

**Trans-European Division  
Second Quarter 2007**

**Missio**

*Teen*



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# Mission Teen

**On the Cover:**  
*Millions of teens in Trans-European Division are searching for meaning to life.*

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making missions meaningful

# Leader's Planner

## Trans-European Division

### The Challenge

The fields representing Trans-European Division this quarter demonstrate the wide diversity of needs and challenges the division faces. Yet the people living in this region share a unity of purpose that drives the work: to train, equip, and send believers to share the gospel.

The Netherlands Union is focusing on planting new churches and providing church homes for its congregations, including an immigrant congregation in Amsterdam that pays far too much to rent a hall in which to worship.

The Egypt Field faces the challenges of growing a church in a Middle-Eastern country that is unfriendly to evangelism. Nile Union Academy, the church's secondary school in Cairo, answers many of the challenges by offering a quality, Christ-centered education along with practical skills to a student body that is largely non-Adventist.

A third project this quarter challenges church members to go beyond their normal planned giving for Thirteenth Sabbath. Funds given on Thirteenth Sabbath that exceed the amount needed to complete the two primary projects will be used to provide simple but permanent dormitories for students at the Adventist secondary school in southern Sudan, where many students still live in mud-brick-and-thatched-roof buildings.

### The Opportunities

Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help provide the following projects:

- A church for the Ghanaian believers in Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- Vocational school and student center at Nile Union Academy, Cairo, Egypt.
- Permanent dormitories at Eyira Adventist Vocational Academy in southern Sudan.

### GraceLink Connections

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

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

The Trans-European Division could be called the trans-world division, as its territory stretches across Europe, parts of Asia, the Middle East, and into northern Africa.

The countries of focus this quarter that will receive part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering are Netherlands and Egypt; any overflow will go to a special project in southern Sudan.

### Egypt

Egypt was first entered by Seventh-day Adventists in 1877, but from the beginning work was difficult. Early missionaries were killed in riots against foreigners; and later apostasy wracked the church in Cairo, and its members were scattered. Then in the mid-1950s the Egyptian government instituted educational requirements that forced all but one Adventist elementary school and Nile Union Academy to close. Although the elementary school lost much of its Adventist character when it adapted the government's curriculum, Nile Union Academy has remained singularly Adventist and is an effective beacon of Adventist truth to students and neighbors as well.

Because the academy

is not recognized by the government of Egypt, students who graduate from this school must take a special exam to qualify to enter an Egyptian university. Few students can afford to take these tests, so many cannot continue with their studies.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help establish a vocational school at Nile Union Academy that will train students in a variety of marketable skills that will allow them to remain in Egypt, where, it is hoped, they will share their faith with those in whose homes and offices they work.

### The Netherlands

The Netherlands (often called Holland) is a modern country in the northeastern region of Europe. It is a densely populated nation, and the Dutch have acquired land, not from their neighbors by conquest, but from the sea by technology. The Dutch are proud of their engineering skills and like to say that God created the world, but the Dutch created Holland, referring to the land that has been reclaimed from the sea.

Religious preferences are nearly equally divided among Protestants, Catholics, and

those who profess no religion. The Adventist Church's leaders are aggressively seeking ways to draw people to Christ. One of their primary means is establishing new church plants that target specific age or interest groups and nationalities. The church is growing and vibrant among Netherlands' several immigrant communities. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help buy a building suitable for worship for one of the largest populations of immigrants, the Ghanaian congregation in Amsterdam.

### **Sudan**

**Sudan** presents a far different challenge. While the northern portion of the country is primarily Arab-influenced and Muslim in religion, the southern portion is primarily African and Christian or animist. Although the cease-fire between the north and the south has held for several months now, the civil war that raged for almost

40 years has left southern Sudan without an infrastructure. The region has no paved roads, no electricity, no telephones, and no running water. Life for the people is a constant struggle for food, water, an education, and many of the things the rest of the world takes for granted.

The church is growing rapidly in southern Sudan and now has about 6,000 members. The Eyira Adventist Vocational Academy, located near Maridi, southern Sudan, was established about 10 years ago, but some students still live in mud-hut-style dormitories. Any funds received on Thirteenth Sabbath in excess of the targeted offering needed to complete the projects in Egypt and Netherlands will go to help build simple dormitories at the Adventist secondary school in Sudan.

**For more information** on these special projects see the Thirteenth Sabbath program on page 29.

Remind members that mission

offerings given throughout the quarter support the world missions program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go to the special projects listed above, and the remaining three quarters will go to world mission offerings.

### **Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects**

During third quarter the West-Central Africa Division will be featured. The Thirteenth Sabbath Projects include churches and evangelistic centers in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Benin; a primary school in Cameroon and a secondary school in eastern Nigeria; and completion of Buea Hospital in Cameroon.

Fourth quarter 2007 will feature projects in the Southern Asia Division.

## **Resources**

*The SDA Encyclopedia* (available in book form and on CD-ROM) contains more detailed information on the history of the church's work in Sweden, Sudan, and Israel.

*The Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2007), contains names and addresses of 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 Egypt and Netherlands appear on pages 8, 10, and 12

of *Children's Mission*. Invite the children's divisions to sing some of the songs they are learning in Dutch and Arabic this quarter.

**The Internet.** The embassy of Egypt's Web site at [www.egyptembassy.us](http://www.egyptembassy.us) has links to information about the country and its history. The embassy of the Netherlands maintains consulate offices throughout the United States and in several other regions of the world. Locations are listed on their Web site at [www.netherlands-embassy.org/location.asp](http://www.netherlands-embassy.org/location.asp).

The National Geographic Web site at [www.nationalgeographic.com/places](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/places) offers information and

photos of nearly any country or culture in the world.

**Mission DVD:** The General Conference Office of Adventist Mission has produced a DVD highlighting the projects in the Trans-European Division as well as mission outreach activities around the world in 3-, 5-, and 10-minute segments suitable for Sabbath School, church, or the interim period between these services. Check with your Sabbath School superintendent for your church's copy of the DVD, or contact Adventist Mission at [www.AdventistMission.org/DVD](http://www.AdventistMission.org/DVD).

**GraceLink Connection: Worship.**

*How does a church with just two or three teens provide meaningful and fun Sabbath activities? The secret may lie in joining a club.*

# Join the Club!

*[Ask several teens to present this report as a skit.]*

**Girl 1:** I sure enjoyed the club meeting Saturday. It was so much fun surprising Ms. Clair!

**Girl 2:** It sure was! Did you see the look on her face when she saw all those mugs? Wow! I thought her eyes would pop out!

**Boy 1:** Hey, what are you two talking about? It sounds as if I missed something.

**Girl 1:** Hi. We were talking about our church's teen club. We surprised our sponsor by making her mugs for her birthday—45 of them, to be exact.

**Boy 1:** What's so special with this club you're raving about? Who belongs?

**Girl 2:** Kids from all over Holland, actually. See, some of our churches are pretty small, with only one or two teenagers each. It's pretty hard to find something to do with such a small group of people, so Ms. Clair got the

idea to band together with other clubs from all over Holland, and now we meet once a month for a special Sabbath afternoon.

**Girl 1:** Yes, we do lots of different things when we meet. We have a Bible study, then do a craft that may relate to the Bible story we are studying. Then if the weather is nice, we may take a hike. Sometimes our club meeting features a special country, such as Sweden or Mexico. Then we make something related to that country and eat food from that country. It's great fun.

**Girl 2:** Remember the time Ms. Clair invited an artist to talk about expressing ourselves through art? Then we each painted a Bible picture in creative ways. That was really fun.

**Girl 1:** Yes, and the time she gave us a simple drawing, such as the sun inside a circle, and we had to describe it to the others so they would be able to draw it without

seeing her original drawing. That was harder than I thought it would be.

**Girl 2:** Yes, that was great. I really appreciated how hard it would have been for Daniel to describe his visions or John the Beloved to describe the beasts of Revelation after that exercise!

**Boy 1:** Is this club just for girls?

**Girl 1:** Oh, no. Lots of guys come too. In fact, Evan is a member. Here he comes, let him tell you what he thinks of the club. He has quite a story to tell. *[Boy 2 walks onto platform and joins group.]*

**Boy 2:** What's up, guys?

**Girl 2:** We were just telling Josh about the church's teen club. Tell him about it, Evan.

**Boy 2:** Yeah, it's pretty neat. Kids come once a month and do some crafts, learn about nature or the Bible, and have fun together. In



the winter, when the sun sets really early, we might go skiing or do some other social thing. It really helped me when I was having a hard time in school.

**Girl 1:** Yes, Evan, tell Josh about that.

**Boy 2:** I was in a new school, and it seemed hard to make new friends. So many of the kids were into things I did not want to do. Frankly, I was lonely. Then I learned about the teen club and tried it. I didn't think it would be that great, but it was. Everyone was really nice to me and friendly. I didn't want to miss a single meeting!

