A black and white photograph of three young boys standing side-by-side, smiling and pointing their right index fingers directly at the camera. The boy on the left is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved polo shirt. The boy in the middle is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt with a palm tree pattern at the bottom hem and light-colored cargo pants. The boy on the right is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved button-down shirt and light-colored trousers. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with some vertical structures.

mission Teen

**South American Division
Second Quarter 2006**



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On the cover: "Thumbs up for Jesus!" These students at an Adventist academy in Brazil show their spirit in the traditional Brazilian way.





making missions meaningful

Leader's Planner

South American Division

The Challenge

South American Division is nearing 3 million members; almost a million new believers have been added in the past five years. The church is growing rapidly, especially in poorer regions that have the fewest resources. This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath projects focus on building up the church in northwestern Argentina and eastern Brazil.

The Opportunities

Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help provide:

- At least 17 churches/chapels for existing congregations in northwestern Argentina, one of the country's poorest areas.
- Seven churches/chapels for existing congregations in the East Brazil Union.
- Funds to upgrade facilities on the campuses of two Adventist boarding academies near Vitória and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

GraceLink Connection

Mission reports relating to the Sabbath School GraceLink dynamics can be found on the following pages:

Community	7, 13, 15, 17
Service	9, 21, 23, 27
Worship	5, 11, 19, 25

The South American Division includes Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and the Falkland Islands. This quarter special attention is being given to northwestern Argentina and eastern Brazil.

Argentina

Argentina occupies most of the southern part of South America. It lies east of Chile and stretches to the tip of South America.

The Northwest Argentine Mission, where part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go, encompasses some of the poorest regions of Argentina. Since the mission was established in 1988, membership has almost tripled. But the number of churches, chapels, and other houses of worship has increased by only 24 percent. The reason for this small increase is simple: the members lack the resources to build even simple chapels for their congregations.

Brazil

Brazil occupies roughly half the land of South America and contains about half the population as well. Its population is a colorful mix of European, African, Amerindian, and Asian cultures.

While Brazil is considered the

largest Catholic country, only about 13 percent of the population faithfully practice their faith. Spiritism (including animism and spirit worship) claims 8 million adherents and is a powerful force both within and outside of various Christian faith communities.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the second-largest Protestant denomination in the country, with almost 1.5 million members and more than 11,600 churches and companies. There is one Adventist for every 126 Brazilians.

As with any large country, wealth is not evenly distributed. Affluent regions exist beside pockets of extreme poverty throughout the country, but the poorest regions are in the northeast, the west, and the south.

This quarter we will focus on the East Brazil Union, a region that includes the city of Rio de Janeiro. Brazil's portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build chapels in several towns and small cities within this union.

In addition, two boarding academies will receive funds to complete major building projects on their campuses. Petropolis Adventist Academy and Espírito Santo Adventist Academy each need to complete their boys' dormitory.





Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Third quarter will feature the South Pacific Division. The Thirteenth Sabbath projects include an airplane for Papua New Guinea and a church to serve the Adventist students who attend the large international university in Suva, Fiji.

Fourth quarter 2006 will feature the East-Central Africa Division. Countries featured include Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

Report to Stockholders

Thank You!

The believers in Brazil and Chile want to thank you, faithful Sabbath School members, for helping to make their needs become reality. Because you gave to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering during first quarter 2003, several communities of believers in southern Chile and southernmost Brazil received chapels in which to worship and from which to share their faith, and Santa Catarina Academy in southern Brazil was able to open on time. Thirteenth Sabbath

Offering funds helped complete the girls' dormitory here.

Believers in South America say "gracias," and "obrigado" (Spanish and Portuguese for thank you) for sharing.



Resources

The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (available in book form and on CD-ROM) contains more detailed information on the history of the church's work in Argentina and Brazil.

The Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2006) (also available in book and CD-ROM) contains names and addresses of virtually all Seventh-day Adventist institutions and workers around the world. Available through local Adventist Book Centers.

Recipes for an international potluck to celebrate the foods and cultures of Argentina and Brazil appear on pages 6, 8, and 10 of *Children's Mission*. Invite the children's divisions to sing some of the songs they are learning this quarter.

Embassies and tourist commissions can sometimes provide information on their

country. In the United States, write to the following: The Embassy of Argentina, 1600 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 238-6400.

The Embassy of Brazil at 3006 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; or the Brazilian American Cultural Center (212-730-0515).

Videos: *The Adventist Mission DVD* is a free resource available from your local division. For more information, visit <<www.adventistmission.org>> or call 301-680-6676.

An offering goal device can help focus members' attention on world missions and increase mission giving. Ask your Sabbath School Council to set a quarterly mission offering goal, then chart the weekly progress toward the quarter's goal on the goal device.

Draw a simple church on poster

board or cardboard. Mount it on an outline map of South America that highlights Argentina and Brazil. Divide the drawing of the church into segments representing one thirteenth of the quarter's mission offering goal. Each week color in the segments representing the proportion of the offering goal received that week in Sabbath School. (Ask the church treasurer to advise you of any offerings received in tithe envelopes so this figure can be added to the total.)

Remind members that the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is a special opportunity to support world missions in general and the South American Division in particular. On Thirteenth Sabbath, arrange to count the offering and record the total on the goal device before the end of Sabbath School if possible. This immediate feedback will encourage members to faithfully continue their mission giving.





Argentina

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

Juan grew up believing in magic and the ability to tell people's futures. When he enrolled in an Adventist school, he learned the true source of power behind his abilities.



Juan

A Faith to Live By

Juan José Esteban

[Ask a young man to present this first-person report.]

My family followed a belief system that focuses on science and magic. It is not a religion, and most people who practice this belief system belong to other religions. We practiced certain forms of magic and believed in the science of signs and numbers. I learned to read tarot cards and use them to predict people's futures.

Troubled Youth

I was shy and had trouble making friends. Some boys in school mocked me and even beat me. I was lonely and depressed. Then I began having frightening dreams. When a friend learned of my troubles at school, he told my parents about a private secondary school that could help me. I wanted to enroll in this new school and get away from the kids who made my life so sad. My father told me I would not be able to practice our belief system there, but I was more interested

in studying in peace than in practicing my religion. Finally my parents allowed me to enroll in this school.

I packed my things, including my books of magic and my tarot cards, and started out for the Adventist secondary school several hours from home. When I arrived, I avoided saying anything about my family's belief system and told the dean that I was a member of another religion so that the school would allow me to stay.

I loved the school! I made new friends for the first time in years. Two boys became my best friends, and after a while I started telling them about the things I believed in—telling fortunes, the symbolism of numbers, and magic. They listened politely as I explained my beliefs, then they urged me to study the Bible to know the power behind the magic and the fortune-telling. They even agreed to study with me.

Step by Step in Faith

As we studied the Bible

together, I realized that the magic was not from God, but from Satan. I told the pastor about my magic books. We prayed together, then he and I burned the books. However, I did not tell him about my tarot cards, for I thought they were OK to keep.

My Bible teacher became my special friend. We talked a lot, and I knew he really cared about me.

I began having strange dreams. When I asked God to take away the dreams, God reminded me that I still had my tarot cards. I told my Bible teacher about the cards, fearful that I would be kicked out of school. But instead he prayed with me and helped me destroy the cards. From that time on I spent my time reading the Bible. My love for God was like a fire inside me. I fully surrendered my life to God and accepted Jesus as my Savior. What a difference God made in my life when I allowed Him to rule my life!

My best friends encouraged me to take the next step: baptism. I wondered how I could follow my Adventist faith





when I returned home, for I had no Adventist friends there. The pastor told me there were many Adventists in my hometown and urged me to trust in God. I took my stand and was baptized.

Facing the Family

School ended, and I returned home. On the bus ride home I prayed about how I would tell my parents that I no longer believed in the belief system they had taught me. I continued to pray about it when I arrived home. On Sabbath morning I told my parents I had something to tell them. "I have learned a lot in school about the Bible, about God, and about Jesus, who died to save me. I want to follow Jesus, and I cannot follow Him and the family's belief system too. So I have given up everything related to that belief system."

To my surprise, my parents were not angry. Later I learned that while I was in school my parents had visited an Adventist church in town and were impressed with the wonderful people and their simple, honest

lives. In fact, they had visited the church several times, though they quit attending when my mother became sick.

I attended the church in my hometown and often invited my parents. But my mother became sicker and could not attend church. Four months later she died, leaving my father and sister and me. I was lost in pain and grief, but my faith in God kept me strong. I talked to my father about my faith, and in time he gave up his belief in magic and tarot cards and began attending the Adventist church.

A Father's Confession

On the day of my father's baptism he told me that when he was a teenager, he had quit school to support his mother and younger brothers and sisters. One day he met a literature evangelist, who invited him to attend the Adventist church. Father went, and there he found something that he wanted to embrace. He asked his boss to let him have Sabbaths off, but his boss told him he would be fired if he took Saturday off. This scared

my father, for his family depended on his work to survive. He never attended the Adventist church again until the year I was studying in the Adventist school. But he had never stopped believing in God.

My sister has not accepted Jesus as her Savior, but praise God, she has enrolled her daughters in an Adventist school, where they are studying the Bible and learning to trust in the Savior.

False beliefs almost stole Jesus from me. I am so grateful that God saved me from these falsehoods and led me to the path of true faith.

God provided a way out of a lonely and unhappy life by allowing me to attend an Adventist school, where I met Jesus as my Savior. Because your mission offerings support Adventist education, you helped bring me to Christ. Thank you! 🌍

Juan José Esteban lives in Salta, Argentina, where he tutors people in English, French, and German.

Let's talk

? Books on magic, tarot cards (which are used to tell people's fortunes), and Ouija [WEE-jah] boards are sometimes treated as toys or games. What dangers do you see in experimenting with such objects? *[Ouija boards and tarot cards may seem like harmless games, but they are bound up in the occult and present very real dangers to unsuspecting young people. Christians should avoid any contact with them, even in fun. Satan provides the power behind these "games."]*

? Juan destroyed his magic books, but he saw no harm in keeping the tarot cards. What would you tell Juan or someone who told you they used such cards to tell fortunes, for fun or for real? *[Satan hides behind such activities, waiting to snare unsuspecting people and drag them into his kingdom of evil.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that God will lead young people out of false religions and into the light of God's love. Pray for friends who might be involved in satanic activities.





