINIAN UNION CONFERENCE

PASTOR KAMPEN KONSTANTIN

When we compare the offerings received at the Ukrainian Union Conference (UUC) in 2024 to those in 2021, we see a 73 percent increase in national currency. That is particularly striking considering the present situation in Ukraine. The country has been at war since 2014, and in 2022, this conflict escalated into a full-scale invasion. As a result, several cities with strong Adventist communities were destroyed, leaving very few residents behind. Additionally, about 15 percent of the church members have left the country, and the financial solvency of the population has decreased.

While exploring the reasons behind the increase in offerings, it is important to consider factors such as the depreciation of the national currency (with an inflation rate of 43 percent from 2022 to 2024, and the exchange rate of the national currency to the American dollar rising by 52 percent), as well as an increase in average salary due to a labor shortage, and some other factors. However, we believe that the national economic changes cannot fully explain the 73 percent increase in offerings over these three troublesome years.

When we examine the overall statistics of the SDA Church's operation in Ukraine, we notice how wartime has enhanced the dedication of the Ukrainian church. This is reflected primarily in the greater participation of church members and pastors in social and missionary activities, as well as through an increase in offerings to support God's work.

OFFERTORY DEVOTIONAL VIDEOS

During this time of crisis, the Stewardship Ministries Department has implemented several initiatives that, in our opinion, have helped church members

express their dedication to God through their offerings. One of the key projects involves the use of tithe and offertory devotional videos in our local church communities before the divine service weekly collection. Before 2021, our local congregations used the offertory readings before the offering collection. While these materials were beautiful and thoughtful, research shows that we tend to forget 80 percent of what we hear and 50 percent of what we see. While it is hard to scientifically establish that offertory videos are remembered exactly five times more than offertory devotional readings, it's widely accepted that visual elements improve attention, have a stronger impact, and help with information retention.

"Prepare and share the weekly offertory devotionals (readings and videos)."

SOD 2022-2025

The UUC welcomed the initiative of the GC Stewardship Ministries Department to produce these weekly videos to introduce offerings collections and we adopted this initiative. Starting in 2021, UUC Stewardship Ministries began translating

tithe and offertory devotional videos into Ukrainian and recommending local communities watch them during divine worship services. The UUC continued to print the offertory readings brochures for communities who did not have the equipment to watch the video or preferred using printed material. These communities could receive printed material or download an electronic version of offertory readings from a website.

The videos had to not only be translated but also made accessible to each local community. For this purpose, we created a dedicated YouTube channel and pastors' group in the Telegram application. The video for each Saturday is sent to the group weekly. The project started off quite well, and in the first year (2021) of its implementation, the 52 videos got 10,553 views. The Stewardship Ministries Department



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An episode of the tithe and offerings devotional video in Ukrainian language.

continued improving the work and spreading the project among local communities. In 2023, the Nadiia Channel (Hope Channel Ukraine) and a team of consecrated people joined in. As a result of all the efforts, the number of views rose by 337 percent compared to the first year. In early February 2025, a survey among pastors showed that 83 percent of communities watch the tithe and offertory devotional videos. The video appeals in Ukrainian are not only used by the churches in Ukraine. Migration caused by the war has led to the growth of Ukrainian-speaking communities abroad. In 2024, 11 percent of viewers were from outside Ukraine.

WHY DOES IT WORK?

Tithe and offertory devotional videos are powerful tools that strengthen church members' dedication to God. Several characteristics contribute to their effectiveness.

First, they are easy to implement. Aside from owning a video projector, there are no additional costs for a local church to adopt the initiative. It compensates partly for the absence of trained stewardship educators and stewardship departments locally, which is often a reality in small churches. There are no recurring expenses associated with its execution.

Second, they leverage an audience that is readily available—attendees of the church's weekly service. Running stewardship programs outside the divine service setting, if one finds a suitable time slot in the busy schedule of the local church, often comes with the challenge of how to mobilize members to attend. Typically, those who are already convinced and practicing

stewardship principles are the ones who show up to stewardship meetings.