A few months ago I decided to be baptized, and practically the whole club came to my baptism. Some of them drove two hours to come. That was awesome!

**Boy 1:** You sure are lucky to have such a neat thing in your church. But I don't go to church. I wish I could belong to a club like yours.

**Girl 2:** You can! You're welcome to come, Josh. We'd love to have you. Our next meeting is next Saturday afternoon from about 1:00 till 9:00 or so in the evening. Can you make it?

**Boy 1:** I'll have to check with my parents. Where does it meet? How do I get there?

**Boy 2:** I'm sure my folks can take you, Josh. And I think you'd like the club. It's pretty fun. Come and try it. If you like it, you're in. It's that simple.

**Girl 1:** Ms. Clair talked about the upcoming youth weekend campout. I think we're going to do some planning on that. That will be really fun. I think she said the theme would be "Extreme," as in extreme sports. I wonder what she is cooking up this time.

**Girl 2:** I overheard her saying that we were going to talk about King David. His life surely was extreme—in more ways than one!

And not all of those extremes were good, either.

**Boy 2:** I hear a pastor is coming from England to be our speaker. Should be really interesting.

**Boy 1:** Now you *really* have me interested! Is there a chance I can come to the campout too?

**Boy 2:** Sure! But try to come to one of the Saturday meetings first. We don't want you to miss a thing!

**Boy 1:** Thanks guys. This sounds like something I can get into. Are you sure it's OK to bring a stranger to the club?

**Boy 2:** No problem, Josh. You'll only be a stranger for about 30 seconds! Look, it's time to go to class. I'll see you later, OK?

**Girl 1:** Yes, do come. Bye.

**Boy 1:** Thanks! Bye! *[Group separates and hurries off stage.]* 🌐

**do it!**

- Teens in the Netherlands meet together once a month to explore the Bible, share their faith, learn, and have fun on Sabbath afternoons. Leaders develop creative activities that help young people deal with real life situations and challenges such as those discussed in today's report.
- If you belong to a small church, consider joining the youth from another small church or district of churches for Sabbath afternoon. Take turns deciding on meaningful and interesting activities. What types of activities would you like to see in such a meeting? Are you willing to help plan such a meeting?
- What would you need to create a district teen club? What would you want the club to accomplish when it meets?

**PRAY** pray **PRAY**

*Pray that God will continue to bless the Adventist teens in the Netherlands who often study in public schools and have few Adventist friends nearby. Pray that they will invite their friends to come and share the fun of being a Christian.*

**GraceLink Connection: Worship.**  
*Nadine liked the group Bible study and wanted to share what she was learning with her friends at school.*



Nadine

# Nadine's Bible Club

Charlotte Ishkanian

Nadine lives in the Netherlands, a small country in northwestern Europe. [*Locate Netherlands on the map.*] She was 10 years old when she and her mother were invited to attend a small Christian group meeting in the home of a friend. Nadine's family did not attend any church, but both Nadine and her mother enjoyed the small group meeting, where they felt they were among friends. In this safe cluster of new friends, Nadine and her mother began to really look at spiritual things. They began studying the Bible and learned more about who God is and what He wants to see happen in the lives of those who wish to follow Him.

## Starting Something New

The group talked about sharing God's love with those they meet. Nadine was excited about what she was learning and wanted to share it with her friends. But she was not sure how. Her classmates at school were not really

interested in anything religious. She tried talking to her friends at school about God. Some of them wanted to know more about God, but Nadine did not know how to answer some of their questions, how to explain God to them. She needed help.

Then she had an idea. That afternoon she asked her mother whether she could start a Bible club for her friends. Her mother thought it was a great idea, and the two talked about what Nadine wanted to include in the club. They shared their idea with the other members of the small group, and they too liked the idea. But no one knew how to start a girls' club.

Then in the adult small group meeting someone showed a video that included a segment about a girl in Brazil who had started her own Bible club. "This is what I want to do, Mom!" Nadine said. So Nadine and her mother started making plans.

"At first I was not sure my friends would come to a Bible

club," Nadine said. "So Mom and I planned a special program. I invited my friends, and four of them came to that first meeting—and they liked it! We talked about how our week went, and then I prayed. I wanted the club to be fun, so we did a craft. Then we watched a Bible video and talked about how we could apply its lesson to our lives. Mom suggested that we give every girl a card and a sticker each time they came, so we did. We promised the girls a prize when they had collected 10 stickers on their card.

"The next time we met more of my friends came. Now five girls come to our club meetings all the time, and a few others come when they can. Only one of the girls in the club attends church, so I feel that we are really helping them think about God," Nadine said with a smile.

## Surprise Prayer

Most of the girls who come to the club have not been to church on a regular basis. They were

shy about praying when Nadine started the club, so she prayed. Then one day one of her friends surprised Nadine and asked permission to pray. She had never been to church and had never prayed before, but after Nadine prayed, this girl prayed. And to Nadine's surprise, her friend prayed for *her*. Nadine had told the girls that she was transferring to a new school, and the girl knew that such a move can be difficult. She prayed that Nadine would have many new friends in her new school. Nadine said, "I felt so special knowing that she would pray for me."

Since that time other girls have prayed, and now the group sometimes has a circle prayer, in which each person prays for the person next to her in the circle. Everyone has an opportunity to pray and be prayed for.

#### Invitation to Fun

Nadine also invites her friends to come to the small group's praise and worship time, special meetings that the adult small group has just to praise God. Each of the girls has come at least once, and the whole club came to the special Christmas program.

When the adult small group planned a weekend camp outing, they invited Nadine's girls' club to join them. "We stayed in a lodge in the forest," Nadine said, "and we girls slept in one room. We talked late into the night.

During the day we had Bible discussions, and on Sabbath we had an informal church service. We talked about things that matter to us and discussed whether these things are really important. My friends liked the camp and want to do it again."

School will soon be out for the summer, and Nadine's friends already are asking whether they will have the club again when school starts. "I'm so glad my friends accepted my invitation to come and learn about God," Nadine said. "Often they ask me questions about God in private. One girl, who knows that we keep the Sabbath, asked, 'Does it bother you that you can't go shopping with your friends on your Sabbath?' I told her that Sabbath is such a special day to spend with God and our families. We don't have to do housework or schoolwork that day; we just spend the day with God and one another. I can go shopping on Sunday.'

"I'm glad that my mother helped me organize my girls' club. I'm glad that our Bible study group includes my friends in what they do. It makes me feel wonderful to know that my friends are interested in knowing more about God. I hope one day they will give their hearts to God."

In a country such as the Netherlands, where many historic churches have just a few faithful

members, it's good to know that God still has young people such as Nadine who are willing to share their faith with their friends. Our mission offerings support these small groups as they reach out to their neighbors in the Netherlands and around the world. Thank you for giving to missions. 🌍

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Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Teen Mission.



Nadine started her club as a way to share God's love with her friends. Because of her sharing, her friends have learned that God loves them and wants to be part of their lives. They have learned that being a Christian is fun and life-changing.

Experience the same joys yourself. Talk to your pastor or youth leader about starting a girls' club, a boys' club, or a teen club in your neighborhood or in your church. Prayerfully plan what you would do to make learning about God fun as well as spiritual. Who can you invite? How large should the group be? *[Smaller groups of no more than eight or 10 work best for weekly meetings; if more than this want to come, separate into smaller groups by gender or age or interests. Plan to meet together in the larger group once a month or once a quarter.]*

Decide on a meeting place and time; create simple invitations for class members to give to one or two of their friends, then—just do it. Pray for God's guidance, let Him lead, and watch what happens.

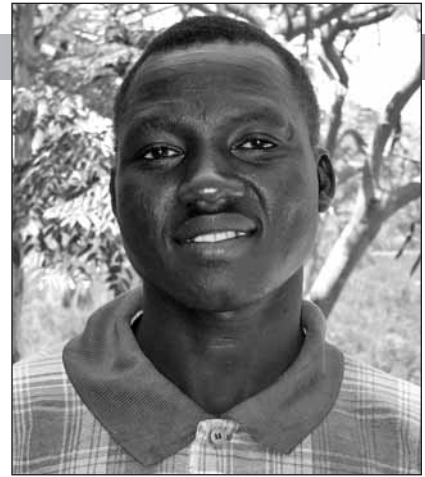
## let's talk

? What made Nadine decide to start a club for her friends? What good has come from her efforts to start this girls' club?



## GraceLink Connection: Grace

*His uncle sent him on a journey to Egypt to find an education. But what could a teenage boy do alone?*



Simon

# Simon's Quest

Simon Koug

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

**M**y father died when I was 7 years old, and my mother sent me to live with an uncle in a nearby village in southern Sudan. Another uncle who lived nearby was an Adventist, and he often talked to me about God. I became more interested in what he was saying and started reading the Bible for myself. There I began to understand that the Adventist Church based its beliefs on the Bible, not on tradition.

