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Wisam's story bears evidence to God's miraculous intervention.

Wisam belonged to a powerful Muslim family.

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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

One of my main challenges was when we were applying for high schools. I ended up with health sciences—my fourth choice. I started crying. But it ended up being the right school. God always has a plan; He's always ahead, and He knows what He's doing. He always does what's best. Visit vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajkaylacadogan for more of Cadogan's story.

KAYLA CADOGAN,
freshman at State University
of New York at New Paltz



Cover Photo by Mylon Medley

Dear Reader: The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which follows *Adventist Journey* (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

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ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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Volunteer builders celebrate the completion of more than 200 storage sheds for Paradise, California, residents who lost their homes in the 2018 Camp Fire. *Tom Lloyd*

Christians Building Sheds—and hope—in Paradise for Camp Fire survivors.

Being Christian

BY BECKY ST. CLAIR

The morning of November 8, 2018, began just like any other day for Allen Plowman and his two children, residents of Paradise, California. At 7:30 they hopped in the car to head to school. The kids commented on how beautiful the sunrise was that morning.

But when Plowman pulled in front of Paradise Adventist Academy, he was told to take his kids home. There was a fire nearby, and though there was no official word, as a precaution there would be no school that day.

Ash was now falling from a darkened sky. Not unusual—sometimes fires from as far away as 100 miles drop ash in town. Unperturbed, Plowman climbed onto his roof and began the normal precautions—cleaning pine needles out of the rain gutters and hosing down the roof. It was there that he saw the flames.

“Less than a block away, a tree was burning,” he says. “We hadn’t been warned that there was imminent danger, but the fire was coming fast.”

Plowman’s kids grabbed two of their favorite toys, and he tossed a box of important papers into the back of their truck. It took two and a half hours to get out of town. They passed their regular gro-

Building sheds—and hope—in Paradise for Camp Fire survivors.

cery store and gas station, both in flames, and at one point a truck driving next to them caught fire.

A week and a half later Plowman was watching YouTube videos taken by cleanup crews—the only people allowed into Paradise—and he caught a glimpse of his property. Everything was gone.

One Year Later

In July 2019 Plowman, his kids, and his mom were finally allowed back. It took two months from the time of the fire for them to be permitted to return, and another six months for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to clear the debris enough for a camper to be moved onto their property.

November 8, 2019. Plowman is back on his property. Or what was left of it.

As fall slips into winter around the residents of Paradise, it’s not the haunting, happy sounds of Canada geese flying south that greets them every morning; it’s the visceral roar of a chain saw. Or three.

The bone-dry, charred-black trees still standing around Paradise leave the area vulnerable to another, more terrifying fire. And though they’ve removed 60,000 of them, more than 600,000

remain. From 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, Plowman and his neighbors live their lives to a soundtrack of chain saws. And because none of the residence plots have electricity restored, the constant rattling drone of generators fills whatever breaks there are in the chain saw work.

Surrounded by a landscape of fire retardant-covered dirt, felled trees, and piles of garbage and debris waiting to be hauled to the dump, Plowman has crammed everything the family owns into their camper with them, or tightly into the back of their truck. In the middle of what they call “the yard”—a flattened piece of land where their house used to sit, and where one day they hope it will again—sits Plowman’s daughter’s drum set, covered only with a small blue tarp.

“We don’t have anywhere else to put it for her to practice,” he says. “But we can’t leave it out, or it will get ruined or stolen.”

Plowman hesitates to purchase anything of value for lack of anywhere to store it securely. Stories have been passed around Paradise of entire campers disappearing

while the owners are at work. And with the rainy season quickly approaching, storing items outdoors, especially if they are sensitive to temperature and humidity fluctuations, isn’t an option.

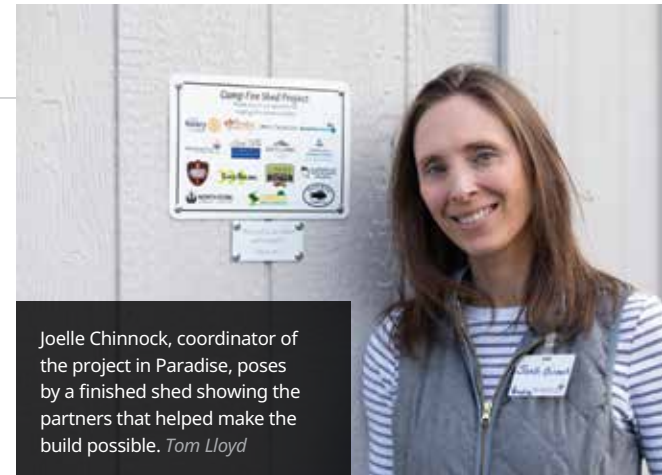
This is particularly an issue for Ashley, a young dialysis patient who administers her own dialysate at home. Ashley lives with her husband and two dogs in a worn-down camper at the end of a dead-end street.

