

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official “United in Prayer” Weekly Blog and Prayer Requests
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How a Broken SUV Became a Missionary

By Andrew McChesney

Parking at home after a weekend camping trip, Joe Marcellino saw a trail of oil going up the street from his Isuzu Trooper SUV.

“Oh-oh,” he said to his wife, Susan. “Things aren’t good.”

Joe, then a 33-year-old IT manager at the Seventh-day Adventist World Church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, called a friend for help.

His friend, Eric Armer, found that the oil had spewed from the oil filter’s rubber gasket, and warned that the engine had probably sustained significant damage. He estimated that repairs could cost more than \$3,000.

Joe and Susan, recently married, had about \$3,000 in the bank. Joe was reluctant to spend the money on the SUV because the couple had fallen behind in returning tithe and owed about \$1,500 for the past three months.

Susan saw no room for discussion. “We need to give our first fruits,” she said.

Joe and Susan prayed and decided to return tithe rather than repair the SUV.

After this decision, Eric contacted Joe and advised him to contact the gas station that had changed his oil shortly before the camping trip. The gas station sent a mechanic to Joe’s house and, after an inspection, took responsibility for the damaged engine. The gas station offered to rebuild the engine for free.

Joe, however, wasn’t sure that he trusted the gas station after the oil change, so the gas station’s insurance paid them \$3,000 instead. Joe took the money and asked another friend, Bill Brody, a car mechanic, to rebuild the engine. When the repairs were finished, Joe received the bill — for \$1,500. To his surprise, the \$3,000 from the gas station’s insurance had been enough to cover the cost of the repairs and his tithe.

Bill cautioned Joe not to keep the SUV. “As a personal friend, I advise you to sell it as soon as possible,” he said. Within a week, Joe was approached by Wayne Calbi, the purchasing director at Adventist Church headquarters. Wayne asked Joe whether he would be willing to sell the SUV.

"A missionary in Africa has asked specifically to buy an Isuzu Trooper," he said. "Are you willing to sell it?" Joe immediately shared the SUV's history and his worry that the engine wouldn't last long. "I'll take the risk," Wayne said.

He gave Joe a fair price and had the vehicle shipped to Africa. Seeing Joe's concerns, he promised to keep him posted on what happened to the SUV. The vehicle had 40,000 miles (about 64,000 kilometers) at the time of the sale.

After about 18 months had gone by, Wayne said to Joe, "You remember that SUV? It now has over 100,000 miles on it." "Praise the Lord!" Joe said. "I didn't think it would last that long."

A couple years later, Wayne said, "Joe, I wanted to let you know it's passed the 200,000-mile mark." Now Joe was truly amazed. A few years later, Wayne said the SUV had passed 300,000 miles.

"It is the Lord who kept it going for this missionary!" Joe said.

Joe, now 61, said the experience taught him an important lesson about mission and the importance of returning tithe first.

"The Lord met our needs when we sat down as husband and wife to give our first fruits to Him and to put our trust in Him," Joe said. "He didn't only meet our needs, but He also met the needs of the missionary in Africa. He knew other needs down the line that we didn't know about, and the SUV was a blessing that kept on giving year after year."

Andrew McChesney is editor for Adventist Mission.

World Church Prayer Requests

August 12-19, 2018

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for our young people as they are heading back to school for the fall. Pray for God to lead in the decisions that need to be made. And pray that their education will be more than just about getting a good job, but most importantly, about preparation for a career of service and useful labor for the Lord.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray for the Inter-European Division as they seek to find new ways to reach the secular/postmodern population in Europe. Pray that the Adventist young people of Europe discover the relevance of the Adventist message and mission.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for God to open the doors of North Korea to the gospel. There are approximately 23 million people that live in North Korea and at this time, there are no open doors, and no known Adventist presence.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for an unnamed church mission outpost center in the East-Central Africa Division. A clinic has been established in a predominantly Muslim country, and church growth is very difficult. All things are possible with God!
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the upcoming Pathways to Health event scheduled for Ft. Worth, Texas, September 19-21, 2018. Pray for God to send the needed volunteers and that many hearts will be open to the gospel as a result of the Pathways ministry.