At first the uncle with whom I lived objected when I wanted to worship at the Adventist church, but in time he allowed me to decide for myself which faith I would follow. After attending the church for several years, I asked to be baptized.

The school I attended held classes on Saturday, and the principal refused to give me permission to be absent. So whenever I was absent from school on Sabbath, I knew I would be punished on Monday. When teachers scheduled exams

on Sabbath, I would ask for permission to take the exam on another day. Some teachers allowed me to, but others did not.

### **Journey Into Egypt**

When I completed primary school, my uncle told me that I must go to Egypt to continue my studies, that the schools nearby were not good. I did not want to go to Egypt. I knew no one in Egypt, and I did not want to go there alone. I knew that other Sudanese had gone to Egypt, but they found neither an education nor work. But my uncle insisted that I go, so I went.

I took a bus from our village in southern Sudan to Khartoum [KAR-TOOM], the capital. *[If possible, trace on a map the journey from southern Sudan to Egypt.]* It was a dangerous journey, for war was still raging in Sudan. But taking the bus was better than walking. From Khartoum I traveled by train to Cairo.

I found a relative living there, and I lived with him until he

returned to Sudan. Then I was really alone! I felt as if I was a refugee in a strange land. I had no money and no friends. I looked around for a school, but without money, what was the use of searching? So that first year I stayed out of school.

### **Finding Adventists**

During that year a fellow Sudanese refugee introduced me to some Sudanese Adventists in Cairo. I began worshipping with them. At last I had a few friends!

I learned about the Adventist camp meeting that was held on the campus of Nile Union Academy, the Adventist high school outside Cairo. I attended that camp meeting and learned more about the academy. The school was really good, and I wanted to study there. But I still had no money and no work. I did not know how I could pay my school fees. But I asked how much it would cost to study at the academy. I went to the academy to talk to the school principal,

Dwight Rose. To my surprise he offered a partial sponsorship if I would agree to work to pay the remainder of my school fees. I was so excited to hear this because I had almost given up hope that I would ever be able to complete my education!

### New Start

I started by studying English for a year, since the school teaches its classes in English. English is a difficult language to learn, but by God's grace, I have learned it.

School fees have remained a problem. A man had promised to help me with my school fees, but the money never came. Without this money I feared I could not stay in school. That night I prayed a long time, telling God, "You opened the door to study at Nile Union Academy, but now I have to leave. If it is Your plan, I will leave; but if it is Your plan for me to stay, then please provide for my school fees."

The next day Mrs. Rose called me and told me, "We will try to find a sponsor to help you stay in

school. Please don't go."

I was so happy! I knew that God had heard my prayer.

I finished the first year's study and worked hard that summer to earn the rest of my school fees. The work on campus does not pay a lot, but I did my best. When school started again, I had earned only enough to pay the past year's bill and my registration fee for the current year. Again I prayed, and this time Mr. Rose called me into his office and told me he would take my circumstances to the board. Later he said the board had agreed that I could stay. Again I rejoiced.

I am in my final year of study now. I don't know how God will provide, but I have learned not to worry about it. Every year God has provided the funds for my tuition; I just have to do my part and work hard.

Although I have read my Bible faithfully for several years, since I came to Nile, I have learned so much more about God. I am studying in a systematic way and learning to apply God's principles

to my daily life.

When I finish high school I want to return to Sudan. I have not seen my family in four years. I am eager to tell them how God has blessed me. They are not Adventists. When I write them, I tell them that God is providing for me here, and they are glad. But when I see them again, I can share the beautiful message I have found in the Adventist Church and the Adventist family I have gotten to know.

This quarter Nile Union Academy will receive part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to establish a vocational school. This school will provide training to students like me who may never go to university. The training will be part of our high school education. Please give a generous offering for this quarter and help my school and the students it serves. 🌍

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**Simon Koung** is in his last year of study at Nile Union Academy; he comes from southern Sudan.

# Let's talk

? Simon chose to trust God and be faithful to Him even though he was not sure how things would work out. How did God reward

- Simon's faithfulness? *[God helped Simon do well in school when he was absent on Sabbaths; God led Simon to Nile Union Academy and has provided his school fees.]*

? Imagine having to go alone to a foreign country where you knew no one and find a school in which to study—all without money.

- Could you do it? How would you feel? Have you ever had to do something difficult with no one to help you? Share it with the class. How does knowing God is with you make it easier?

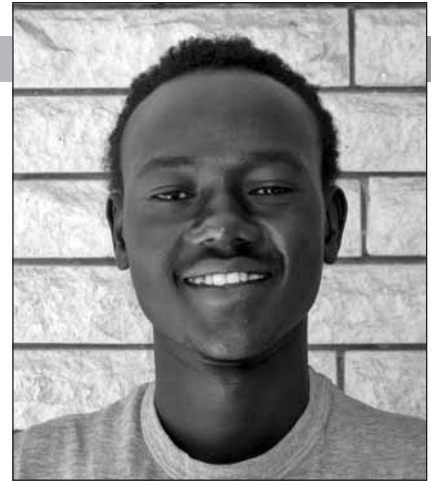
**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that the students at Nile Union Academy will find Jesus as their Savior and learn to trust Him to meet their every need.*

**GraceLink Connection: Grace.**

*His parents sent him to Egypt to go to school,  
but he arrived with no money and no friends.*

*What could he do?*



Goal

# My God Shall Provide

Goal Chol

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

I come from Sudan, a country that has been at war with itself for most of the past 40 years. The war has caused suffering and death for millions of people, including my family. Entire villages have been destroyed and the people forced to flee for their lives. Schools also were destroyed or were forced to close. My parents had not been able to attend school, but they wanted something better for me. However, the fighting disrupted my own education, and by the time I was 12 years old I had been able to study in primary school for only one year.

My parents had no money, but my father's friend offered to take me with his family to Khartoum [kar-TOOM], the capital of Sudan, to study. There seemed to be no other option, so I went. However, when we arrived in Khartoum, we discovered that all the schools there are taught in Arabic, a language I did not know. And because of the civil war, we did not want to study in Arabic.

## **Into Egypt**

My father's friend decided to take us to Egypt, where he had heard that the schools were better. But when we arrived in Egypt, we realized that Egyptians speak Arabic too. We decided to look for a school that taught in English. We would still have to learn another language—English—but we felt English was a better choice than Arabic.

We found a school in Cairo that served refugees. The school was basically an English immersion school. That means that we studied only English—no math, no history, nothing but English. I was disappointed that I was not learning these other subjects, but I threw my energies into learning English, hoping to find another English-speaking school later.

After I completed a year at this school, I was desperate to start studying, to catch up with other students my age. I asked about English-speaking schools, and I learned that there were some,

but most were day schools and taught in the Egyptian system. Then someone told me about Nile Union Academy. I knew nothing about the school, but I was sure that I could never afford to study at such a fine school, for I had no money and no job to earn any money.

Then I met a man who knew my father. In fact, as we talked, I realized that we were distant relatives. He asked where I was going to school, and I explained that I needed to study at an English-medium school, and the only one I knew of was too expensive. He offered to help me study there and gave me some money. With joy I went to enroll in Nile Union Academy.

The school is located on the edge of Cairo, Egypt, in a dusty neighborhood. But the school itself is clean and bright. I walked onto the campus and searched for someone who could help me. A kind student directed me to the administration building, where I found the registrar's office. I asked

to enroll and laid the money this man had given me on the counter. It was enough to register and pay for two months' tuition.

### Facing Challenges

I began classes knowing that I would face many challenges, but I was joyful that at last I could get an education!

I thought that the man who gave me the enrollment fee would continue to help me with tuition, but I never heard from him again. When some people learned of my situation, they helped me with some money, but I worked to pay most of my school fees.

Money for school fees was not the only problem I faced that first year. Because I had studied only first grade in Sudan and English in the Cairo school, I was far behind the other students. There was so much I did not know! Basically I went from first grade to high school in one leap. I could read and write, but math and science were huge problems. I could not add or subtract, and when I looked at my math book I could not understand anything on the pages. I did not know anything

about geography or science or history either, and I struggled to keep up with the other students. But the teachers were so kind. They explained what I did not understand, and I was able to learn it quickly. It was as if God opened my mind.

Long division was so hard for me. I did not understand why anyone would want to do it, let alone know how to do it. But the teacher spent hours explaining it to me, and finally I caught on. The first quarter I scored 58 percent, which is a failing grade. But my teacher told me not to be discouraged, and I knew I could do better. The second quarter I scored 75. It has been a challenge, but thank God, He saw me through.

### Getting to Know God

Before I came here I knew God and I prayed, but I did not know a lot *about* God. At Nile Union Academy I had the opportunity to really meet the God I had been praying to. In Bible class I learned how God dealt with the people in the Bible and what He expects of us today. When God told

Abraham to leave his home and travel to a distant land, I could relate to that. I saw that God provided for Abraham and know He is providing for me.