Third, the initiative addresses the need for repetitive education. Unfortunately, not all baptized members receive thorough instruction about stewardship when they join the church. Consolidating knowledge in this area of Christian discipleship is a necessity. Additionally, McIver (2016)* reports that forgetting is one of the major factors affecting consistency in giving among Seventh-day Adventist members. Through the offertory video initiative, a church member could hear and see 52 presentations on the topic of our consecration to the Lord as faithful stewards in a given year. No other theme is covered as frequently as worshipping through giving in our worship services. This provides a constant reminder, helping to address the issue of forgetting.

Our experience with the offertory devotional videos has confirmed the importance of diversifying how we reach all segments of the church with stewardship teachings. Moving forward, we are open to exploring and testing new approaches to more effectively communicate this timeless message of putting God first.

Pastor Kampen Konstantin serves as the Ukrainian Union Conference Stewardship Director—an attached territory to the General Conference.

References

*Robert K. McIver. "Giving Practices among Seventh-day Adventists." SDA Church Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2016.



UKRAINIAN UNION CONFERENCE.
KYIV, UKRAINE.



DNISTER, UKRAINE



JARILGACH ISLAND, UKRAINE

Double Blessing Envelopes

WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION

DR. PAUL ADU SAMPAH

Shortly after I took office as the new Stewardship Director for the West-Central African Division (WAD) in 2022, I wanted to better understand the factors influencing regular tithes and offerings in the territory. To gain insight, I conducted an investigation. After reviewing the findings, it became evident that providing tithes and offering envelopes to each member would have a major impact on giving practices across our territory. I would like to share the reasoning behind WAD's adoption of tithing and offering envelopes as our primary strategy to assist members to put God first, along with the process of its implementation.

MEMBERS' SOURCES OF SUBSISTENCE

To understand the giving practices of our church members, I wanted to learn more about their sources of income. Through observations and consultations, I could identify five major sources of livelihood for the majority of our members in the WAD territory:

1. Many are living in the rural communities of their respective country and are peasant farmers, selling their produce during the week and immediately spending their earnings at the market.
2. Others are small-scale traders, such as hawkers, roadside plantain roasters, ice water sellers, or housewives who sell in smaller shops at home.
3. Another group consists of artisans like hairdressers, barbers, tailors, carpenters, shoemakers, and others in that category who apply their businesses daily and earn a profit.
4. Then there are the commercial drivers, including the "okada" (motorcycle taxis) and "keke" (motorized tricycle) drivers. They run their businesses daily and generate income.
5. Finally, some members work as daily contractual workers, including daily farm assistants, construction laborers, driver's mates, and market shopping assistants who are paid daily.

These five groups, which make up the majority of our church membership in the WAD, share some common characteristics. First, they earn a daily income from their trades or

activities, with no defined amount in advance. Second, they typically spend their earnings and profits the same day or immediately after receiving them; they seldom have a spending plan. Third, if they understand and believe in tithing, they remember and calculate their tithe and give offerings on what is left at the end of the week or on Sabbath morning as they prepare for church. For many, the best they can do is to give offerings since they do not keep a clear record of what they have earned during the week.

THE DOUBLE BLESSING ENVELOPES

Through the investigation, we realized that we faced a twofold challenge, which can be summarized by two questions: 1. How can we encourage our members to diligently track their earnings? 2. How can we help them calculate their tithe daily and decide on their offerings before spending? To address this, a plan was developed that was heavily inspired by the advice of the apostle Paul to the early church: "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

To assist our members in maintaining regularity and faithfulness in giving, our department designed a special envelope with two compartments: one for tithe and one for offerings for the division territory. Members are encouraged to deposit their tithe and offerings in the respective compartments of the envelope at the end of each working day, based on their earnings. This daily exercise helps them monitor their income and ensures they do not spend what belongs to God. At the end of the sixth working day (Friday), members seal both sides of the envelope containing their accumulated tithe and offerings, and bring it to church, the "storehouse," as directed by the Owner. The envelope provides a visible and practical daily reminder, reinforcing the regularity and faithfulness of giving.