Argentina

GraceLink Connection: Community.

Gonzalo found a loving home and a new life with his aunt and uncle.



Angel and Gonzalo

Do-It-Together Church

Charlotte Ishkanian

Angel [ahn-HEL] greeted his cousin Gonzalo [gohn-ZAH-loh] as he walked toward Angel's rural home in northern Argentina. Angel's family were farmers. Their tiny community has no electricity or running water, so the family finds ways to provide for their needs.

Gonzalo joined Angel as he guided the *zorra* [ZOH-rah], the small flat-bed wagon pulled by the family's burro, to the nearby pond. The boys scooped out pans of water to fill the large barrel standing on the wagon. The water would quench the thirst of their animals and keep the garden alive another day. The boys chatted as they worked. Although Gonzalo did not live with Angel, he spent as much time as possible there.

Gonzalo's Hard Life

Gonzalo had lived with his grandparents ever since his mother left him at age 2. His grandmother treated him well, but his grandfather was a gruff and harsh man. And when he was drunk, he could be brutal. Gonzalo tried to avoid his

grandfather during his drunken binges by escaping to his cousin's home, a haven of peace.

Angel's family had recently become Adventist Christians. The nearest church was about 20 miles [30 kilometers] away, so the parents took turns attending church. One week Angel's father would ride the family's bicycle to church, while his mother taught the children at home. The next week Mother would go to church, and Father would stay home. The roads were little more than cow paths, so a car would never make it to the church.

Gonzalo enjoyed the little Sabbath School his cousins held in their home. He had learned to love Jesus, and his greatest wish was to be baptized. But he knew his grandfather would never permit it.

The Runaway

When Gonzalo was 11, his grandmother died. Grandfather's drinking became worse, and Gonzalo was forced to wash clothes, clean the house, and cook. Often when there was no

money for food, Grandfather sent Gonzalo to cut grass or clear land for other people's gardens. Then he took the money to buy alcohol.

Sometimes Gonzalo escaped to his cousin's house, where he found peace and a sense of family. But when he returned home, he often was beaten for running away. Gonzalo wished he could live with Uncle Liborio [lee-BOH-ree-oh]. But because Grandfather was his legal guardian, Uncle Liborio was powerless to go against Grandfather's wishes.

One day while Gonzalo was making bread, he dropped the pan containing the bread dough. His grandfather shouted curses, grabbed a metal rod, and began beating the boy. Gonzalo ran out of the house and hid in the tall grass. For four days he hid from his grandfather. A neighbor told Uncle Liborio where Gonzalo was hiding, and Uncle Liborio sent for the boy. Gonzalo had no decent clothes or shoes. His aunt fed him and dressed his wounds while Uncle Liborio went to visit the grandfather and verify that





Gonzalo was telling the truth.

After speaking to Grandfather, Uncle Liborio went to the police station and reported that Gonzalo had come to live with his family and requested custody of the boy. At last Gonzalo had a family of his own.

New Family, New Church

Angel knew that Gonzalo wanted to be baptized, so he encouraged him to prepare. The cousins studied the Bible together. When Gonzalo told his uncle he wanted to be baptized, Uncle Liborio smiled, for he knew that Gonzalo loved the Lord. What a joyful day when he walked into the river, following Jesus' example.

Gonzalo took on his share of chores, carrying water and feeding the animals, herding the sheep and goats, milking the cows, and carrying firewood. In the evening the family gathered around the table, where they read their Bible by lantern light and completed their homework.

Uncle Liborio told the family that they had decided to build a chapel in the corner of the family's land. Angel and his mother started forming bricks in the mold Uncle Liborio had made. Gonzalo laid the bricks in the sun to dry and then stacked the dry bricks to be burned rock-hard. Together they made and dried more than 5,500 bricks for the chapel.

While the bricks were drying, Uncle Liborio cleared the land and leveled it. He marked out the corners of the building. When some church leaders learned of the family's plan to build a church, they bought some bags of cement and drove out to help them for several days. They mixed sand, water, and the cement to make mortar to hold the bricks together. Everything was done by hand, for there were no machines or electricity to operate them.

Day after day the family finished their chores and gathered to work on the church. It took two months, but at last the building

was complete, including a metal roof provided by loving Christians who lived in a town nearby.

Time to Celebrate

When the church was finished, the family invited everyone from miles around to come and celebrate with them. After nine years of riding their bicycle 20 miles to church each week, they could now worship together in their own chapel. About 100 people came to celebrate the opening of the church. Gonzalo and Angel sat up front; after all, it was their church. They had helped make the bricks, carried the water, mixed the cement, and laid row after row of precious brick to make the church become a reality. With joy they dedicated their church and their lives to God. Some 40 adults and children now worship in that church each week.

Gonzalo and Angel and their family live in a rural area, where a church made of mud bricks is the best the members can offer. But such a church may not be permitted in a city or town where many congregations in northwestern Argentina exist. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help 17 Adventist congregations build suitable chapels in their towns. Just as Gonzalo and Angel worked together to make their family's dream come true, our offerings will help others make their dream of a chapel come true. 🌐

let's talk

? Why did Gonzalo want to spend so much time with his cousin's family? *[He was hungry for love and acceptance that he did not get at home.]*

? Do you know someone whose home life is not happy? How can you help that person experience the joy of a peaceful and happy home? *[Welcome your friend into your home for fun family activities and everyday tasks such as cleaning the house or weeding the garden.]*

? What would you say to a friend who lived in an abusive or cold family? *[If your friend is being abused, you must tell an adult—your parents, your pastor, or a teacher. It may be dangerous for your friend to remain in such an environment. Encourage your friend to spend time with you if that is possible, so that he or she can learn what a happy Christian family is like. Pray for and with your friend. Be willing to listen when they want to talk.]*

Gonzalo and Angel Galvan live in Babilonia, Argentina.

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that Gonzalo's grandfather will give up drinking and turn his life over to Jesus. Pray for the congregations that have no chapels in which to worship.





Argentina

GraceLink Connection: Service.

Crippled by polio, Mirta saw no hope for the future and wanted to die. Then two men showed her a reason to live.



Mirta

A Reason to Live

Alita Byrd

Mirta [MEER-tah] should have been excited. It was her fourth birthday. But she lay in bed groaning in pain, too sick to move. Terrified, her parents took her to the hospital, where doctors discovered the little girl had polio.

For weeks Mirta lay helpless in the hospital, unable to help herself. She slowly improved and had physical therapy to strengthen her weak muscles. But the doctors told her parents that she would never walk again.

Troubled Life

Mirta's parents took her home and continued her physical therapy treatments. They were determined that she would live as normal a life as possible. When she was old enough to attend school, they took her in a horse-drawn cart.

Mirta suffered muscle pain and struggled to focus on her lessons. In time her parents realized that school was too difficult for Mirta. She stayed home and began knitting sweaters and socks to

help support the family. Without friends to talk to and playmates to enjoy, she became increasingly sad and quiet.

By the time Mirta was 16 she had experienced more pain and loneliness than most people feel in a lifetime. When her parents argued, as they often did, Mirta felt that somehow she was to blame. Then tragedy struck. Her baby sister died suddenly, sending the entire family into shock.

Overwhelmed with pain and a sense of uselessness, Mirta opened her bottle of painkillers and emptied the 100 tablets into her hand. *If I take these all at once, she thought, my pain will be over; I will die.* Mirta swallowed the pills and fell into a deep sleep.

Three days later Mirta awoke. *I'm not dead!* she thought. *I can't even kill myself!* She sank deeper into depression.

A Dirty Book

One day Mirta's mother returned from work and gave Mirta an old book. It was dirty

and had no cover. "I found this at work," Mother said "I thought you might like it."

Mirta took the book and opened it. She had nothing else to do, so she began reading. She became so fascinated that she could not put the book down. Although she knew a little about religion and had sometimes gone to church with her mother, she had never heard anything like what this book told her.

Mirta finished the book in just a few hours. She found the address of the publisher and wrote them a letter asking if they had other books she could read. She did not really expect an answer, but she found herself pouring out her heart in that letter. She described her health condition and the sadness and despair she often felt. She said that the book had given her hope for the first time in her life.

Then Mirta fell sick and was sent to a hospital for treatment. She and her mother stayed with a cousin who lived near the hospital.





The Visitors

A few days later Mirta's father arrived with two men. "These men came to the house looking for you," he told Mirta. "They said you had written a letter to their company, and they wanted to see you. So I brought them here."

Mirta looked at the two men. *Why would they want to see me?* she wondered. After all, she had only written a letter.

The men sat down and chatted. They told Mirta that they were Seventh-day Adventists who worked at the publishing house where her letter had arrived. They talked to her about God and how much He loves her. Mirta tried to understand what they were saying, but her illness made it difficult to focus her mind.

"Where is God?" Mirta asked. "If He loves me so much, why doesn't He help me? I am always sick, always suffering. If God exists, and if He cares for me, how can He let this happen?"

The men explained that Satan, not God, is the author of evil. They read Bible verses that comforted and encouraged Mirta.

Then one of the men asked if Mirta had a Bible. She said she did not. He reached into his bag and pulled out a Bible, which he gave to Mirta. It was beautiful, and Mirta could not resist thumbing through the pages. Then the man asked again, "Would you like to study the Bible?"

"Yes, I would," Mirta answered. The men arranged to return to study with Mirta and her mother on Friday. They thanked the family and left.

"Are you crazy?" Mirta's father asked her. "Those men are trying to convert you to some strange religion. Maybe they are trying to trick you into joining a cult."

"Well, if they are from a cult, I will find out at the Bible study," she said stubbornly.

A New Life

That Friday the men returned and studied the Bible with Mirta and her mother. Mirta never dreamed the Bible had so much to say about God's plan for His world. Between Bible studies, Mirta and her mother read the new Bible. For the first time

in her life, Mirta felt hope and confidence in the future.

After several months of studies Mirta and her mother surrendered their lives to Christ and joined the Adventist Church. They were convinced that it was God's true remnant church.