As I attend daily worships in the dormitory and Sabbath worship, I have been able to put a face on God, to learn what He wants to do in me and through me and what He expects of me. I know I can trust God completely.

I have just finished my first year at the academy. It was a challenging year, for I covered eight years' studies in one year. I have learned so much, and I have many dreams for the future. I would like to become an engineer and return to help my country rebuild. This is a big dream, but if it is God's will it can happen.

I have learned that God can provide all my needs, that He led me to Egypt and to Nile Union Academy. He provided my school fees. I know that He will never leave me or forsake me. 🌍

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**Goal Chol**, 19, came to Egypt six years ago from Malakal, north of Juba, in Sudan.

# Let's talk

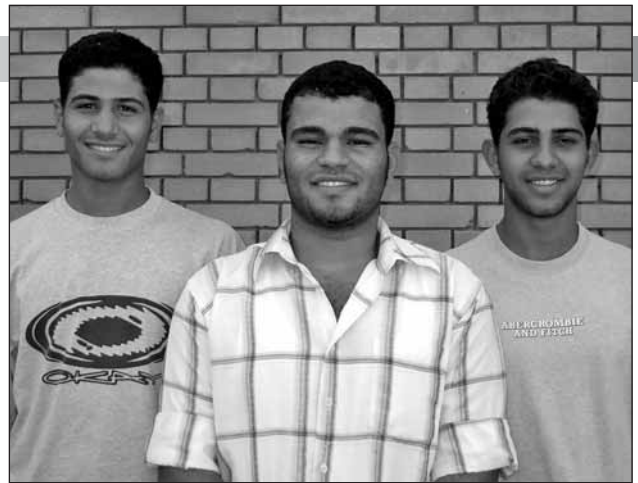
- ? Sometimes what we think of as coincidences are really miracles. What "miraculous" coincidences happened to Goal? [*He found out that his friend was really a distant relative who could help him continue his studies.*]
- ? Goal lives in a country that is shattered by war, and yet God found a way to reach him. In what ways does God reach out to us in spite of the circumstances of our lives? [*discussion*]

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that Goal and other refugees like him will continue to receive God's protection and blessings.*

**GraceLink Connection: Community.**

*Three young men from an Egyptian village were tired of playing games with their education. They share how their lives have changed since enrolling at Nile Union Academy.*



Noah, Michael, and Isaac

# Three Friends Find Faith

Charlotte Ishkanian

*[Ask three teen boys and a narrator to present this interview.]*

**Narrator:** Today we have three students from Nile Union Academy with us. Please introduce yourselves and tell us how you came to study at Nile.

**Michel:** I am Michel, and these are my friends, Noah and Isaac. We come from the same town in Upper Egypt. Many students from our town are studying at Nile Union Academy. We want to tell you why we are here and what we like about this school.

A friend from my town told me about Nile Union Academy. He liked it and said that classes are taught in English. I wanted to come, but I didn't think I could. I had played around in school and skipped a lot of classes, so my grades were not very good. But Noah and Isaac and I went to talk to the Adventist pastor, and he said he would see whether the school would accept us. He warned us that the school has high principles and would

not allow bad behavior, so we decided to be more serious about our education.

**Noah:** In our school we had up to 100 students in a single class. Teachers could not keep order, so we were not motivated to learn. Some teachers even offered to give students good grades—for a price.

**Isaac:** We felt that our teachers did not take school seriously, so we did not either. We skipped classes and got into mischief. When my uncle learned that I had been punished for skipping school, he said he was disappointed in me and begged me to try harder. I felt bad and promised to try.

**Noah:** My father had skipped school and could barely read. He told me that without a good education life would be hard, but if I worked hard, I would have a good life. He is happy that I am

studying at Nile because he knew some students who had studied here and who had good jobs. He urged me to work hard and stop playing in class. I promised to do my best and really try.

**Narrator:** What important lessons did you learn at Nile Union Academy?

**Isaac:** When we first came to Nile, we tried to skip classes. But soon we realized that this school would not tolerate disobedience. We had come here to be challenged and to make something of ourselves, so we applied ourselves and did well.

**Noah:** Some people back home said that Adventists were Jews and did not believe in Jesus. But we soon realized that this was not true. Everything we learn in Bible class is centered on Jesus. Adventists really follow the Bible. Before I came here I seldom read



the Bible. In my church we did not really learn about the Bible. But at Nile, we have Bible class every day as well as evening worship.

**Isaac:** We all wanted to do well here. We had not learned how to study before, so first semester was tough. But we learned how to study and to challenge ourselves. We began doing better in school. And now all of us are on the honor roll. We challenge one another to do our best.

Our teachers really teach us well, and if we have questions, we can ask and they will gladly help us. So we are learning well here.

**Noah:** The school teaches us to do our best, study hard, work honestly, and set our minds on God. We have grown a lot.

**Isaac:** I was warned not to listen to what Adventists say about the Bible, but in Bible class the teacher explains the Bible texts to us and lets us make our own decisions about them. That really helps.

**Michel:** These teachers treat us as if we were their own children. If we get a bad grade, they do what they must to help us do better. They encourage us and don't let us give up. They are always ready to help us.

**Isaac:** On Thursdays we have a social time, and the teachers join us and play games or sports with us. That's good. In class, the teacher is our teacher; outside the class he is our friend and our brother. Back home school was no fun. Here fun is planned into our schedule, just as study time is.

**Narrator:** What about religion?

**Michel:** Before I came here I did not know much about the Bible. I did not read the Bible or know what it really said. Here I learn the Bible systematically, and it makes sense. The teachers do not

force us to believe; they teach us the Bible and let us choose what to do about God. I am planning to be baptized next year.

**Noah:** I am still thinking about religion. I want to know the Bible well and think it through before I make this decision. My father told me to study the Bible and make the decision on my own. He is willing to let me choose Adventism or not. It's my decision.

**Isaac:** When we came to Nile, we were the first non-Adventist students from our town. Now 25 of the 28 students here from our town are not Adventists. When we go home people ask us how we like the school. We answer them honestly. And that has drawn a lot of students from our town to this school.

**Noah:** Yes, we talk to our friends during vacation and tell them what a great school this is. Our friends tell their families, and now many of them are here. People in our town are not rich. Many are farmers. Some of our fathers and brothers have gone to other countries to work and send money home for their families just to survive.

**Isaac:** Our extended families live together, often in the same house. We help one another, and that is how we survive. Families are very

important in Egypt, so when we find something that works, such as this school, we try to send as many as we can. That is our way.

**Narrator:** How will you leave this school changed?

**Isaac:** We used to smoke on holidays. It was tradition. But here we learned that smoking can really hurt us. So now I don't smoke, even on feast days.

**Noah:** I will leave knowing more about God.

**Michel:** This school taught me how to be responsible, how to be a leader and plan for the future. We are learning manual labor and how to do a good job at whatever we are given to do. That will help me a lot when I am on my own. I am thankful for this chance to tell others what a great school Nile Union Academy is.

**Narrator:** Nile Union Academy is a light in the darkness of a vast Muslim country. On June 30 part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a vocational school at Nile Union Academy. This program will provide students with skills to earn a living and will be especially valuable to those who cannot go on to university. Thank you for supporting this school with your prayers and with your offerings. 🌍



**GraceLink Connection: Community.**

*He refused to listen to the heresy that was taught in the Adventist school, but the lives of his teachers spoke louder than words.*



Hitham

# I Am Satisfied

Hitham Ibrahim

I grew up in an Orthodox family. I rarely attended church except for weddings and funerals because Sunday is a work day in Egypt, and schools hold classes.

When I was in eighth grade my family began looking for a high school for my twin brother and me. I had heard about Nile Union Academy and knew that it was operated by Seventh-day Adventists, but I did not know much about Adventists. I told my family about the academy and that the school was Seventh-day Adventist, which is a Christian denomination. My parents thought that Adventists are Jews because they keep the Sabbath.

Some family members warned us not to go to this school. "They will try to brainwash you," they said. Others said the Adventists are Jews, and some warned us to be careful and not listen to their talk about religion.

We were having a hard time deciding where to go to school, so I asked everyone I could about these Seventh-day Adventists. But we were not getting any closer

to a decision. Then I decided to pray. "God, if You want me to go to this school, I will go. But do something to tell me." Finally I decided to study at Nile Union Academy, but I would not listen to their religion. And if I did not like it there, I could study English the first year, then go somewhere else to finish high school.

## Meeting the Adventists

When I arrived at Nile Union Academy one of the first people I met was Mrs. Donna, a teacher who was helping register students. She was so kind and friendly that I could not help but like her. Before I knew it I was calling her Mom.

