



**Your Weekly  
Prayer Inspiration**  
*and Prayer Requests*  
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**April 23, 2017**

## **Praying for Missing Sheep**

By Lloyd Perrin

The church that I pastor in the U.S. state of Oregon has an official membership of 491 people. But only 38 percent of those members are active, a number that inches up to 44 percent if you include elderly members who are house-bound because of physical or mental disabilities. That means 56 percent of our members are inactive — a figure that I haven't found to be unusual during my decades of pastoring Seventh-day Adventist churches in the United States.

So recently, we started going through our membership records at the Milton Seventh-day Adventist Church in Milton-Freewater, Oregon. We hope to determine the whereabouts of inactive members, reconnect with them, and invite them back. Inevitably, however, we will end up with a list of members who have simply disappeared. After this list is compiled, I will distribute the list of these missing members to each church officer. We will pray daily for each missing member by name and ask God to help us reconnect with them.

Surprises abounded when I previously gave this prayer challenge to the Linwood Seventh-day Adventist Church in Spokane, Washington. We compiled a list of 30 missing members and asked God to bring them across our path. Within days, a church officer called me to say, "I was down at the supermarket and guess who was in line with me? It was one of the missing members. I got a telephone number and address."

About three weeks after we started to pray, I received a letter from a woman who had left the church 15 years earlier. The woman wrote that she had stopped attending church after failing to return a storybook from the church library. She had moved to another state and, she wrote, had been too lazy to find a way to return the book. But guilt had gnawed at her heart and then grown into a cancer that poisoned her relationship with God. The book and other circumstances had prompted her to leave the church.

The woman wrote that she had suddenly remembered the book and felt convicted to reach out to the church. She apologized for taking the book and enclosed \$50 to cover the book's cost and 15 years of interest on its value.

I called up the woman immediately, and we had a delightful conversation. As I listened to her story, I realized that her sense of conviction had only begun growing when our church had

started to pray 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) away. I put her in touch with her local Adventist pastor, and she became an active member of that church.

The woman was a blessing to our church as well. With her permission, I shared her story with our church members. We rejoiced in the powerful reminder that prayer works.

We didn't locate all the missing members on the list. But through prayer we found about two-thirds of those missing members within three months. We reconnected with them and invited them to return to church. Many were reclaimed.

I am longing to see how God will answer our prayers this time as well. I am leaving a membership list on my office desk to remind me to pray. We need to find our missing sheep and invite them back home.

**Lloyd Perrin** is senior pastor of the Milton Seventh-day Adventist Church in Milton-Freewater, Oregon, and the Blue Mountain Valley-Mission Church in Athena, Oregon. This church was originally shared on Adventist Mission, and is being reprinted with permission.

(<https://www.adventistmission.org/surprises-appear-when-a-church-prays-for-missing-sheep>)

## **World Church Prayer Requests**

### **April 23 - 30**

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Also please continue to pray for the "Reach the World: Issues Impacting Children, Women, and Families" leadership conference that will be occurring May 10-13, 2017 in Budapest Hungary. The General Conference Departments of *Children's Ministries*, *Women's Ministries*, and *Family Ministries* are hosting this International Leadership Conference. Please join us in praying that the presence of God will be at this event in a very special way. (For those interested in knowing more about what will take place at this event, you can login to our event site at [www.facebook.com/RTWBudapest2017](http://www.facebook.com/RTWBudapest2017))
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray for God to bring healing to women, children, and families suffering from abuse, violence, and the affects of substance abuse. Within our own walls there are many that need healing. Let's ask the Lord to show us how we can reach out more effectively to the hurting within our own congregations.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** There are 45 cities of a million or more with fewer than 10 Adventists. Please pray for consecrated, Spirit-led workers to bring a dramatic change!
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** The *South American Division* is home to 72 cities of 500,000 inhabitants or more each. The division has ambitious plans to open 71 new centers of influence across the region! Please ask God to bless these plans, that many may be won to Him!