For the first time in her life, Mirta could look to the future. She returned to school to complete her education, and she underwent surgery to improve her health.

Mirta shares her faith wherever she can—in hospitals, on the streets, even in jails. She has invited people to evangelistic meetings and gives Bible studies to anyone who is willing to study. She has led many to Christ.

"I am happiest when I share my faith and God's love with others," Mirta says. "I still cannot walk, but I know that God has plans for my life. That is why I did not die when I was 16. I want to follow Him and make a difference in the world for my Jesus."

Our mission offerings help assure that books and literature reach hurting people such as Mirta, and Bible study guides are available to lead thousands to Christ every day. 

Mirta Rodriguez lives in San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina. Alita Byrd lives in Pretoria, South Africa, and is a contributing editor of Mission.

Let's talk

? Do you know someone who has suffered a physical challenge such as Mirta did, or someone who is experiencing deep sadness or loneliness in their life? List ways that you can help them. *[Write class responses on the board. Include such things as sharing an exciting book, watching a funny video together, or just spending time talking or playing a game together. Encourage class members to try one or more of these in the coming weeks, and remind them that the elderly are often isolated, physically challenged, and lonely.]*

? How would you share God's love with someone who feels that no one loves them, even God? *[By showing you care, you can show that God cares. Be prepared with Bible verses that assure a person that God loves them and can be trusted to hear their prayers and meet their needs if they just ask.]*

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that God will continue to use Mirta to spread His love and share His power with those she meets.





Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

This Christian boarding school was my last chance to turn my life around, but I did not know how to do it.



Ádamo

Encounter With Christ

Edson Rossini

[Ask a young man to present this first-person report.]

My parents divorced when I was quite young. The trauma hit me hard, and I began behaving badly. Mother could not handle me, and she sent me to live with my grandparents. My grandfather was a career soldier, and he ran a rigid home. He expected good grades and obedience. But my mind often wandered from the lessons, and my grades began to fall. Instead of helping me, he punished me. My kind grandmother wanted to help me, but she did not know what to do.

I got into fights at school, and the school sent home notes complaining about my behavior. My grandfather again punished me and threatened to send me away if I did not behave myself. I know now that he was doing the best he could to raise me right, but it did not work.

When I failed school that year, my grandfather was furious. He told me that if I did not apply myself to my studies and behave

myself, I would have to leave his home. Later he felt bad that he had said this, and he apologized. Soon after that my grandfather died.

I wanted to find my birth father. I was sure he would understand me. One day I set out to search for him. I found my father living with a new wife and their son. I told him my problems and asked him to let me live with him. But he said simply, "I have another wife and another son. I think it is best that you not live here."

Sadly I returned to my grandmother's home. She was glad to see me and wanted me to stay. But my problems did not go away.

Downward Spiral

I still felt rebellious. I did not want to go to school. Some teachers tried to help me, but I refused to do my homework. I stole money for music and video games. I was 16 years old and going nowhere.

One day my uncle Pedro visited. He was trying to get free of a serious drug habit. I saw that we were both trapped in dead-end habits. Uncle Pedro opened

his mother's Bible and read the story of Adam and Eve's fall in Genesis 3. Then he told me, "You need to find God."

What my uncle said made sense, so that week I looked for a church in the neighborhood. I found one and attended the Sunday services. The people welcomed me and prayed for me. But when they sang, some people fell on the floor; others thrashed about as if they were possessed. I was afraid it would happen to me, and I prayed that God would protect me from whatever these people had. But when church ended, I left feeling light and happy. I wanted to go back.

When I told my grandmother where I'd been, she was unhappy, concerned that this church would be a bad influence on me. Later that week Grandmother told me that she loved me, but she could not handle me anymore and had arranged for me to live with my mother.

I packed my things and returned to my mother's home, glad to be there. The next day Mother sat me down and said,





“You can live with me, but you must attend school. I have found a Christian boarding school in Petropolis, about an hour from here. We will go and see if they will accept you.”

That night I dreamed that I saw a boat at sea. Dark clouds filled the sky, and Satan sat in the boat. He warned me not to go to the school at Petropolis. I woke up fearful, wondering what was in store for me in this new school.

New School, New Hope

Petropolis Adventist Academy lies an hour outside Rio de Janeiro in a quiet valley among steep black mountains. This place was definitely not bad!

I sat outside the school director’s office while my mother pleaded with him to accept me as a student. I heard the director explain that I would be among much younger students, and if I disobeyed the rules, I could not stay at the school. Again my mother begged him to give me a chance. At last the director came

out and welcomed me as a new student. I shook his hand, eager to prove that I could obey the school’s rules.

Everything was new at this school. We prayed in classes, studied the Bible in school, and on Saturday everyone went to church. I went to the new believers’ class, where I learned what the name Seventh-day Adventist means and what Adventists believe.

During the week I was again impressed by the difference I saw in the Adventist students. The next Sabbath the pastor spoke about the second coming of Jesus, and showed us part of a movie. As I saw the image of Jesus coming in the sky, I realized that I needed to change my life, but I did not know how.

The following week things went bad. Another boy and I got into a fight. Then a few days later, late at night, another student said something that made me mad. He ran out of my room and into his room and slammed the door.

I followed, yelling and kicking at his door.

The dean heard the ruckus and took me to his office. He listened to my explanation, then he said sadly that I might have to go home. I begged him to let me stay in school, and I promised to try harder. We talked until 2:00 a.m. He saw that I really wanted to change my life, and he agreed to help me. Then we prayed together.

I asked a student to study the Bible with me. We studied together almost every day, and soon everyone started to see changes in me. I loved reading the Bible, enjoyed attending worship services, and my temper finally came under control. Soon I was baptized.

I am so grateful to God for saving me and to the students and teachers at Petropolis who helped lead me to Jesus.

I have learned that our mission offerings help finance schools such as Petropolis Adventist Academy. So your mission offerings helped me find the Lord. Thank you! 🌍

Let's talk

? Ádamo had a difficult time in school and eventually gave up.
 Why was he willing to try again when he was 16? *[He realized that he needed to change his life and that he needed an education to improve himself.]*

? Why did the director of the academy hesitate to accept Ádamo as a student? *[Ádamo had a history of fighting; many of the students were younger than he, and the director rightly feared that Ádamo could be a bad influence on them.]*

? How did the dean help Ádamo deal with his anger? *[The dean explained the consequences—that he would have to leave the school—then he counseled and prayed with him.]*

? How does hearing Ádamo’s story make you feel about students in your school who may be troublemakers? What can you say or do to help them know there is a better way to handle anger?

Edson Rossini teaches English at Petropolis Adventist Academy. **Ádamo Borges** graduated from Petropolis Adventist Academy. He is a literature evangelist working in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that God will help you relate to troubled students in your school in a Christlike way.





Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Community.

Stelio was used to bounding up the stairs, but suddenly he could hardly make it. What was wrong?



Stelio

The Power of Prayer

Stelio Becker

You need to see a doctor," one of Stelio's [STEHL-ee-oh] friends said when he noticed how pale and tired Stelio looked.

Stelio worked hard on his family's farm in eastern Brazil. But as he hoed weeds in the family garden, he dreamed of a Christian education. He had completed two years of high school in the public schools, but he yearned for friends whose values matched his own. The big problem was money.

Then a visiting pastor learned of Stelio's dream. He wrote to Petropolis [peh-TRAW-poh-lis] Adventist Academy. The school offered him a work-study scholarship to attend school. Stelio could hardly believe that his dream would come true.

Stelio made the nine-hour bus trip to the school and almost ran to the campus. "This is the happiest day of my life," he told the registrar.

Stelio was assigned to work in the school computer lab after school every day and all day on Sunday. During school vacations he stayed at school to help pay his school bill.

Sudden Sickness

Normally Stelio could sprint across the hilly campus with no effort, but one day he felt tired and weak. Then he began having nosebleeds. A few days later he could hardly climb the steps to his room, and he wanted to sleep constantly. Something was wrong.

School vacation was coming, and the faculty urged Stelio to return home and rest. Reluctantly Stelio agreed to go home.

His mother, shocked at how pale and weak her son looked, took him to see a doctor. The doctor ordered tests and determined that Stelio had a rare type of anemia [ah-NEE-mee-ah] similar to leukemia [loo-KEE-mee-ah]. The doctor admitted Stelio into the hospital and ordered a blood transfusion.

But Stelio needed more than blood; he needed a bone marrow transplant to survive. Stelio's best hope for a bone marrow match was his sister, Jany. If her bone marrow did not match his, Stelio probably would die before a donor could be found. Stelio, who had prayed so long for a

Christian education, prayed that Jany would be a match so he could return to school.

Valley of Death

School reopened, but Stelio lay in a hospital bed fighting for his life. When students at his school learned how sick Stelio was, they prayed around the clock for him. They prayed during Bible class, during worship, and whenever students gathered.

Word came that Stelio's sister was a match and could donate Stelio some bone marrow. However, only two public hospitals in Brazil could perform the bone marrow transplant, so Stelio, Jany, and their mother traveled many hours to the nearest hospital for the transplant.

First, Stelio received chemotherapy to kill the cells that were making him so sick. The procedure made him even sicker, but it was necessary to save his life. He was isolated from other patients, and even his mother and sister could not visit without special protective garments. Often Stelio watched people walk by the





window that was his only view to the outside world. *Will my life ever be normal again?* he wondered. *Will I be able to continue my education?* He felt peace pour over him and knew that God would help him through this.

The doctors transfused his sister's bone marrow cells into Stelio's body, but it would take several days before he would be strong enough to sit up or talk. So he lay in bed and prayed, "God, if You let me live, I want to work for You."

Good News

Two weeks later the doctors told him that the bone marrow cells his sister had donated were producing new blood cells. The transplant had worked!

Within a month Stelio's blood levels were normal, and he could be discharged from the hospital. However, he had to return to the hospital for frequent checkups to be sure his recovery was complete. His mother prayed for a room near the hospital, for she had no money to pay rent or buy food. She prayed that God would supply their needs.