At one corner of their temporary home sits a pile of cardboard boxes full of Ashley’s dialysis supplies, which need to stay dry in order to be viable. If the supplies are ruined, Ashley can’t administer her dialysis, and she could potentially die.

Love Paradise

“Ashley is the reason the shed project is so important,” says Joelle Chinnock, member of the Paradise Adventist Church and coordinator of the shed build project. “That storage space is literally saving her life.”

Though their home did not burn, Chinnock’s family, along with 50,000 others, were evacuated when the fire started.



Joelle Chinnock, coordinator of the project in Paradise, poses by a finished shed showing the partners that helped make the build possible. *Tom Lloyd*

Two days after suggesting the shed build, representatives from Maranatha Volunteers International were standing in the parking lot of what used to be the Paradise Seventh-day Adventist Church, planning for 100 sheds.

Chinnock began giving her time to her church’s outreach ministry, Love Paradise.

Three years ago Garrison Chaffee, youth pastor at the church and director of Love Paradise, met with the town manager of Paradise and agreed



An aerial view of the shed build at the Paradise church site where volunteers constructed more than 200 sheds. *Tom Lloyd*

to take on Make a Difference Day, a national movement for community engagement. Since then, Love Paradise, with members of the church and community, have cleaned a bike path, painted park benches, planted daffodils, and more.

“Since the fire, the avenues and opportunities for Love Paradise to serve have multiplied exponentially,” Chaffee says. “We set up a distribution center at the Chico church and filled and emptied the gym with donations three times.”

The group also set up a clean water station at the former Paradise church site, as most of the local water supply is tainted with heavy metals as a result of the fire. They got thousands of brand-new T-shirts donated by various sources. Additionally, they put together what they dubbed “Welcome Home Kits,” large plastic bins packed with items a family might need to get their homes restarted after the fire, such as towels, dishes, pots and pans, soap, toilet paper, garbage cans, and gift cards.

In order to continue to be relevant, Love Paradise browsed Facebook support pages to find areas of greatest need. When Chinnock saw a post about a man building a shed for someone, she thought, *We could do that.*

Two days after suggesting the shed build, representatives from Maranatha Volunteers International were standing in the parking lot of what used to be the Paradise Seventh-day Adventist Church, planning to build 100 sheds.

Chinnock was working on a budget for the project when she got a call from David Woods, the on-site building director. He wanted to build 200 sheds.

“In a panic, I asked him if he had any idea how much money that



Ashley, who currently lives in a camper with her husband and two dogs, thanks Joelle Chinnock, build coordinator for the Love Paradise project, for a much-needed storage shed. *Tom Lloyd*

would be,” says Chinnock.

“David calmly responded, ‘How big is your God?’”

They decided to aim for 200.

Diverse Investment

Bang-thwack! Bang-thwack! Pause. Bang-thwack! Bang-thwack! Pause.

A volunteer pounds a sledgehammer against the wall base, fitting it tightly against the floor frame, while inside another wields a nail gun, driving nails deep into the two-by-fours between each stud.

Several yards away, at the edge of the pavement, is a line of three makeshift workbenches where more volunteers zzzip away, cutting boards for the 10’ x 12’ sheds—the largest you can build without a permit. The system is a tight one; everyone moves deftly and efficiently between stations.

“Often when building inspectors see a bunch of older people and kids as builders, they’re skeptical,” admits Kenneth Weiss, executive vice president for Maranatha Volunteers International. He stands on the build site in boots and a hard

hat, arms folded across his chest, and chuckles. “But regularly, these same inspectors express incredulity at the high quality of work our volunteers produce. We’re pretty proud of that.”

This is especially true as the number of volunteers increases, as a larger group typically becomes less manageable.

The average Maranatha project in North America has 40 to 50 volunteers, and the organization’s largest project, Ultimate Workout, boasted approximately 200. The shed build project in Paradise has seen more than 350 volunteers come through, some for a day, others for a week, a few for the entire three weeks, topping out at nearly 125 per day.