Soon after that I met Mrs. Donna's husband, Mr. Dwight, the school principal. He was also kind, and I soon learned that he was fair in dealing with students. If I had a problem I knew Mr. Dwight or Mrs. Donna would listen.

The first year of high school we must take English, since the school teaches all its classes in English. Mrs. Donna was my

teacher, and I enjoyed her classes. I had to take Bible class too, but I tried to ignore what the teachers said that might not be according to my beliefs. I did my homework, but I did not spend time reading the Bible. I was trying to be sure I was not infected with Adventist doctrines, no matter how nice these people were.

On the first Friday of school, Mr. Dwight announced that we all must attend church on Saturday morning. *So that's how they indoctrinate people*, I thought. *They make us worship on their Sabbath.* I went to church, but only because I had to. I must admit that I enjoyed the singing, though I did not understand a lot of it that was in English. But during the sermon I doodled so I would not hear any heresy.

When we had our first weekend home leave, I decided to stay at school so I could visit Cairo. On Thursday evening Mr. Dwight invited those of us who had stayed at school to come to his home. I was surprised. "Why is he doing this?" I asked.

I decided to go and found 10 other students who had stayed on campus. Mrs. Donna had fixed a meal for us, and before we ate, Mr. Dwight prayed. I had never prayed like his. It was as if Mr. Dwight was talking to Someone sitting at the table with us. I had grown up fearing God because I had been taught that if I was bad, God would make me burn eternally in hell. But when Mr. Dwight prayed he had no fear in his voice. I wondered whether God would get mad if I prayed to Him instead of to a saint. I did not yet understand that no one but God is holy, not even a priest.

### The Word Takes Root

I began to listen to what Mr. Dwight taught in Bible class, and I paid attention in chapel and in church. I even joined the Sabbath afternoon Bible study group. I started reading my Bible for myself and found many texts that support what Adventists believe.

The more time I spent with the Adventists and the more I learned about them, the more I realized that my friends were wrong.

Adventists *do* believe that Jesus is the Son of God; they *do* believe that Jesus is the Savior. I asked more questions and soon realized that Jesus loves me very much—enough to die for me.

When I went home, I told my family and friends what I had learned about what Adventists teach, and I challenged them to read the Bible and the Ten Commandments for themselves, especially the fourth commandment. But my father was not convinced. “How can it be wrong to worship on Sunday?” he asked. “Go to the priest and let him explain why we keep Sunday.”

For five years I have studied at Nile Union Academy. For five years I have studied the Bible in Bible class, with Mr. Dwight, and with other members of the school staff. I have learned a lot about what the Bible teaches, and I have decided to follow my conscience and be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

My father is not angry with me about my decision. He is glad that I have found a personal

relationship with God. He tells people, “My son is in a good school. He has grown and loves God. What more can I ask?”

My twin brother and my younger brother are with me at Nile Union Academy. So far they have not made a decision for Christ, but I pray that they will. God has answered my sincere prayers for understanding and guidance. God has used Nile Union Academy to teach me His love and the plan of salvation, and I want to share that knowledge with others.

Nile Union Academy needs your prayers and your help. For the students who cannot continue their education at the university level, the school will provide vocational training. Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this June will help make the vocational school a reality. Thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of young people in Egypt. 🌍

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**Hitham Ibrahim** lives in Alexandria, Egypt. He hopes to continue his education at an Adventist university.

# Let's talk

? There are fewer than 1,000 Adventists in Egypt and few opportunities for evangelism. How is Nile Union Academy a good investment in evangelism? *[Students in Egypt want to learn English, and Nile is the only English-language boarding school in Egypt. Many students apply who are not from Adventist homes. While they study at the school, they receive Bible training as well. The school's caring staff shows students what Christianity is about.]*

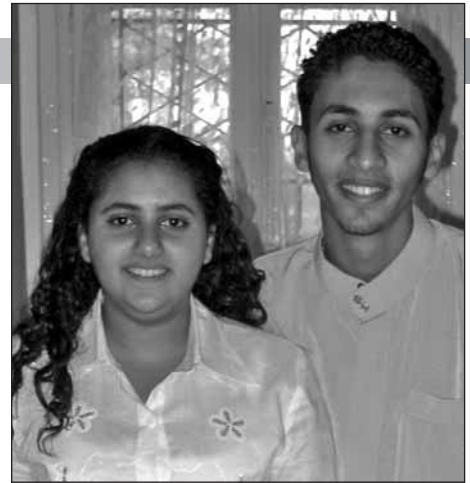
? How has Hitham's decision for Christ influenced his family and friends? *[His parents see that he has grown spiritually; his brothers have watched him grow spiritually and may one day follow his example.]*

**PRAY** pray **PRAY**

*Pray that Hitham will continue to grow in faith and influence his family and friends for Christ. Pray that his family will follow his good example.*

**GraceLink Connection: Worship.**

*When their parents enrolled Micheal and Marian in the Adventist school in Egypt, it started a chain reaction that led to their family's baptism.*



*Marian and Micheal*

# Our Big Day

Micheal and Miriam Yousef

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

**Marian:** My name is Marian. I live in Cairo, the capital city of Egypt. *[Locate Cairo and Egypt on the map.]* This is my older brother, Micheal. Today my family and I were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**Micheal:** We have always believed in God, and we attended church together whenever we could. But because Sunday is a normal work and school day in Egypt, we could attend church only on holidays and during school vacations.

When I was ready to start primary school, my parents wanted to find a school that would reinforce our family's strong moral values as well as give me a solid education. So they enrolled me in the Adventist elementary school. My parents did not know anything about Seventh-day Adventists, but my father had heard it was a good school.

**Marian:** When Micheal began telling us what he was learning in Bible class, our father started

asking questions about what Adventists believe.

My father read the Bible a lot. One day he found something in the Bible that he did not understand. He called the school pastor to ask him about it, and the pastor invited him to meet with him to see what the Bible said about his question. Soon our parents were studying the Bible with the pastor. When Dad learned about the Sabbath, he decided to close his shop on Sabbath. We knew he was serious about following what the Bible said. Mother had trouble getting the Sabbath off from work; but whenever she had the day off, we attended church together.

**Micheal:** When I finished elementary school, my parents wanted me to study at Nile Union Academy, the Adventist secondary school on the edge of Cairo. But when our extended family learned of our plans, some of my relatives objected. They argued that the academy was not accredited with the Egyptian government, and

I would not be able to go on to university when I graduated.

Father thought about their comments carefully, and eventually he decided to enroll me in an Egyptian school for one year. Wow! What a change! That school had so many problems. My classes had up to 100 students in each one, and the teachers could not really teach.

Students smoked, and some even smoked a drug that made them act crazy. Other students threatened the teachers if they thought they might get a bad grade. I was miserable. My father realized that it was better for me to study at Nile Union Academy and risk not having an Egyptian high school diploma than to lose my soul in the government school.

**Marian:** I was still studying in the Adventist elementary school during this time, but I was glad when my parents allowed Micheal to study at Nile Union Academy. It meant that I too would study there one day.



**Micheal:** What a difference I found when I enrolled at Nile! My classes are small, and the teachers really care about us. If we don't understand something, they take time to help us understand. And if anyone is having a problem—in school or with family or whatever—the teachers listen and pray with them.

Because Nile Union Academy is an English-medium school, I started by taking a year of English and Bible. At the end of that year I was able to speak and understand enough English to do well in my classes. And I was really learning the Bible here!

**Marian:** Because our father was not working on Sabbaths, he went to church at Nile Union Academy every week. Before long Mom was able to work on Fridays or Sundays so she could have Sabbaths off. Now they both worship at the school with us. On Sabbath afternoons Mom and Dad started taking Bible studies with the school staff. Micheal and I went with them and studied the Bible with them. I had lots of questions about things that I did not understand, but the principal was always willing to allow me to ask my questions and took time to answer them.

**Micheal:** We started talking about being baptized. Dad was ready to be baptized long ago, but he wanted our family to be baptized together when we all were ready. So he waited. We continued studying with the school principal for three years. In that time all our questions were answered. We were ready! Today we were baptized as a family into God's family. What a neat thing!

But not everyone is happy about our decision. In Egypt families are close. Aunts and uncles and grandparents live close to one another—sometimes in the same house. They talk about everything, discuss everything, and everyone tries to agree on things. So for one part of the family to leave the family's faith and join another church is very serious.

Mom and Dad say that our faith family—those who worship and believe as we do now—are our real family. We are God's family. Dad wants our aunts and uncles to study the Bible with him so they will understand why we have decided to become Adventists. When someone asks our father why he has given up a day of work to go to church, he quotes Matthew 16:26 to them: "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own

soul?" [NKJV]. Then he says, "Shall we obey God, or people? I and my family have chosen to obey God."

**Marian:** Jesus called the children to come to Him. I am glad that God has called our family to be His children. I want to tell others what God has done for me. I want to learn more about Jesus and do His will all my life.