One day two pastors visited Stelio. They had heard his story—of his dream to study, his life-threatening illness, and the mounting bills to pay for his medical care. They invited

him to tell his story in a nearby church. Stelio agreed. He wore a surgical mask as he stepped onto the platform with the pastor, his mother, and his sister. Following the service, people offered gifts of cash and promises of help for the family. It was enough to rent a room and buy food until Stelio could go home.

Finally, after months of treatment, Stelio was able to return home to a joyful reunion. Stelio's father had not been interested in Christianity, but he was impressed that so many people were praying for his son and helping the family. The love shown to them overwhelmed him, especially the letters and cards from students and staff at the academy. He stopped drinking and helped organize a service of thanksgiving to God for saving Stelio's life. Father invited everyone he knew, even his former drinking friends, to come and see the miracle God had performed for their family. Because of Stelio's faith and his miraculous recovery, his father is now preparing for baptism.

The Empty Chair

Stelio could not make up the schoolwork he had missed in time to graduate with his class, but his classmates asked that an empty chair be placed where Stelio

would have sat in honor of their missing classmate. Stelio returned to Petropolis Adventist Academy in January 2005, and graduated in December 2005.

Stelio has not forgotten his promise to God that if God saved his life, he would work for Him. He would like to study theology, if that is God's will. He has no idea how he will pay his tuition to go on to university and seminary, but Stelio has seen how God can provide. And he knows that what God has started, He will finish.

Stelio thanks God for answering his prayer to study in an Adventist academy. Petropolis Adventist Academy has guided many young people to a knowledge of God. Some, like Stelio, cannot afford to pay tuition and must work for the opportunity to attend a Christian school. Others come with little knowledge of God. But each student is introduced to the Savior through classroom studies, dormitory worship, and Sabbath worship services.

The boys' dormitory needs to be replaced. Petropolis Adventist Academy is counting on your offering this Thirteenth Sabbath in order to continue blessing young people who come there to study.



Stelio Becker recently graduated from Petropolis Adventist Academy near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Let's talk

? What good things came out of Stelio's sickness? [*His prayer life was strengthened; his classmates learned the blessings of intercessory prayer; and his father, seeing the love of Christians, gave his heart to the Lord.*]

? How can you help a friend or classmate who is ill? [*List responses on the board and challenge the class to put at least one into practice this week.*]

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Stelio's life will continue to bless others and that his father will fully commit his life to Jesus.

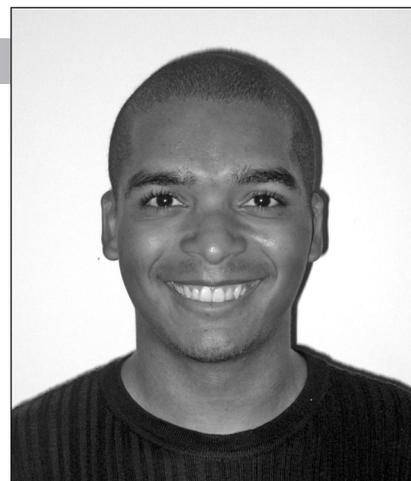




Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Community.

A chance meeting? Or did God send the school principal to visit his friends that day?



Vagner

Dida's Desire

Vagner Pereira

Dida grew up in a village in Brazil. His father worked as a bricklayer, but his earnings barely supported his six children.

Dida's mother had once been an Adventist, but she left the church when she was a teenager. She married Dida's father, who was not a believer. Soon he began drinking, and much of his meager earnings went to buy alcohol.

Searching for Lost Hope

Dida's mother was troubled by the struggles her family faced. She remembered happier days when she had attended church, and she decided that she had to find an Adventist church. But she was not sure where one was located.

On Saturday morning she took a bus to town and walked up and down the streets searching for the church. Then a woman walked past her, dressed quite nicely. Dida's mother thought, *This woman looks as if she is going to church. Perhaps she is an Adventist.*

Dida's mother followed the woman, hoping she would lead

her to the church. After a few minutes the woman sensed that she was being followed and turned around to ask Dida's mother if she could help her. Dida's mother looked up and saw a sign that identified the Adventist church. "No thank you," she said. "I found what I'm looking for."

During worship that day Dida's mother knew that she had found what she needed to bring meaning to her life. She wanted to share her joy and hope with her family, but her older children were not interested in religion. *Perhaps Dida would come with me to church,* she thought. Dida and his mother had always been close, and he seemed interested in spiritual things. So she invited him to go with her the next Sabbath.

Dida agreed to go and began attending church every week, even when his brothers and sisters laughed at him.

Dida especially enjoyed Sabbath School, with its Bible stories and fun music. He loved to sing, so he joined the choir, too. He learned that the young

people met for Pathfinders on Sabbath afternoon, and he asked his mother for permission to stay for the Pathfinder program. She agreed and brought some bread for his lunch after church so he could stay for Pathfinders. He noticed that when the Pathfinders presented special programs in church they wore a special uniform, or at least a yellow neckerchief. He knew that his mother had no money to buy one, so he did not ask.

Then one day a church member brought a small sack to church. She smiled and gave it to Dida. "I think you can use this," she said. Eagerly Dida looked inside. It contained a used Pathfinder shirt and neckerchief! Dida was so excited he could hardly wait to tell his mother.

Difficulties and a Dream

Although Dida loved church, things at home were still difficult. Few people valued education, and most young people dropped out of school. Dida had a hard time studying, and when he was





12 years old, he had to repeat a grade. This discouraged him even more. When his father urged him to quit school and become his helper, Dida obeyed. Perhaps he could earn enough money to help his mother buy food and clothes for the younger children.

The work of a bricklayer was very difficult, and Dida struggled to keep up. His father paid him very little for his work, but Dida faithfully gave his earnings to his mother. For four years Dida worked with his father, hoping that someday his life would be better.

Sometimes in church someone would talk about an Adventist boarding school not too far from his home. Dida dreamed of attending school again. Perhaps he could do better in this school, where he would be away from his father's drinking and the problems that distracted him from studying. But then he thought of how much it must cost to go to that school, and his shoulders slumped in discouragement. *Why do I dream?* he wondered to himself. *I will never earn enough money to attend the Adventist school.*

One day Dida was visiting at a friend's house when another guest arrived. It was the principal of the Adventist school! Dida's heart fluttered with excitement, yet he hesitated to speak. The

man turned to Dida and asked where he attended school. "I don't," Dida said, hanging his head. "I finished five grades of primary school, then I had to stop and work for my father. I want to finish school, but it is too difficult to study at night and work as a bricklayer during the day. But—" he hesitated. "But if I could study in the Adventist school, that would be perfect!" There, he had spoken his heart's desire.

"How old are you?" the principal asked Dida.

"I am 17," Dida answered.

"Would you be willing to study with children six years younger than you? That could be difficult," the principal said.

"I would not care, if only I could study," Dida said, partly to himself and partly to the principal sitting nearby.

The principal could see that Dida was determined to make a better life for himself. He encouraged Dida to pray about his desire to study, then he said goodbye to the family and left the home.

The Oldest Sixth Grader

The principal could not forget Dida's desire to study. He told several people about the determined young man from the village who wanted to study. A

family offered to pay Dida's school fees so he could attend school.

When Dida learned that he had been accepted to study at the Adventist primary school, he was so excited. The principal reminded him that it would be difficult to study with much younger children, but Dida was determined to study, no matter what people said.

Dida did well in school and even joined the choir. He had a good voice and had once dreamed of being an actor or a singer. But those dreams faded as he realized that he could use his voice to honor God instead.

Dida finished primary school and joined the academy. Because he was older than most of the students, Dida was made dean of boys. He urges his younger brother and sisters to continue in their studies, for he has seen the possibilities that an education can bring.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a boys' dormitory for Petropolis Adventist School, where Dida studied. 

Dida has completed secondary school and hopes to study nursing. Vagner Pereira teaches music at Petropolis Adventist Academy.

Let's talk

- ? Dida faced a challenge returning to school when he was 5 years older than his classmates. How would you react if someone
- much older than you enrolled in your class? What would you do to help him or her feel welcome? How would you treat someone who was different in another way, perhaps someone who did not speak well or could not walk?
- ? Dida learned that singing was a talent God had blessed him with and that he could use to praise God. What talents do you have,
- and how can you use them for God?

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that Dida will continue using his talents for God and that he will continue to encourage his family members to trust in Jesus.





GraceLink Connection: Community.

A teen, feeling unloved, tried to commit suicide, but discovered that God was the only answer to her needs.

Another Chance to Live

Charlotte Ishkanian

Claudia* lives in Brazil. She knew that her father wanted a boy and was disappointed that she was a girl. He often told her that she was fat and ugly. And a problem at birth left her with seizures that needed medical attention and required the family to move to the city, where they could be close to medical care.

A neighbor befriended Claudia's mother and invited her to attend the Adventist church. Mother took her daughters to church, and there they found God. But Claudia's father objected and made it difficult for the family to worship.

Lonely and Rejected

Claudia's father drove a taxi. One day some men hired him to drive them to another city and wait for them while they took care of some business. Later the men returned, and they drove back to the city. What her father did not know was that the men had gone to collect some money from a man. There was an argument, and the men killed the man. Several days later the police arrested

Claudia's father. Even though he had never been in trouble before, he was sent to prison.

Mother found work as a school cook and janitor and cleaned houses on Sundays to feed her family. With Mother working such long hours, Claudia became more lonely than ever. She had few friends at school and was often reminded that her father was in prison. Claudia tried to talk to her mother about her troubles, but Mother worked so hard she was seldom home, and when she did return home, she was too tired to listen to Claudia's problems.

One day Claudia thought, *My father does not love me, Mother has no time for me, and my sisters say I am fat. It would be better if I died.* She picked up the bottle of medicine she took for seizures, opened it, and took all 90 pills. Then she went to bed. She woke up in the hospital two weeks later, unable to walk and in great pain. It took a month of physical therapy to help her walk again. But because no one realized she had tried to commit suicide, she did not get the support she needed.

More than anything, Claudia wanted to feel needed. She joined a student literature ministry team and went to another city to sell Christian literature. She enjoyed her work and felt needed. But her worried mother demanded that she return home where Mother could protect her. Claudia did not understand why she had to leave the work she loved. She even wondered whether God disliked her.