“What I’ve really enjoyed watching with this particular project is the amazing synergy between so many different involved parties,” Weiss says. “It’s truly fantastic to see this many entities invested in their community.”

He’s right; the plaques affixed to each shed include the list of all

entities who sponsored the project, including not only Adventist churches, Adventist union conferences and conferences, Maranatha, Adventist Community Services, and Adventist Health, but also Capay Farms, North Valley Community Foundation, North Fork Lumber Company, Chico Building, Paradise Rotary Foundation, Schmidbauer Lumber, Inc., Butte Strong Fund, and Trinity River Lumber Company.

The volunteers are also a diverse group, ranging in age from 6 to 80, and coming from various places across the country and beyond.

Shenalyn and her children took a day off from homeschooling to help. Even her 6-year-old daughter, Sonya, happily painted sheds.

Kai is part of an AmeriCorps group and hails from Sierra Leone.

Devin, age 11, and Caleb, age 14, came with their families from Weimar, California, for their first-ever mission experience.

Randy, from Denver, Colorado, read about the shed build on Facebook.

Keanan drove down from Oregon with his landlord to volunteer, and stayed even after his landlord went home.

David came out from Maine and celebrated his birthday on the build site, enjoying the group’s rendition of “Happy Birthday” at lunch with an extra-large serving of peach cobbler. “It’s the biggest birthday party I’ve ever had,” he said with a big grin to go with it.

Though many volunteers were Adventists, a large number were not.

“It was unusual to get such a large number of non-Adventist volunteers,” says Kyle Fiess, vice president of projects for Maranatha. “Part of the reason for that is the significant media attention we received regionally. People really have an interest in what’s happening in Paradise, and they want to be involved.”

Paradise Rebuilt

During the final days of the shed build, Paradise council member Mike Zuccolillo, who also lost his home to the fire, came to meet the people behind the project. About five feet ten with close-cut salt-and-pepper hair, Zuccolillo moves with relaxed intention and has an easy smile.

“I’ve been amazed at how the private sector has stepped up and answered the call to help,” he says. Butte County is not a wealthy one, and for most residents, saving an extra few hundred dollars is a big deal. Finding storage options is next to impossible.

In the year following the fire, Zuccolillo says, the remaining residents have learned to celebrate “all the little happy things.” They’ve gone from a city of nearly 27,000 to a ghost town with an estimated 2,000 residents, but they are a re-

Photo by Tom Lloyd



Major Impact

As of the end of November 2019, Love Paradise has received nearly 700 applications for sheds.

“We’ve been looking for ways to be relevant ever since we started Love Paradise,” says Joelle Chinnock, coordinator of the shed build project and member of the Paradise Adventist Church. “We don’t have to search anymore. If we get too diversified, we can’t perfect what we’re doing. We just do sheds now. It’s our thing, and it’s how we can best serve our community.”

The need continues to be great. Nearly 19,000 structures, with more than 11,000 of those homes, were lost in Paradise from the Camp Fire, the most destructive in California history. Burning more than 153,000 acres, the Camp Fire resulted in the deaths of 86 people, ranging in age from 53 to 90, and also impacted nearby Magalia and Concow communities. Once a thriving community of roughly 27,000, Paradise is now populated by an estimated 2,000 (exact counts are difficult), and many of those live in RVs or trailers.

“These sheds are so important,” Chinnock explains. “For those in situations similar to Ashley’s, a shed can be lifesaving. For most Paradise residents, like Allen, a shed is a sense of security. It’s safety. For some, it’s the closest thing to a home they’ve had for more than a year.”

Love Paradise is coordinating with Maranatha to conduct another shed build project in spring 2020. To be a part of this project, sign up to volunteer through Maranatha Volunteers International (maranatha.org), or donate toward the project via Love Paradise (loveparadise.net).



One of more than 350 volunteers helps construct a storage shed. *Julie Z. Lee*

silient, optimistic bunch. “We celebrate every little victory,” he says, “because to us, as we rebuild our entire town, they’re not so little.”

Rebuilding their town is exactly what this group is working on as they move shed after shed off the line and into the parking lot to be painted.

“One year out from the fire, you have a whole community of people who no longer need peanut butter sandwiches; they need long-term support,” Fiess says. “They need people to care about them and to assure them they haven’t been forgotten.”