**Micheal:** I'm glad that Nile Union Academy has chosen to not be accredited with the government so it can be free to teach Bible and follow Adventist principles of education.

The school is expanding to provide a vocational education program for students. This will especially help those students who cannot go on to university. They will learn the skills they need to make their way in life. God is leading in this, and our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help the vocational school get started. Please plan to give a big offering so that Nile Union Academy can continue to shine its light over a dark land. 🌍

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**Micheal and Marian Yousef** are students at Nile Union Academy in Cairo, Egypt.

# Let's talk

? What did Micheal and Marian give up in order to study at Nile Union Academy? [Government accreditation and a government-recognized diploma that will allow them to enter a national university.] What would you be willing to give up to study at a Christian school?

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

Pray for the students and staff at Nile Union Academy, that God will open ways for them to reach others with God's love.



## Egypt

### GraceLink Connection: Grace.

*When two girls from different backgrounds were ready for secondary school, they chose an Adventist school. Here are their stories.*



Gemila



Peace

# Two Grateful Girls

Gemila Mosa and Peace Philip

*[Ask two teen girls to present these first-person testimonies.]*

I am Gemila [geh-MEE-lah]. My family lives near the famous pyramids of Egypt.

We are an Adventist family with five children. My two sisters and I study at Nile Union Academy. At first my father did not want to send my sister so far away from home to study in the Adventist school, so she stayed home for two years. She was very shy and would hardly speak when she came to Nile, but now she is a leader in her class. In fact, we all have gained a lot of confidence during our studies at Nile. Miriam graduated this year and wants to be a teacher.

I came to Nile the year after Miriam. I like it so much! God is so close to us here, and the teachers encourage us to improve in every part of life—in our body, our mind, and our heart. The teachers care so much for us. They want us to learn to think for ourselves and succeed in our life.

When I was younger, I sensed that I was different from other children. I loved God and

spiritual things. I wanted to be kind to everyone and never say bad things. I always listened and wanted to obey my parents and God in everything I did. Some people made fun of me for this, and that made me sad. They did not care so much about God and saw no need to help others or take care of the environment. Some people wondered why I would help people I was not related to or friends with. This was not something that people in our culture do. But I love helping people, and I feel that God wants me to do these things.

If someone treated me badly or said something bad about me, I did not fight back. They thought that I was weak and made fun of me. But I refused to be mean or to talk about people. I wanted to love everyone, but I could not show it, maybe because I feared that they would hurt me.

When I was ready for high school, I was praying that I could study at Nile Union Academy. Miriam was already here and

loved it, but my parents did not want me to come. I prayed very hard, and God opened the way for me to join my sister here.

It is three hours by bus to our home, and that is a long way for us. And Mother needs help working on our family farm. It is hard for her to have us away. My father is an electrical engineer, but he does not earn a lot, and with two children in college and three in academy, it is difficult for them. But thanks to God, Nile Union Academy is helping my parents pay our tuition and fees, and we girls work as much as we can to help pay our school fees.

We love the school. The people here are so kind, and we are learning so much about God. I know that I am in the right school.

When I finish high school, I would like to work for God, maybe as a Bible worker or a Global Mission pioneer to one of the many villages in my area that do not have any Adventists. Whatever I do, I want to do it for God.

## Peace

I am Peace. I grew up in an Adventist family in Sudan. I studied there through the eighth grade. All eighth graders must take several days of exams in order to pass on to the ninth grade. Some of these exams always fall on Sabbath, and we cannot make up these tests. So I did not take the math and social studies exams on Sabbath. Our scores on all the exams are added together, and we pass or fail based on the total score. I passed even without those two exams.

My mother told me that in high school students must take government exams after every year, and some always fall on Sabbath. I asked my mother whether I could study in an Adventist school somewhere else. She was willing, and she suggested Nile Union Academy in Egypt. My brother is in Cairo, so I decided to study here. I am glad I chose Nile Union Academy.

In my other schools teachers are not friendly with students. At Nile Union Academy the staff members are so friendly. They talk to us, they joke with us, and they

help us when we need it. And they pray with us.

At Nile I learned how to work hard and depend on myself. Everyone works at least a little bit, and we get a chance to work at different jobs. Sometimes I work in the cafeteria or clean the school.

This school is great! Every year we have a Week of Prayer. Last year students from an American high school came to hold the Week of Prayer. I have always prayed, but they taught us how to walk closer to God and how to study our Bibles better. I have been baptized, but I learned how to be a better Christian from this Week of Prayer.

I am on the ministry team at school. We go to villages in Upper Egypt and take the church services on Friday evening and Saturday. We hold vespers, Sabbath School, and church service. Then on Sabbath afternoon we visit people. We each have a job, whether it is teaching the children, leading song service, or presenting the mission story.

I have not gone back to Sudan

since I started school, but my mother comes to visit me. I have made a lot of friends at Nile, so I'm not lonely. My best friend and I pray and study the Bible together. She lives in Cairo, so I spend holidays with her. We do some ministry in the Cairo churches during vacations.

I have learned that if we stand up for God, He will never let us down. I learned this when God blessed me to do well on those exams back in Sudan. I want to be a nurse like my mother so I can share God's love with others as I minister to them.

Nile Union Academy is helping young people find purpose in their lives. But even more important, they find Jesus. Your mission offerings help keep this school open. And this Thirteenth Sabbath part of your offering will help open a vocational school that will prepare students for a brighter future. Thank you for giving to missions and to Nile Union Academy. 🌍

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*Gemila Mosa and Peace Philip are students at Nile Union Academy.*

# Let's talk

- ? What benefits have Gemila and Peace found in studying at Nile Union Academy over their previous schools? If you are in a public school, what advantages can you see to studying in an Adventist school over the school you attend now?

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that Gemila and Peace will be able to complete their education at Nile Union Academy. Pray for the many non-Adventist students at the school as well, that they will find Jesus as their Savior while studying at the Adventist academy.*

**GraceLink Connection: Community.**  
*They sowed the seed and reaped an abundant harvest of souls, but the devil would not give up without a fight.*



Paul

# Death Brings New Life to Church

Paul Manaseh

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

**T**he youth of our church in southern Sudan wanted to share our faith with the people in a distant village and help them know the joy of having God in their lives. The people in our chosen village did not know about Adventists, so we planned carefully how to present our message so the people would understand and accept the truth. We prepared skits, Bible games, special music, and stories as well as sermons. And of course, we prayed for God's blessing over the people and our efforts. We had no way to know that our efforts would lead to tragedy—and jail.

When we arrived in the village, we visited the people in their homes, making friends and inviting them to the meetings. And it worked. On opening night almost 150 people came to our program. Interest grew, and attendance rose to 480.

During the day we visited the people who asked for Bible studies. By the end of the

meetings 25 people—18 youth and seven adults—were ready for baptism, and more were taking Bible studies.

## **Baptisms and Death**

After the baptism the young people from my village returned home, but I stayed to nurture the new believers and give Bible studies to those who had not yet been baptized. I had planned to stay for just a few weeks, but God had other plans.

We worshipped in the shade of a mango tree while we laid plans to build a simple church. We received a piece of land on which to build a church, and one Sunday the new believers met to start gathering materials for the church. Some men marked trees to cut for the frame, some gathered bamboo poles for the rafters, and the women cut grass for the roof.

Work was going well, and everyone was in good spirits. Then disaster struck. One tree fell

wrong and hit a man. We ran to help him, but it was too late. He was dead.

Frightened by this sudden tragedy, nearly everyone fled, for in our culture when someone dies suddenly, people blame someone. No one wanted to be blamed for the man's death, so they ran away. But four of us stayed. We went to the police station to report the accident. But when we made our report, the police decided that we were responsible for the man's death. They beat us and threw us into jail.

## **Persecution Begins**

I felt terrible! We had done the right thing and ended up in jail anyway. I tried to encourage my fellow believers who sat in jail with me. I told them that God had seen what had happened and would bring good from this sad accident—somehow. I urged the others to pray for our release and for the dead man's family.

For three days we sat in jail, not

knowing when or how we would be freed. We did not realize that the dead man's brother, also a new believer, had witnessed the accident. He went to the police and told them, "These men are not to blame for my brother's death. It was an accident. My brother used to drink and smoke, but he gave up these habits when he accepted Jesus as his Savior. He became a good husband and father to his children. Please, release the prisoners so they can attend my brother's funeral."

The police released us in time for the funeral. At the funeral I told the mourners, "This man died believing in Jesus. You will see him again in heaven if you stay faithful to Jesus. Satan meant for this death to discourage us, but if we stand together in Jesus, Satan's purposes will be defeated and God will be honored."

After the funeral some people came to me and told me that they wanted to learn more about God's love.

### Exiled From the Community

But some people in the community still believed that the man's death was a result of

Adventists working on Sunday. Tensions again mounted until some villagers demanded that the chief make me leave the village within five days. This news distressed me, for if I left, all the gains we had made would be lost. The new believers fasted and prayed about the situation.