Cry for Help

Claudia's life continued to spiral downward after she visited her father in prison and learned that he still did not love her. Then on Sunday evening at church, she began to cry. Mother looked at her with concern, but she could not talk then. Claudia asked for the house key and ran home praying, "God, if You don't want me to die, make the medicine disappear." But the medicine stood on her dresser when she arrived. She swallowed all the pills.

Mother became worried and followed Claudia home. She





asked Claudia, "Are you OK?"

"Yes," Claudia answered.

"Tell me what is wrong," Mother pleaded.

"You never had time to talk to me before, and now I don't want to talk to you," Claudia said. She went to bed. Even her sisters became concerned when Claudia refused to pray with them as usual.

"Why won't you pray with us?" they asked.

"Because I did something terrible, and God will not listen to me," Claudia answered. She was shaking and cold.

"What's wrong?" one of her sisters asked. Claudia admitted she had taken pills to commit suicide. Then she fainted. She woke up in the hospital. Her mother stood nearby.

"Why did you do this?" Mother cried.

"You never had time for me," Claudia said. "You work so hard, but you were never there for me." Her mother sat down and urged Claudia to talk, promising to listen as long as Claudia wanted. As Claudia talked of her troubles,

she recalled the other times she had tried to end her life. "I just wanted to be normal, to have friends. But no one is my friend because I am ugly and fat."

Mother apologized that she had not been home enough to realize that Claudia was in such trouble.

Claudia returned home to a different home life. Her mother and sisters spent more time with her and spoke kindly to her. But they watched constantly for signs that she might try to kill herself. Her mother still found it difficult to trust Claudia away from home, even when she was at church. Claudia did not want to live a life as a prisoner. Claudia begged her mother to let her live a normal life, to be independent. Mother promised, but it was hard.

A New Start

Then Claudia learned about Petropolis Adventist Academy, an Adventist boarding school far from her home. She convinced her mother to allow her to attend the Adventist school. Although filled with uncertainty, her mother allowed her to study there.

"I love this school, and my relationship with God is growing here," Claudia said. "Because my father never loved me, it has been difficult for me to realize that God loves me. But now I am discovering that God loves with an unspeakable love. I do not understand why God allowed me to try to end my life, but I am glad He did not let me succeed. Now I know that I have a lot to live for. I can see the future.

"I have damaged my body with the abuse of drugs, but I can live with the pain because I know that God loves me and has His arms around me. He has promised me a future here on earth and a grand future in heaven.

"I tried six times to die, but God gave me six more chances to live. I don't want to throw away this gift." 🌐

**Claudia is a pseudonym. She lives in Brazil and hopes to become a teacher or work in tourism. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Teen Mission.*

let's talk

? Claudia tried to end her life several times. What were some of the problems she faced that made her want to die? [Her father did not love her; she suffered from seizures, which could make it difficult for her to make and keep friends; her father was imprisoned; her mother had to work long hours to support the family and was not there to listen to her concerns. All these things contribute to low self-esteem.]

? Attempted suicide is far more common than many people realize, especially among teenagers. Often people thinking of ending their lives give clues, such as saying "No one loves me," or "It would be better if I died." What should you do if one of your friends begins talking this way or shows other signs of depression or wanting to end their life? [Be their friend, listen to their concerns, offer to pray with them, and tell an adult immediately. You could be saving their life.]

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that Claudia develops a close relationship with God that will help her through the tough times she will face in life.

Pray that class members will be aware of those around them who may struggle with thoughts of suicide and will be willing to help them.





Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

“God, if You exist, heal my mother and I will believe,” I prayed. But nothing happened.



Felipe

Out of Darkness

Felipe de Souza Pequeño

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

After my father left us, my mother and I lived with my grandmother. But Grandmother and Mother argued a lot about religion, and eventually Mother and I moved away. I visited my grandmother sometimes, but when my mother learned that Grandmother was teaching me about God, Mother forbade me to visit her.

Spirit Worship

Mother worshipped in a religion that combines Christianity and African spirit worship. It is common in Brazil. Mother often took me with her to worship services, which were held at night. I often fell asleep amid the chanting, drumming, and dancing around me.

Without my grandmother’s Christian influence, I believed what my mother told me about the spirits and their power. But the loud drumming and the people who were possessed by the spirits frightened me, and I

wanted to leave.

I told my mother that I did not like her worship center, with its noise and people falling down when they were possessed by spirits. She took me to another spirit center. There we went into a room that was painted black. The leader talked and moved his hands to take evil spirits out of people. As I sat there, I felt as if a weight had been lifted from my heart.

One day when Mother was gone, my grandmother called. She told me, “I always pray for you, Felipe [feh-LEE-peh]. The Bible is the only sure source of truth. Be careful not to believe what these people are telling you.”

I watched what these people taught and realized they made fun of God and Jesus. They praised famous rock stars—groups such as Black Sabbath and Bad Religion, who, they believed, worshipped the spirits as well. The spirit group operates orphanages, helps hospitals, and gives money to charity to earn credit toward a better afterlife. But I realized that what they say about their religion does not match with what they do.

Rebellion and Reformation

When I was 13 years old, I rebelled against my mother and her religion. I skipped classes and gave teachers a hard time. My mother asked the school counselor for advice, and he told mother about Petropolis Adventist Academy, where his own daughter attended. Mother wanted nothing to do with Christians, but the adviser said, “Don’t worry. Felipe will not be brainwashed there. My daughter attends there, and she is very happy.”

My mother finally agreed to send me to the Adventist school, but she refused to go to the school herself, so her former boss took me.

I was upset that I could not go home until vacation, and I tried to get expelled. But the dean was patient; he understood I needed time. My roommate encouraged me to try Christianity, but I refused. Maybe my mother’s religion was nonsense, but I was sure this Adventist religion was nonsense too. In spite of myself, I made friends at the school and decided to stay.





When I arrived home for vacation, I found that my mother was really sick. She needed surgery, but we had no money. When I saw her suffering, I prayed, "God, if You really exist, help my mother to be healed, and help me to believe in You." Nothing happened, and Mother was still sick when I returned to school. I was convinced that God did not exist.

Then my grandmother called and told me that my mother was well. The doctor examined her and found none of the problems that had troubled her. I remembered my prayer, and I knew God had answered my prayer.

Change of Heart

Before this I did not enjoy worship services. But I had promised God that I would try to learn about Him, so I listened to worship speakers and read my Bible carefully. I found it interesting. During the fall Week of Prayer the speaker's words were exactly what I needed. The speaker said, "There is no more powerful force in the world than prayer to

God." When I heard this, I knew I had to follow God. I talked to the pastor and decided to give my life to Jesus and be baptized.

I thought about telling my mother, but I did not want her to become upset and say bad things. Finally I called and invited her to attend my baptism. Her response was just what I expected. "This is the worst decision you have ever made. You will regret this!" she said.

My mother had moved back to my grandmother's home, and Grandmother urged Mother to come to the school for my baptism. My grandmother wanted to come, but she could not. My mother finally agreed to come, but she refused to enter the church and stayed outside.

I knew she was on campus and wished she had come to church. Then, when it was time for the baptism, my roommates went outside and begged her to come into the church just to see my baptism. They pulled her into the church so she could see my baptism. But after church she again said, "You're making a mistake."

Sharing When I Can

When I go home for vacation, my mother will not listen to anything about my religion. She does not allow me to attend church on Sabbath, so I stay in my room and read the Bible and pray. Sometimes Grandmother sneaks me out of the house, and we hurry to the church. But Mother tries to do anything that will draw my attention away from my faith and attending church.

My grandmother asks questions about what I believe, and I tell her what I know. She loves to listen to what I am learning about God, and she says that she believes. But she also says she is too old to change religions.

I notice small changes in my mother's life. While she once tried to prevent me from attending church, she now allows me to go. She once resisted my religion, but now she lets me believe as I wish.

I thank God for allowing me to attend Petropolis Adventist Academy, where I was lifted out of darkness and found Jesus, the Light of the world. This quarter part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Petropolis rebuild the men's dormitory. Thank you for sharing in this important mission project. 🌐

Felipe de Souza Pequeno is 16 years old and studies at Petropolis Adventist Academy in Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil.

let's talk

- ? Felipe did not like his mother's religion. Why do you think it was so hard for him to accept Christianity when he went to the Adventist school? *[Suggested response: He knew little about God, and what he heard seemed impossible to believe until he let the Holy Spirit open his mind and heart to the truth.]*
- ? Felipe prayed his first real prayer when his mother was ill. What happened when she was not healed before he returned to school? *[He decided God did not exist.]* What changed his mind? *[His grandmother called to tell him his mother was healed.]*
- ? Why did Felipe's mother not want to enter the church to watch his baptism? What can change her heart and mind about God?

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that God will touch the hearts of Felipe's mother and grandmother as Felipe shares God's love with them.

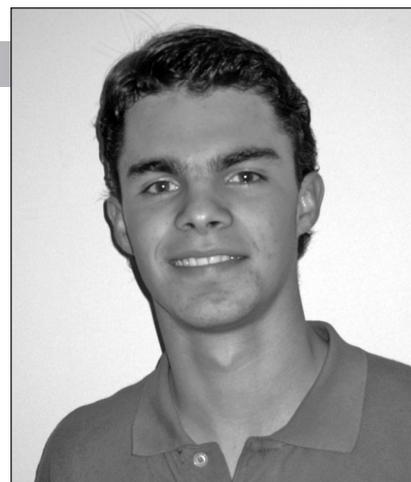




Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Service.

Paulo stared at the sports contract, then pushed it away. He had already decided on his next move.



Paulo

All The Right Moves

Paulo Käffler

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

My name is Paulo. I'm 16 years old. Some people think I'm crazy, that I've lost my mind, but I think that I've found my way. Let me explain.

When I was 12 years old, my family moved from Brazil to Portugal so we could experience another culture.

Promising Player

Soccer—or football, as we call it—is the biggest sport in Brazil and Portugal. Every boy plays soccer, and I played pretty well. I never thought it would ever be more than a school sport until a soccer scout saw me play and asked me to try out for a youth professional team. Imagine being asked to try out for a big team! Dreams of fame swirled through my head.