The reaction of shed recipients has been one of humble and sincere gratitude. A once-wealthy woman who had lost everything broke down in tears when her shed was delivered. “I’ve always been in a position to help others, contributing where I could to those less fortunate,” she sobbed. “I’m so grateful for others who can now do the same for me.”



Love Paradise volunteers sign the final shed's inside wall. Tom Lloyd

The crowd closed around the final shed and passed around a Sharpie for everyone to sign the inside of the building. Some wrote Bible verses; others simply signed their names with swoops and swirls and tails.

One man who came to the site to thank the builders commented, “It’s nice to see Christians being Christian.”

During the build Chinnock overheard her son tell the site director, “We’re building for Jesus.”

In the beginning her family was hesitant to get onboard, certain she was in over her head.

“They were right,” Chinnock says with the hint of a smile. “I am in over my head. But my God walks on water.”

The End of the Beginning

On November 21, five days before the scheduled end of the project, approximately 120 volunteers gathered on the build site to be a part of the final shed going through the line. Some had nail guns, others had hammers; still others picked up routers. The frame was nailed; the hole for the door cut on one wall. A call went out for “several strong men” to lift the wall to the floor frame; a group of several strong women ran to raise the next. Laughter and chatter filled the space between poundings and buzzings and bangings.

They had done it.

The crowd closed around the final shed and passed around a Sharpie for everyone to sign the inside of the building. Some wrote Bible verses; others simply signed their names with swoops and swirls and tails. People cheered and clapped.

Then a murmur began at one end of the crowd. As the roof was lifted via Bobcat and lowered into place, the word spread throughout the group of volunteers: This wasn’t actually shed number 200.

It was shed number 202.

Becky St. Clair is a freelance writer who lives in Angwin, California.



Mary Johnson and another volunteer take a “selfie.” Mary Johnson

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← John Bradshaw and other church leaders, local officials, and ministry representatives cut the ribbon at the dedication on November 22, 2019. Photos by Stephen Ruf

IT IS WRITTEN MINISTRIES OPENS NEW HEADQUARTERS

BY TIERRA HAYES

On Friday, November 22, 2019, more than 500 community members, pastors, church officials, and workers gathered for the grand opening of the new It Is Written headquarters in Collegedale, Tennessee. The event was live-streamed on It Is Written’s Facebook page and featured a dedication, a ribbon cutting, ministry tours, giveaways, and refreshments.

Although the day was rainy, those in attendance pressed together under tents and umbrellas to hear more about the digital-focused

ministry that has been around since 1956.

After a series of formal addresses from North American Division president Daniel R. Jackson, Collegedale mayor Katie Lamb, and It Is Written speaker/director John Bradshaw, the audience was invited to take a self-guided tour around the facilities. The various stops throughout the building highlighted new studio space, offices, and meeting rooms, all tailored to provide efficiency to the growing team.

The ministry employs approximately 40 people, from graphic

designers, pastors, IT specialists, and more, who work together to produce a variety of television programming and print publications that are distributed worldwide.

“This building, this ministry, is a testimony to God’s goodness,” Jackson said. “We thank God today for John Bradshaw and his team—for the outstanding ministry, for the blessing of people all around the world and throughout North America. As we open this new home we give honor to God.”

Local Context

During her address at the grand opening, Lamb welcomed the organization to the city of Collegedale and expressed her wishes that those who relocated to the area get to enjoy the amenities provided by the surrounding nature and community. “Collegedale takes pride in providing an environment for family-friendly organizations.

As we work together to this end during this Thanksgiving season, let’s give thanks for the religious freedoms that we enjoy,” she said. “Welcome and may God bless this organization.”

Many community members in attendance came from the surrounding Collegedale area, but some had traveled from farther away, such as Lidia Seda who came from Guntersville, Alabama, to be present for the unveiling.

“We heard about this through a friend, and felt that we should go and support Adventist ministry, so we came,” Seda said. “I like the fact that they have enough space not only to do what they need to do, but to grow. That was wise.”

Bradshaw said that the support and prayers of those who came to witness the event mean the world to him and his team. “Having people here meant the world to us,” he said. “[There were] pastors and physicians and dentists and our neighbors, church administrators, laypeople, people who in some cases drove hours and hours [to attend] because they wanted to be a part of this. It’s just very exciting and encouraging in terms of ministry.”

The new headquarters, with its 41,000-square-foot building, is only a few miles from the campus of Southern Adventist University

(SAU). Many of those employed by It Is Written are either current students or alumni of the institution, making the location ideal not only for the ministry but also for the school.