Just before the deadline for me to leave the community, the chief came to where we were praying and told me I could stay. He explained that a visitor had come to him and told him that Adventists really do worship on God's holy Sabbath and that God had never changed His holy day to Sunday. "You do not have to leave the village. In fact, you can go to every home in the village and tell them that the Sabbath is God's holy day, not Sunday, as they have been taught."

Moments before the chief arrived, I had wondered about who would nurture the new members once I left. Suddenly the chief had almost ordered me to stay and work in the area.

### Construction Resumes

Two weeks after the accident, we resumed work on the church.

Soon we had a new house of worship. Even villagers who were not church members joined us. When we finished the church we held another series of meetings, and this time 17 people were baptized. I warned the new believers that being a Christian is not easy. Jesus suffered, and He was God. I challenged them to walk in the footsteps of Christ.

I had planned to stay in the village for one month after the first series of meetings to nurture the new believers, but I stayed for two years. During that time the membership grew to more than 110 believers.

I return often to visit the village where death helped grow a church. I encourage the believers to stay faithful and continue to share God's message of salvation with others.

Our mission offerings help raise up congregations such as this one in southern Sudan. Please ask God what He would have you do to support world missions. 🌍

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**Paul Manaseh** is a now a district pastor in Maridi, southern Sudan.

# let's talk

? Did God cause the death of the new believer? If God did not cause the death, why did He allow it? How did God turn the tragedy into a blessing for Paul? For the people in this village? Have you ever experienced something bad in your life that God turned into a blessing? Share with the class.

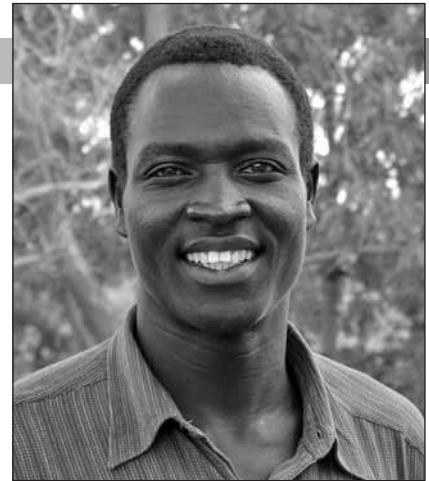
? How do you think that Paul and the other new believers felt when they were thrown into jail? [*Discouraged, worried, afraid.*] Have you ever done what you felt was the right thing to do and suffered unfairly for your actions? What can you do to avoid losing your faith in such a situation? [*Read the Bible, claim God's promises, and ask God to work His will in your life.*]

**PRAY** pray **PRAY**

*Pray that God will strengthen Paul as he works with people who want to know more about God; pray that the believers in this village will remain strong in their faith.*

**GraceLink Connection: Grace.**

*As the wind blasted the tiny rowboat and rain pelted the fearful passengers, Robert heard a voice tell him, "Don't be afraid; God is with us."*



Robert

# "God Is With Us"

Robert Young

I was attending a boarding school across the Nile River from where my family lives. One day the school director asked me to go to my village to tell a boy's parents that he was sick, and they needed to take him home. I walked down to the river and found a boat waiting to take passengers across the river. I sat down in the boat and waited while more passengers boarded. It was market day, and soon the boat filled with people and their cargo.

The sun hung low in the sky as three men began rowing the boat across the river. The Nile River is not terribly wide at that place, but with our heavy load, the trip would take two hours.

## **Sudden Storm**

As we approached the middle of the river, I felt the wind begin to blow. Dark clouds filled the sky. The passengers on the boat fell silent with worry as the rowers pushed against the oars, but they were no match for the wind that was blowing us off course.

We neared a floating island

of reeds, and passengers on the island side grabbed the reeds and held on to steady the boat while the rowers rested. The reeds provided little shelter from the wind. Some women cried out in fear as the boat rocked and the wind roared across the water.

Everyone hoped the winds would die down, but they continued to blow, and cold rain pelted us. The captain decided to try to reach shore. He ordered the people holding on to the reeds to let go, but some people feared we would sink in the open waters. We had to force them to let go so the men could row away from the reed island.

Now we were on our own. There were no other reed islands to protect us. The storm was blowing harder than ever. I began to wonder if we were going to die. Some were crying out to God. Even Muslims were praying, "Jesus, help us!"

## **Don't Be Afraid**

Then above the wind and the rain I heard a voice say, "Don't

be afraid; God is with us." I could not tell whether I had heard someone on the boat say this, or whether God said it. But I took courage in the words. I thought, *If God wants us live, we will live and make it safely to shore.* I sat back and rested in God's protection. I had peace in my heart, knowing that if we died in Jesus, then we would rest until we were raised to life again.

With new courage and strength the rowers managed to steer the boat toward shore. Someone found an extra oar lying on the bottom of the boat, and one of us took that and started rowing.

Another floating reed island blocked our way to shore. We had to row around it, for those reed islands near shore often hide crocodiles and hippos, both of whom can be very dangerous to someone floundering in the water.

## **Safely on Shore**

With superhuman strength the rowers finally managed to get us to a place on the riverbank where we could scramble out of the



boat to safety. The normal two-hour trip had taken us more than three hours. I knelt down near the riverbank and thanked God for saving our lives.

It was dark, and I hurried to my parents' home. They were surprised to see me, especially on such a stormy night. I explained the urgent need to come. They asked how we had made it across the river in such bad weather, so I told my parents about our treacherous crossing. I told my parents that God had saved us. My parents were nominal Christians, and I wanted them to know that our prayers had been answered.

The next morning I delivered the message to the sick boy's family before returning to school. My mother did not want me to go back. She feared that something terrible would happen to me after the previous night's storm. But I assured her that God would be with me. "You don't have to worry, Mother," I assured her. "Remember the voice I heard on the river that said, 'Don't be

afraid; God is with us.' God will be with me on my way back as well. I trust God; I know He will save me."

The river was calm, and the sun shone warm as we crossed the river that morning. I learned that during the previous night's storm four boats, each carrying 12 or 13 people, had capsized. Six people had drowned. When I heard that, I knew without a doubt that God had indeed been with us.

After that experience, whenever I met challenges that threatened me I remembered the voice that said, "Don't be afraid; God is with us." The fear would drain away.

### **Guerrilla Attack**

The next year I was riding on the top of a large truck loaded with goods. The truck was ambushed by a gang of guerrilla soldiers. When the truck stopped, we dived off the truck and ran into the bushes. Some passengers lay around the truck, hit by the guerrilla soldiers' gunfire.

We watched from the bushes as

the guerrillas stole our things and set fire to the truck. Suddenly we heard gunfire, and the guerrillas ran away. Army troops were firing on the rebels who had set our vehicle on fire. They chased the rebels away, then called us out of the bush. They told us to walk to the nearest village, three miles [five kilometers] away. We had lost everything, but we were alive. As I walked, I praised God, because I was alive. One passenger died that day, and two others were wounded. I encouraged the wounded as we helped them toward the village. I told them, "Don't be afraid; God is with us."

I am now a refugee living in a camp in Uganda, waiting for peace to come to Sudan so I can go home. But it is OK if I never go home, because wherever I am, God is with me. 🌍

---

**Robert Young** is a gospel evangelist working in a refugee camp in northern Uganda.

# Let's talk

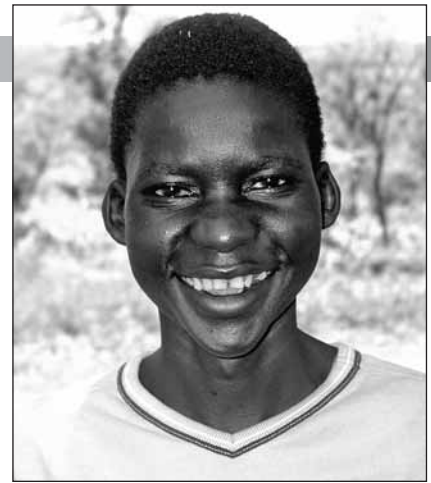
- ? Robert had made the trip across the Nile River in southern Sudan often. What made this trip dangerous? *[A small boat heavy with passengers and cargo, the sudden storm.]* What did the passengers and crew do to protect themselves from the storm? *[The rowers rowed harder; passengers grabbed hold of a floating reed island to let the rowers rest; Robert and other passengers prayed.]*
- ? What comforting promise did Robert receive at the height of the storm? *[A voice told him, "Do not be afraid; God is with us."]*
  - How has this promise become part of Robert's life since then?
- ? Has a Bible verse or promise of God become special to you during a difficult time? Share the promise with the class.