After the tryouts the team offered me a contract to play soccer. I was interested, but I told the coach I would not play soccer or attend team meetings on my Sabbath. The coaches agreed, so I

signed the contract.

But other players complained when I did not play as often as they did. I had no problem avoiding playing on Sabbath until our team made the finals. The big game fell on Sabbath. The coach knew he could not force me to play, but the team members pressured me, telling me they could not win without me. Finally I gave in and played in the finals. I hated that I'd broken the Sabbath and promised God I would never do it again.

The next season a true professional team offered me a contract, but I almost did not sign it. The team paid more money, but I would have to live in a special boarding school for soccer players and would not get to see my family much. Again I told the coach that I would not play on Sabbaths, and he agreed and made sure he wrote that into my contract. So I signed the three-year contract. I was 14 years old.

Since most soccer games are on Friday and Saturday nights, it wasn't long before my teammates and coach began pressuring me

to play on Sabbath. I reminded the coach of my contract, and he stopped pressuring me.

My roommate was a fellow Brazilian. We got along great. He liked it that I prayed before each game, and he asked me about my faith. I explained the Sabbath to him, and he understood. In fact, he even helped me find the Adventist church when we were in a strange city. If I could not get to the church, we stayed in my room together and sang and prayed and read the Bible while other players were out having a good time.

I know that my parents were praying for me, for they knew the pressures I was under. Playing professional soccer is a high-stakes, high-pressure life. My parents told me that I did not have to prove myself to anyone and that I could come home anytime.

A Golden Opportunity

Playing with my team was a great experience, and God helped me a lot. My three-year contract was ending, and I needed to think about my future. Soccer teams





were trying to get me to sign a contract with them. My agent reminded me that I could be rich and famous with just the stroke of a pen. I needed time to think.

One day my parents visited me. They brought videos of a family reunion I had not attended. As we watched it, my uncle said, "We don't even know you anymore." My mom gently reminded me that I used to want to be a doctor. I had not thought about my dream of being a doctor for a long time. Where had it gone? Could I give up everything just to study medicine?

I talked with my pastor, who counseled me to think carefully about my future. "You have a lot to gain—and a lot to lose. Ask God what He wants you to do." The battle raged in my mind. Should I give up soccer and focus on my studies? Or should I continue playing and hope to become a great star?

One day my mom asked if I wanted to return to Brazil and finish high school. That meant living in a boarding school dormitory. "No way!" I said. I had seen the world, tasted its riches. How could I go back to

dormitory life?

"You don't have to live in the dormitory," Mom said, reading my thoughts. "You can live with your uncle in town." That was different. I began thinking seriously of returning to Brazil.

A Tough Decision

That day my agent called me. He had a contract for me from the most sought-after team in Europe. I remembered that the coach of this team had once told us, "If you play for us, forget your studies, forget your family, forget your religion." My studies, my family, and my religion were the most important things in my life. I stared at the contract, which offered more money than I could imagine. Then a Bible verse I had learned came to mind. I whispered it to myself. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth" (Matthew 6:19, NIV).

"What did you say?" the agent said.

"I cannot sign this contract," I told him. "I'm going back to Brazil and study to be a doctor."

"You're crazy!" my agent yelled at me. "How can you turn this down? Think of the money,

the fame!" He paused, but I did not respond. "You're not thinking of giving up money for religion, are you?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered. "In a way, I am."

My contract came to an end. I played my last soccer game, packed away my gear, said goodbye to my parents, and boarded a plane for Brazil. School would start in a few days.

I don't want to be rich or famous. I just want to follow the dream God has given me, the dream to be a doctor and help people.

I'm back at the Adventist academy in Brazil, learning to be a normal teenager again. I thank God for this school and its committed teachers. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help improve the school's facilities so more students can get a quality, Christ-centered education. Thank you for your mission offerings every week and on Thirteenth Sabbath. 🌍

Paulo Käffler is a student at the Adventist secondary school in Colatina, Brazil.

let's talk

? Imagine earning more money in a month than your parents earn in a year. Imagine being famous and sought after. Would you have turned all this down to follow a dream God had given you? Why?

? How can Paulo, the former soccer star, use his experience as a sports hero to honor God? *[Encourage class to come up with ideas. He can mentor other youth, especially those who have little and think that money is the answer to all their problems. He can share the decisions he had to make and tell them why following God is better than riches or fame.]*

? If your friend had a chance to make it big in a major sport, what would you advise them to do? Why?

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Paulo will be able to influence many young people in Brazil to follow Jesus and the dreams only He can place in their hearts.





Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Service.

There are many ways to lead someone to Jesus, but these teens found two secrets to success.



Pollyanna

One Goal, Two Paths

Kenia de Albuquerque and Pollyanna de Macêdo Bezerra

[Ask two teen girls to present this first-person report.]

The Power of Prayer

My name is Kenia. I am 13 years old. My grandparents and my aunts and uncles taught me about God and took me to Sabbath School. When I was old enough, they enrolled me in the Adventurers Club and later the Pathfinder Club. Because of them, I have been surrounded with God's love. But one thing made me sad: my mother was not a Christian.

When I started school and learned to write, I would write her little notes to tell her that I loved her and that Jesus loves her. I encouraged her to stop smoking and give her life to Jesus. To my joy, my mother gave up smoking and even began attending church. This encouraged me, and I continued writing her notes.

When I was older, I wanted to seal my commitment to God through baptism, and I invited my mother to join me. But she said she was not ready to

make such a commitment, so I was baptized alone. I was not discouraged, and I never lost my faith that one day Mother would give her life to Jesus.

Then my church studied intercessory prayer. We wrote the names of those for whom we were praying on a master list, so everyone could pray for everyone's requests. I asked the church to pray for my mother.

One Sabbath the pastor planned a special program on intercessory prayer. He invited a special speaker, and I was asked to prepare a special praise song. It was a wonderful worship service! The pastor emphasized the importance of praying for other people. He talked about the effect of prayer in people's lives. Then it was time for special music.

I walked to the front to sing, and at that moment the most beautiful thing happened. The curtains that covered the baptismal tank opened, revealing my mother standing there, waiting to be baptized. I was so filled with joy that I could hardly sing.

Tears filled my eyes, and a deep and profound gratitude filled my heart. God had given me the best gift I could ever receive—the conversion of my mother.

I am so grateful for the power of intercessory prayer, and I am so glad that I did not give up praying for my mother!

Seeking to Serve

I am Pollyanna. I grew up in an Adventist pastor's home and often listened to people's experiences of leading people to Jesus. I wanted to lead someone to Christ too. But it was not easy to share my faith with my classmates. They were not interested in talking about religion. But I placed my life in God's hand and asked Him for a miracle.

Some students at school called me the girl who did not study on Saturdays. So when my classmates asked me why I did not attend school on Saturday, I could tell them. When they asked why I did not drink or smoke, I could share my beliefs. Sometimes we had lengthy





discussions about religion, and a few even attended church with me. But their interest did not seem to last long.

Then there was Patrick.

Patrick was my classmate. He enjoyed parties at which there was plenty of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. But in spite of his behavior, I sensed that Patrick was searching for something.

One day Patrick seemed unusually sad. I asked him what was wrong, and he told me that his grandfather had died. I gave him a bookmark on which I had written a Bible text to comfort him. He was so touched by my gift. Apparently no one else at school cared that he had lost his grandfather.

From that day on, Patrick and I talked a lot about spiritual topics, including death. I invited him to church, and he came.

To my delight, Patrick really enjoyed the worship service. As the church members sang together, the words of the song touched his heart, and Patrick realized that he did not have to face his problems alone; God was with him. From that Sabbath on, Patrick attended church with me.

One Sabbath we had a baptism, and the pastor invited

those who wanted to follow Jesus to stand. Patrick stood; he wanted to give his life to the Savior. It would be difficult to break the habits he had developed, but with much prayer and encouragement Patrick gained the victory over his alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. And when his friends invited him to a party, he told them that he no longer belonged there, for Jesus had changed him.

One day Patrick's friends invited him to go out with them. Then he realized that they were going to a bar. They all ordered beer, but Patrick ordered a soda. His friends were surprised, but when he explained that he no longer drank alcohol, his friends asked the bartender to bring them sodas as well. They quizzed Patrick about the changes in his life, and Patrick shared many things about his faith and his new life in Christ. This incident helped strengthen Patrick's faith as he prepared for baptism.

Patrick was baptized and joined a small group of believers near his home. He is active in church and shares his love for God with his parents, who are coming to church now.

Many other young people, like Patrick, are thirsty to know God.

You can be the one to help them find what they are looking for. Don't be afraid to share your faith with your friends. 🌐

Kenia de Albuquerque is in the seventh grade at the Adventist school in Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Pollyanna de Macêdo Bezerra is a dental student in Vitória, Brazil.

do it!

Kenia talks about intercessory prayer. Intercession means simply praying on behalf of someone else. Christ intercedes with His Father on our behalf and expects us to pray for those we know who need God's presence in their lives.

Make a list of special prayer requests that class members have. Include people who need to come to Christ, people who are struggling with specific problems, or any special request that a class member prays for regularly. Include church projects, such as upcoming evangelistic meetings. Ask the class to pray for the names on the prayer list during the week, and in Sabbath School pray over the list. When a prayer has been answered, report how and place a star by that request.

let's talk

- ? What two methods did these girls find to lead someone to Jesus? Were their methods complicated or difficult to learn? How long did it take before the girls were able to lead their friend and loved one to Christ? *[Kenia prayed for her mother for several years; Pollyanna prayed that God would help her share her faith for quite a while before God led her to Patrick.]* What does the length of time it took tell us about being persistent in our quest to lead someone to Christ?





Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

I believed this was the truth, but how could I give up all I had for a belief?



Igor

The Truth That Saves

Igor Carvalho

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

My family are Protestants. When I was 15 years old, my mother's co-worker invited us to participate in Bible studies. I thought I knew a lot about the Bible, and I enjoyed debating religious ideas, so I went with her.