“Because It Is Written is here, a number of our students and even more of our graduates are now working in this building,” said David Smith, SAU president. “They are engaged with the church, they are using their creative skills, and It Is Written is blessed. But so are we, and I’m glad this is being recognized.”

It Is Written also sponsors the Soulwinning and Leadership Training, better known as SALT, initiative on the university campus. Students are provided with the resources and skills to become more confident and engaged in personal evangelism.

Furthering His Kingdom

Bradshaw believes that all the efforts put forward by It Is Written, whether through training programs such as SALT, television shows, and just day-to-day interactions are working together to further God’s kingdom.

“We know the value of this because we meet the people. The people who say ‘I was searching, I turned on the TV, there was It Is Written, and I said, ‘This is something.’ I kept watching, and I called,



↑ Speaker/director John Bradshaw addresses those gathered for the It Is Written grand opening dedication.

and I was baptized. Now I’m in the church today.’ We hear those stories again and again,” Bradshaw said. “God established this ministry 63 years ago to grow His kingdom, and He’s been using this ministry ever since to do just that.”

Visit itiswritten.build for photos of the new headquarters.

Tierra Hayes is a student at Southern Adventist University and managing editor of the university’s Southern Accent.

↓ More than 500 attend the It Is Written ribbon-cutting ceremony and dedication held at the media ministry’s new headquarters in Collegedale, Tennessee.





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BY ALVIN KIBBLE

We Can't Quit Now

In Matthew 24:3-14 we find Jesus and His disciples taking a tour of the temple grounds in Jerusalem. Enamored, the disciples wanted to view more of it.

Throughout the week people had been piling in to visit the temple, drawn to watching the great debate in progress. There was the lonely Galilean, unlettered, untaught, surrounded by priests and scribes and rulers with all their rich apparel and judiciary badges and earthly trappings. Jesus, calm, poised, and dignified, unflappable, had met with confidence every theological question and challenge.

People were visibly inspired. They were impressed with Jesus. But they were perplexed. They didn't understand why the scribes would not respond to Jesus' words. After all, this was the trusted intelligentsia of Jerusalem. The people couldn't believe that the rulers didn't believe Jesus when He explained everything so carefully.

The Jewish leaders were never going to receive Jesus as the Messiah. And to His disciples, their mission seemed hopeless.

This was the background upon which Jesus warns the Pharisees: "Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Matt. 23:38, NIV).

What? the disciples must've thought to themselves. *How could my Lord say something so foolish? Is He losing it?* The stones of the temple were of the purest marble, restored to the luster and grandeur of the first temple.

Jesus cautioned that all the buildings would be knocked down, and "not one stone here will be left on another" (Matt. 24:2, NIV).

He continued, describing the signs of the end with false messiahs, earthquakes, and more (see verses 4-12). Jesus also declared that "the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (verse 13).

Prophecy is fast being fulfilled. "The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth," writes Ellen White.¹ "The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones."²

Seventh-day Adventists are indeed a people of destiny. And like the church of Christ's day, we have a stake in the outcome of the situation. We've been teaching and preaching this stuff for years. What is Christ waiting for?

He is waiting and longing for the manifestation of Himself in His church.

His Witnesses

W. R. Robinson, one of the forerunners of our missionaries to Africa and editor of *Message* magazine, one of the oldest gospel periodicals the church has published, used to stand up and say, "When the message goes out, guess what? Souls come in!"

We can't quit now.

We are Christ's witnesses. Preaching will forever remain primary, but we're not going to get everyone into our evangelistic revivals. With all the preaching that Paul and the other apostles did, the greatest witness was declared by the believers.

Imagine a friendship ministry. A hospitality ministry. A sharing ministry. A compassion ministry. Imagine inviting your new friends in Christ to a prayer conference, an evangelism revival, a marriage seminar. Imagine exploring the Bible with them

at Panera once a week while you eat dinner. Imagine a discipleship ministry. Imagine a vision complete.

God never, ever leaves undone what He has started. He leaves no stone unturned. God would never ask us to do the impossible.

We have to model to this generation that we are a preaching ministry and a witnessing ministry. Because when this gospel of the kingdom *shall* have been preached, born witness, we can go home.

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 11.
²*Ibid.*

Alvin Kibble, vice president of the North American Division for Leadership Development, Big Data + Social Media, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, and Literature Ministries.

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