On February 22, 2023, the "Double Blessing Envelope" was officially launched at the division's head office in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Samples were distributed to all union stewardship directors. The Northern Ghana Union Conference was selected to pilot the new envelopes. By June 2023, early results from the

BATOUFAM, CAMEROON



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pilot project showed a positive response from church leaders and members, with the demand for the “Double Blessing Envelope” exceeding expectations. The WAD Stewardship Ministries Department is now promoting and facilitating the printing of the new envelopes in the four major languages of its territory—English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese—upon requests from unions.

For effective implementation, each church member has begun receiving two durable envelopes, whereas many did not even have one previously. After members return tithes and offerings in one envelope, they will use the second envelope the following week. Since these envelopes are made from long-lasting materials, this requires only a one-time investment, which is an important consideration for entities with limited resources. Each envelope includes an identity tag where donors can write their names, local church, local conference, and union. Each donor has a personal identification number generated from the church record book. Using these envelopes also contributes to reducing the practice of loose or unidentified giving. Many territories did not have official envelopes for tithes and

Our Mission: Each year, an additional 2% of the local church membership, at the start of the year, is participating in tithing and regular and systematic offerings.

SOD 2022-2025

offerings, so this improved internal control in the management of church funds.

The “Double Blessing Envelope” is now a joint project of the Stewardship Ministries and Treasury Departments of the WAD. By the end of 2024, over 200,000 envelopes were distributed across 8 of the 10 unions in our territory. The treasurer’s report during the 2024 year-end meeting highlighted that both tithe and offering have improved significantly in local currencies in the unions that have started using the special envelopes. Are

we already reaping some early fruits from the adoption of the “Double Blessing Envelope”? It appears that the “Double Blessing Envelope” is helping to grow a new generation of systematic and faithful givers in the WAD territory. We prayerfully expect further growth.

Dr. Paul Adu Sampah is currently serving as the West-Central Division (WAD) Stewardship Director, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.



Presentation of Double Blessing envelopes during a stewardship advisory.



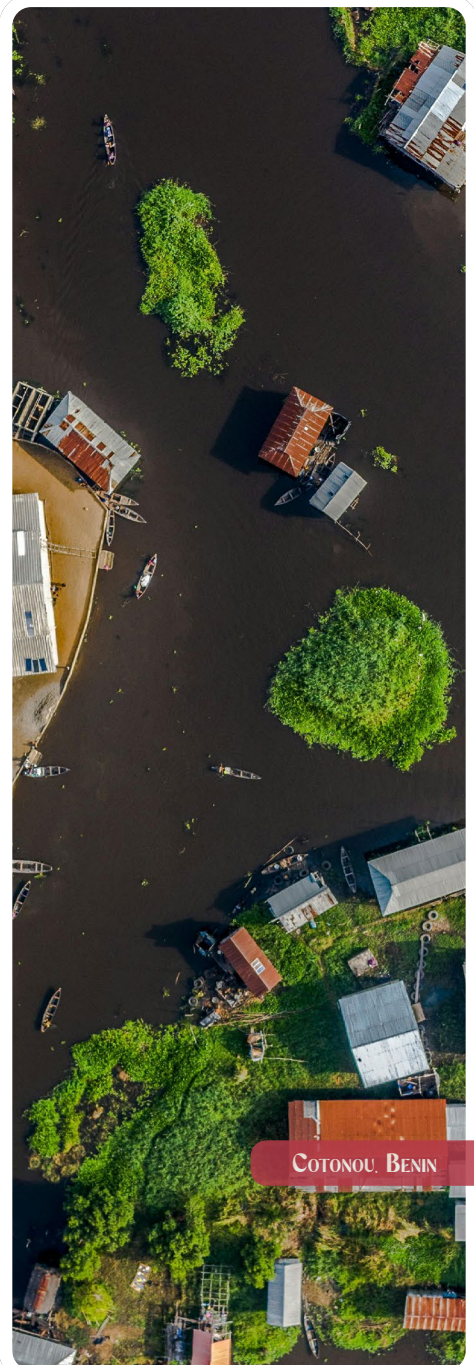
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WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION,
ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE



RIVER OF GOLD, SENEGAL



COTONOU, BENIN

GENEROUS ACTS

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP DRAMAS
TO INSPIRE AND CHALLENGE!

BY DR. KEN LONG

COMING
SOON!

GOD FIRST

ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES



WATCH