One day we studied God's plan for good health. I had problems with chronic bronchitis [brawn-KI-tus], but when I stopped using coffee, tea, and most meats, I did not have another attack.

I continued attending the small group Bible studies even after I finished high school and enrolled in a Protestant seminary because I enjoyed the in-depth study. But some things I read in the Bible puzzled me, and I was not sure what to do about them.

Then one night I had a dream. I saw a banner quoting Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this

word, it is because there is no light in them." I woke up determined to study the Bible more carefully and compare everything I believed with the Bible.

One day as I was preparing to go to class, I overheard a television program my mother was watching. A pastor talked about the difficulties he experienced in the military because he kept the Sabbath. I could not get the word "Sabbath" out of my mind. As I walked to class I wondered, *Is it possible that I am keeping the wrong day? Am I being unfaithful to my Savior?*

Struggling to Obey

That afternoon I looked up everything the Bible says about the Sabbath. I knew I should obey the fourth commandment. But if I did, what would my family say? My grandfather and two uncles are Protestant pastors, and I planned to be a pastor. And what about my church? I was a leader there. I was not sure that I was ready to give up so much for an idea, a belief—

even a biblical belief. What if a test was scheduled on Sabbath? How could I tell my seminary teachers that I kept the Sabbath? And what about my future? Would I be able to find a job if I did not work on Sabbath?

My mind was in conflict. God kept reminding me of the Bible verses I had studied about the Sabbath, and about obedience to His Word. I prayed a lot. "Help me, Lord. I want to follow Your will," I said. I asked the Lord for strength to obey, and God did not let me down. God gave me the courage to obey Him and not worry about pleasing the people I knew.

I continued studying the Bible with the small group, and I began attending the Adventist church. A month later I left the seminary.

When I first began keeping the Sabbath, my mother accepted my decision. But a few weeks later she came to my grandfather's house where I was staying and told me to stop attending the Adventist church. She saw my collection of





Ellen White books on the shelf and said, "I can't let you read these books." She reached up to take them from the shelf.

My grandfather was listening to our conversation, and when my mother tried to take my books, he stopped her. "Daughter," he said, "if Igor is correct in what he believes, you will have to answer God." My mother replaced the books on the shelf. That night I cried, because I did not want a division between my mother and me. I asked my friends to pray for me.

On Sabbath I talked to my mother again. I read to her texts in the Bible that traced the Sabbath from Genesis to Revelation. She listened, and she understood. But she said that she did not have the strength to keep the Sabbath. "Neither do I," I said, "but God will help us, and we can do it." Mother began to keep the Sabbath, and we worshipped God together in church.

Preaching in Sunday School

I was still attending the church on Sunday, for I had many friends there. One morning in Sunday School class the teacher discussed a text about the Sabbath. The teacher read the verse that says "I

am the Lord of the Sabbath." Then he said, "If Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, what does the Sabbath mean to Christ?"

Someone responded, "The Sabbath is a servant of God."

The teacher then said, "If the Sabbath is a servant of God, Jesus did with the Sabbath whatever He wanted to do. He left the Sabbath in the Old Testament. We have to be careful because some people try to preach the Sabbath. But I will not believe it unless they can prove from God's Word that I am wrong." He pounded his Bible for emphasis.

I raised my hand, and the teacher called on me. I said, "Let's see what the Bible says about the Sabbath." I opened my Bible and began reading texts I had studied. I read the verses in Genesis that referred to the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, and verses that explained that there are two uses of the word "Sabbath"—the seventh day of the week, which was never done away with, and the Old Testament use of sabbath, which meant other special holy days.

"My brother," the teacher interrupted, "we keep Sunday

because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday."

I read verses from the New Testament showing that Jesus rested in the tomb on Sabbath and arose on the first day of the week. Then I turned to other verses that showed that Jesus' followers kept the Sabbath even after His death and resurrection. Then I added my own testimony. "I keep the Sabbath, not to be saved, but because Jesus has already saved me."

When I sat down, the church elder sitting beside me whispered, "I agree with what you have said." Another elder told me that some charismatic pastors secretly kept the Sabbath.

Taking a Stand

The Holy Spirit convinced me to be rebaptized into the truths I had learned to love, and now my mother is preparing for baptism as well. I still want to study theology, but now my entire outlook is different.

I thank God for the small group Bible study that introduced to me the truths I hold dear. Your mission offerings helped provide the materials we studied that brought me to Christ. 🌐

Igor Carvalho is a literature evangelist in Brazil.

let's talk

? We are taught to honor our parents. How did Igor, the boy in this story, honor his mother, even when he told her that what she believed was wrong? *[He spoke with respect and love; he made no demands on her, but presented what he knew.]*

? What will happen to those who, like Igor, learn Bible truths but, unlike Igor, dismiss what they learn or refuse to obey? *[God's truth is light, and if we refuse to obey what we know is truth, we will be left in spiritual darkness.]*

PRAY pray

Pray for young people who face difficult decisions in their homes and families as a result of following the Lord. Pray that they will seek God and gain strength from Him, knowing that He always works things out for those who love Him.





Brazil

GraceLink Connection: Service.

The school on the hill shines the light of faith in eastern Brazil.



Clezio

Light on a Hill

Márcio V. Mutz

The Espírito Santo Adventist Academy, lovingly called EDESSA [eh-DEH-sah], stands on a hill high above the banks of a river in eastern Brazil. Since it was established more than 40 years ago many young people have trained for service to God.

Ilania's Dream

Ilania [ee-LAH-yah] grew up in an unstable home. Her father had died, and her mother was often absent. But someone introduced her to the Adventist Church, and there she found the family and the stability she needed. She accepted Jesus as her Savior and dedicated herself to God.

As Ilania grew up, she dreamed of studying at the Adventist academy, where she could escape the fighting and confusion that filled her home. She knew that it would take prayer for her dream to come true, but she prayed and worked, and when the time came for her to study in high school, she applied for a work-study scholarship. She was accepted, and she enrolled in

the school of her dreams.

She worked in the registrar's office and was well known for her kindness and courtesy. She kept her grades above average in spite of her many hours of work, and she became active in the church as a deaconess and a greeter.

As graduation neared, Ilania laid plans to attend Brazil Adventist University in São Paulo. Her father had left her money in a trust that she could use for her education, so she and her mother traveled to the bank to withdraw the money. But as they left the bank, thieves attacked them and stole the money that would have helped pay for her college education.

Instead of crying, Ilania prayed that God would provide so she could continue her studies rather than return home empty-handed. She wanted to serve God and remain faithful to the Lord's Word.

God heard her prayers. Today Ilania is studying nursing in Rio de Janeiro. When she finishes her studies, she will work for God as a caring, attentive nurse.

Anderson

Anderson was, quite simply, a troublemaker. He refused to work around the house, picked fights with kids at school, and gave his family grief. His grandmother did not know what else to do with him. So she enrolled him at EDESSA. She warned the school of his problems before she left.

It was not long before Anderson's behavior confirmed his grandmother's information. However, with prayerful, loving discipline from his teachers and his dean, Anderson began to change. He opened his heart to God and His message of love. Anderson began to read his Bible, pay attention in worship, and even become friends with the dean of students and the church pastor.

Anderson enjoyed music and became involved with the Christian music ministry on campus. Then, instead of seeing him pick a fight, students and staff found Anderson singing in the halls of the dormitory.

During his last year at the academy, Anderson asked to be





baptized as evidence that he accepted Jesus as his Savior. He invited his family to witness his baptism, and they came, amazed at the transformation that had taken place in this young man.

Clezio

Clezio [KLEH-zee-oh] grew up in an Adventist family and learned to trust in God from his earliest years. He is currently a student at EDESSA, though his family lives 13 hours away by bus. Last year that long bus trip turned into a journey of faith for this young man.

As he traveled back to school following vacation, he had to change buses halfway to the school. When he entered the bus station to buy the ticket for the second half of his trip, he discovered that the price of a ticket had gone up, and his mother had not known and had not given him enough money to purchase his ticket all the way to the school.

He had a long wait for the next bus, so he prepared to lie down on the bus station floor to rest. Before he fell asleep he prayed that God would provide the money to get to school. Then

he fell asleep. When he awoke three hours later, he again prayed for the ticket money. And he remembered that he did not have any food with him, so he prayed that God would provide food as well as the ticket money. And he went back to sleep.

He awoke a second time and looked around. He saw two men talking to each other and decided to speak to them. He was a little fearful to talk to strangers, but he walked over to them and told them his problem. The men gave him some money, but it still was not enough to purchase the second half of his ticket. He thanked the men and returned to where he had left his suitcase. When he turned to see the two men, they were not there. He thanked God for the money the men had given him, then he saw two elderly people walking toward him. He waited until they were near him, then he told them he needed a little money to buy his bus ticket back to school. The woman said she did not have any money to give him. Clezio thanked the couple and prayed in his heart for God to show him who would answer his prayer for

bus money. As he was walking away from the couple, the elderly man touched his shoulder and gave him more than enough money to buy his ticket to school. Clezio thanked the couple, then he knelt down and thanked God for answering his prayers. He bought his ticket and something small to eat, and on the Sabbath after he returned to school, he gave the remaining money back to God.

Appeal

God has used EDESSA, the school on the hill, to shine as a light far beyond the small community that stands nearby, and to much of Brazil. That light transforms the lives of many young people who attend the school and those who go out from here to serve. But the school faces several challenges. Older buildings need refurbishing, and new facilities are required to keep up with academic excellence. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help renovate the boys' dormitory to bring it up to fire codes and make it a more comfortable place for young men such as Anderson to study. 🌐

let's talk

- ? What difference does a Christian education make in a person's life? Ask those from your class who attend an Adventist school to
 - share the differences they see between a public-school education and a Christian education.
- ? Who determines whether a Christian school will have a positive effect on those who attend? *[Encourage class members to realize that they alone determine whether they take away good or bad from their educational opportunities.]* How can class members help students in their school grow in Jesus, no matter what school they attend? *[Christians in public schools can pray for opportunities to share their faith with those around them by word or by deed.]*

Márcio V. Mutz pastors the church at Espírito Santo Adventist Academy in Colatina, Brazil.

PRAY pray

Pray that whatever situation class members find themselves in they will be beacons of light to those around them.



Program

Adventist News Today

Congregational Song "Christ for the World,"
The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
 No. 370

Welcome

Program Adventist News Today

Prayer

Offering Ask kindergarten and primary children to sing one or more of the songs they have learned in Spanish or Portuguese as the offering is taken.

Closing Song "Take My Life and Let It Be,"
The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
 No. 330

Note: Photos of the special projects for this quarter are available on our Web site at www.adventistmission.org. Click on "Stories" and then South American Division.

* * *

News Anchor: Good morning, and welcome to *Adventist News Today*, your Adventist news program. Featured this week is the South American Division. We have a lot to report today, so let's get started. Our first report is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the East Brazil Union.

Reporter 1: Rio de Janeiro is famous for its sandy beaches, its stunning mountains, and its carnival. But beyond the glitter of this city, millions of people live and work. As with all large cities, Rio has its share of poor. They live in shanty towns and slums, called favelas [fah-VEH-lahs], with few resources. Streets often are dirt paths, drugs and gang activities are rampant, and many live in fear for their lives.

In one favela in Rio Adventists are making a difference for the people who live there. Pastor Salón da Costa and his wife, Marlene, are conducting programs for the community. They started by holding meetings for the children in a garage provided by a church member. Mothers came with their little ones, and soon the pastor and his wife added seminars to teach them money management and healthful living, and to offer help with addictions. As interest and attendance grew, the couple organized Pathfinder and Adventurer Clubs as well. Today some 70 people crowd into this tiny refurbished garage.

The group needs a chapel in which to worship and learn the skills that will help the younger members to break out of their cycle of poverty. Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help provide a simple chapel in this favela to bring light and hope to people who live in conditions most of

* * *

Participants: A news anchor and two to four reporters. *[Ask the teens and young adults to present this program in a lively and energetic manner. Choose participants who will practice their parts and present them clearly. While participants do not have to memorize their parts, they should be familiar enough with the content that they can present the material with confidence.]*

Props: Set up a table and chairs for the presenters. A map of South America attached to a stand or projected onto a screen will be helpful. Ask someone to point to each location as it is mentioned to help the audience visualize the area. If you wish, ask someone to stand near the front with a large video camera to simulate a TV camera. If none is available, glue the lid to a shoebox and paint it black or silver. Cut a hole in the front for the "lens."



us cannot imagine.

News Anchor: An hour outside the fast-paced life of Rio, life slows down in the countryside.

_____ [name of reporter] has a special report of a light on a mountain just outside of Rio.

Reporter 2: Amid the black mountains of Petropolis stands an Adventist boarding school that ministers to more than 500 students. Petropolis [peh-TROH-poh-lihs] Adventist Academy accepts students from all walks of life. While most come from Adventist homes, many have come to this school for other reasons.

Ádamo [AH-dah-moh] came as a last resort. His mother brought him, begging that the school give him a chance to study. His life had been a series of frustrations and failed attempts, and he had given up on school. But someone had told him about Petropolis Academy, and he was willing to try once more—if the school would accept him.

The principal agreed to accept him on probation, and Ádamo started classes. He was older than the other boys in his grade, and some teased him. He got into fights. But instead of expelling him, the dean talked to and prayed with him. He helped Ádamo see that he had a future, and most of all, that Jesus was on his side.

Ádamo began listening in Bible class and church; he started to read his Bible, and soon he asked to be baptized. Today Ádamo has graduated from Petropolis and is working for God. “If the staff of Petropolis Academy had not given me a chance to change my life, I might not be alive today,” he testifies.

Petropolis Academy is growing. The school has built a new girls’ dormitory and added to its classroom block. Now it needs help to enlarge the boys’ dormitory to accommodate all

those who want to come. Part of today’s offering will help the school complete their project of building for the future.

News Anchor: North of Rio de Janeiro lies the city of Vitória. Two hours west, in the farmland of this region, stands another Adventist academy on a hill. The boarding school, known as EDESSA, draws students from hundreds of miles around. _____ [name of reporter] will tell us about one student there.

Reporter 3: The Espírito Santo Adventist Academy, sometimes called EDESSA [eh-DEH-sah], truly does stand as a light on a hill. Located atop a large hill, it looks down on the farmland and river below. This peaceful setting provides an excellent situation for training young people for God.

As with most Adventist schools, many students must rely on scholarships or sponsorships to be able to attend. Alan Ramos comes from a poor family living in northern Brazil. He had to quit school in the fifth grade to help his family, but he never gave up his desire to complete his education.

While he was working to support his family, a friend invited him to a meeting in the Adventist church. Alan went, and there he met a couple who befriended him. They became like his second parents. This couple and Alan’s friend studied the Bible with him, and in time Alan asked to be baptized into the Adventist Church.

His parents did not approve of his decision, and they made his life difficult. Last year this same couple who had helped lead Alan to the Lord encouraged him to finish his education. They offered to help pay his tuition. Alan began taking night school classes while he searched for an Adventist boarding school. In one year he had completed two grades.

Alan enrolled in EDESSA and completed two more years in one year while working four hours a day to help pay his room and board. He hopes to complete high school in one year.

“EDESSA has made it possible to fulfill my dream to finish school,” Alan says. “I love the school, especially the Christian atmosphere here. When I graduate, I would like to prepare to serve God as a pastor.” Alan is already preparing for his ministry. He serves as the local church elder and enjoys giving Bible studies to people who want to know God.

“This school has opened many doors for me and helped me in so many ways,” Alan adds. “They are helping me make my dreams become a reality. I know that God has plans for me. I just need to be open for them.”

EDESSA, like Petropolis Academy, is rebuilding, enlarging for the future. Part of today’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help complete the boys’ dormitory.

News Anchor: Brazil is not the only region with needs in the South American Division. Let’s travel southwest, into the northern portion of Argentina [locate on map], where God’s work is moving rapidly. _____ [name of reporter] has a special report.

Reporter 4: Northern Argentina has its own special beauty. Here lie the seven-colored mountains. Layers of minerals in these mountains provide dazzling colors when the sun shines on them. Here, too, live many of Argentina’s Amerindians, its native peoples. Quaint adobe houses line narrow streets, and life flows more slowly here.

But the expansion of the Adventist Church in this region is moving rapidly. Perhaps because people here have fewer resources





than people in the large cities, they are more open to faith. Churches and companies have sprung up throughout this area. Many of these companies do not have land or a building to call their own. They meet in homes, rented rooms, or whatever they can find. And the outside world does not know they exist, for they have no church homes.

Some companies of believers number only a handful, but others have 30 or more believers. Today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help make a dream of a church home possible for 17 of these companies of believers. They are working to build their congregations while saving their pesos [PEH-sohs] to build a house of worship. Let's make their dreams and their work easier today by giving a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

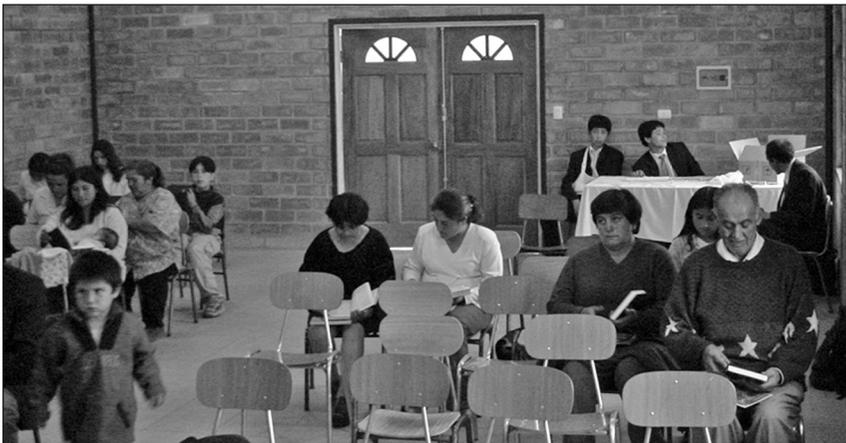
News Anchor: Our time is almost up, but let me remind you that the mission offerings you give each week go to world missions, to advance the gospel through evangelism, medical outreach, education, publishing ventures, and lay worker-led outreach. Three quarters of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering go into the world mission budget. But the remaining 25 percent becomes the Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering that will go directly to the fields that are listed on the map in your lesson quarterly. This is why a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering means so much to the fields being featured today and every quarter.

[Prayer and Offering]

Report to Stockholders, continued



Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2003 helped build the girls' dormitory at Santa Catarina Academy in Brazil (above) and the Mafil chapel in Chile (below).



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Teen Mission (ISSN 0190-4108)
is produced and
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Office of Mission Awareness,
General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists,
12501 Old Columbia Pike,
Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.
Printed in U.S.A.
Second Quarter 2006
Volume 52, Number 2
E-mail: GoMission@gc.adventist.org
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Mission Projects

- 1 Rebuild boys' dormitory at Petropolis Adventist Academy.
- 2 Rebuild boys' dormitory at Espirito Santo Academy (EDESSA).
- 3 Seven churches in newly entered regions in the East Brazil Union.
- 4 Chapels for existing congregations in Northwest Argentin Mission.

For more information, visit www.adventistmission.org



Unions	Churches	Companies	Members	Population
Austral Union Conference	542	328	108,485	47,300,000
Bolivia Union Mission	253	686	143,029	8,766,000
Central Brazil Union Conference	828	621	174,668	44,128,022
Chile Union Mission	518	244	117,730	15,988,000
East Brazil Union Conference	861	902	145,455	33,955,654
Ecuador Union Mission	111	307	52,524	13,402,000
North Brazil Union Mission	1,409	1,180	543,221	17,371,828
Northeast Brazil Union Mission	995	1,403	236,015	43,877,295
Peru Union Mission	1,568	2,538	664,016	27,547,000
South Brazil Union Conference	669	835	140,424	25,717,467
West Central Brazil Union Mission	409	578	89,041	14,040,734
Total	8,163	9,622	2,414,608	292,094,000

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Where legally possible, offerings will go to these projects; otherwise, special arrangements will be made with the General Conference for distribution of funds based on the laws of the countries where these offerings are collected.