## PRAY pray PRAY

*Pray that those living in southern Sudan and those in refugee camps outside Sudan will soon be able to return to their homeland in peace. Pray that the people will sense God's presence in their lives and will trust Him with their future.*

## GraceLink Connection: Community.

*When tragedy struck their school, students were urged to turn to God and not let Satan win a victory.*



John

# Triumph in Tragedy

Charlotte Ishkanian

In the countryside near the city of Maridi in southern Sudan stands a primary and secondary school that is earning a reputation of excellence. Eyira [eh-YEER-ah] Adventist Secondary School has grown out of the bush that surrounds it. Most of its 200 students have come here to study because they know the school will teach them well. Because the majority of students at the school are not Adventists, the school truly is a mission outreach.

Many of the students enrolled in Eyira are older than most high school students. The war in southern Sudan has disrupted their education. Schools were closed as whole villages fled to avoid the fighting in the region. Now that the fighting has subsided, students are eager to complete their education. They must work to pay their own tuition because their parents do not have money to pay their school fees.

### John's Story

John Rusia [ROO-see-ah] is 19 years old and in the seventh grade at Eyira. When he was 5

years old, he fled from his village during a bombing raid and was separated from his mother. An uncle found him and took him in. He has seen his mother only once since then.

Several years later John again fled his village when soldiers marched through. He had no time to gather his belongings; he simply fled into the bush with his relatives to escape the soldiers. Life in Sudan is uncertain at best; John never knew when he would have to run away and how he would find food to eat.

John made his way to Eyira School, where he feels more secure. He grows food in his own garden and works in people's homes to earn money for school fees. He is determined to finish high school, no matter how long it takes.

### Ezekiel and the Outreach Program

Students are required to attend morning and evening worship and to study the Bible in class. But beyond this, students have organized a strong outreach program as well.

Ezekiel Joseph is 17 and in the ninth grade. He joined an outreach group that visits surrounding villages on Sabbath afternoons. They divide into teams and visit from house to house, inviting people to join them for a time of singing and talking about the love of God.

"Often the older people do not come, but the children and teens come," he says. "They like our programs, especially the stories they hear and the songs we teach them." If the people of the village are interested in what they hear, Ezekiel and his friends will return another Sabbath to teach them more.

"When we have enough people who are interested in learning about God, we will hold evangelistic meetings in the village," Ezekiel explained. "We will ask a pastor to come and help us conduct the meetings. We do this because someone else has shared with us the love of God and we want to share God's love with others."

### Outreach and Inreach

Some of the students who go

with the outreach team are not yet Adventists. Peter joined the outreach program because he had nothing else to do and some of his friends were going. One week he volunteered to speak in a village and present the message for the day. Peter is a natural leader and has a talent for public speaking. Soon he was speaking at lots of the meetings. By the end of the school year, Peter had committed his life to Christ and been baptized.

Other students have learned more about Adventist beliefs when they have gone on these Sabbath afternoon evangelistic missions. As they see how God is working in their lives, their love for God increases. They see God blessing them as they share His love with others.

While few villagers have been baptized, several of the young people from the outreach group have committed their life to Christ. And as people in the villages listen to the students' testimonies, they are getting excited about knowing God better. "Either way, we are winners," Ezekiel says.

### Tragedy Strikes

One day a terrible tragedy struck Eyira School. During exam time while students were studying in their rooms, a fierce thunderstorm swept down on the school campus. Lightning struck a tree and some wires near the boys' dormitories, killing two students and injuring eight others.

It happened without warning. One boy who sat on his bed studying with a friend was killed instantly, but his friend was not hurt. A boy in another room was killed while talking to friends. Some other students were injured.

Students gathered to pray for understanding and God's protection and peace. It was hard to understand why God had allowed this tragedy to hit their school. The campus pastor encouraged students to stand strong in their faith in God and not let Satan use the tragedy to his advantage. The pastor reminded the students that they all must be ready to meet God at any time and encouraged them that they would see their friends when Jesus comes. Many students renewed their commitment to

Christ during that time, and at the next baptism 20 students took their stand for Christ. So God did bring good out of tragedy.

Now the school faces another great challenge. Many of the students still live in mud-brick houses with dirt floors. If any funds remain from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Eyira Secondary School will receive help building permanent dormitories for its students. Plan now to give a big Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on June 30 so that all three regions of Trans-European Division will receive a blessing. 🌍



What are some effective ways to share your faith in your community? Think of things that have not already been done in your church. For example, form a work band to clean up a park or a neglected area in the neighborhood. Bring bags to collect litter and glass; wear shirts that identify your group. Set a date to do one of your chosen projects and encourage church members to support your project. Report to your church the results of your outreach.

Invite your class to commit themselves to increase your class's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering through creative means. Invite members to donate money from special projects or money received as birthday or holiday gifts. Set a goal and strive to reach it on June 30, Thirteenth Sabbath.

## let's talk

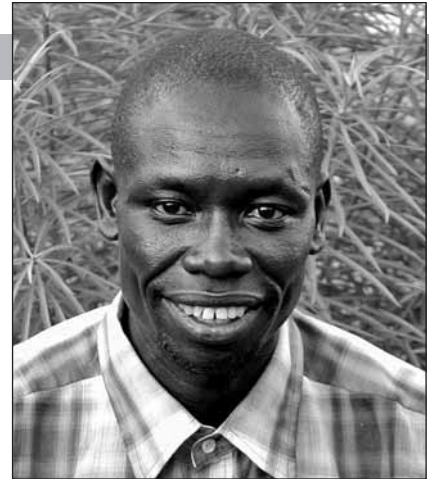
? Students at Eyira reached out to villages surrounding the school, but few people in the villages came to Christ. How was the outreach program effective in spite of the disappointing results?

• *[Youth in the outreach groups committed their lives to Christ.]*  
Does your youth group hold evangelistic outreach programs? Do you feel that if there are no baptisms you have somehow failed? Should we measure the success of a program by the number of people who give their lives to Christ?

? The tragic death of two students from lightning was difficult for the students at Eyira to understand. How could good come from such a terrible accident? Who caused the lightning to strike and kill those students? Why do you think God allowed this to happen? How did good come from the tragedy? What can we learn about God from such senseless deaths?

**GraceLink Connection: Worship.**

*From the day Joseph learned that God loved him, his life has never been the same.*



Joseph

# Joseph Spreads God's Love

Joseph Lagu Gaitano

Joseph looked up to see his older brother stride into the family compound. "Ho, Joseph," his elder brother said, trying to hide his excitement. "Did you know that Jesus loves you? You should come to church with me and listen to what I am learning. It is amazing!"

Joseph lives in southern Sudan, a war-ravaged country in eastern Africa. Joseph was pleased that his brother had invited him to church, so he and the entire family visited the Adventist church. Joseph began studying the Bible in preparation for baptism.

But before he could be baptized, soldiers of the southern Sudanese military came to Joseph's town and drafted all young boys into the army. Joseph had no choice; he had to go. He tried to be brave as he said goodbye to his mother and his sisters. Then he marched with the other teenage boys to the military training camp. After he learned how to handle a rifle, he was sent into the war zone.

Joseph did not forget that

God loves him and wants him to follow Jesus. He was eager to learn more about Jesus and to be baptized. One day Joseph heard that Adventists were holding evangelistic meetings some 70 miles [112 kilometers] away from the military base. He *had* to go, even though he knew he would be in trouble for leaving the base.

## **Putting God First**

Joseph left the camp and walked for two days to the town where the meetings were being held. At night he slept in a tree, safe from soldiers and wild animals. At last he arrived where the meetings were being held. He soon forgot about the military; he was happy to be among God's people again.

But back at the base, when Joseph's commander realized Joseph was missing, he was angry. He sent soldiers to find him and bring him back. The soldiers finally arrived at the town where Joseph had gone. They found him standing in the front of the meeting, waiting to be baptized.

The soldiers waited outside until the service ended, then they found Joseph and ordered him to start walking back to base.

Every step of the journey back Joseph prayed that God would help him speak to his commanding officer. Joseph was not afraid of his punishment, but he wanted to share God's love with anyone who would listen—even an angry commanding officer.

Joseph was taken directly to the commander's tent. The angry commander gave Joseph two options: "You can obey your commanding officers and forget about your religion, or you can refuse to serve in the military and be executed," the commander said. "The army does not tolerate deserters and has little sympathy for religion while we're at war."

Joseph paused a moment then asked the commander a question: "Tell me, if a soldier dies, where does his soul go? I want to know the answer so I can make my decision."

There was silence as the commander paused, seeking a

response. Finally Joseph spoke again. "I want to follow my God. If you will kill me because of that, then do it," he said. He refused to deny God's love, even in the face of death.

Other officers were listening to Joseph's conversation with the commander. "You should let this boy go," they whispered to the commander. The commander thought for a moment, then barked an order. Joseph was taken from the room and beaten severely. Then he was told, "If you insist on following your religion, then leave the army and serve your God."

### Joseph's New Commander

Joseph did not waste a moment. He returned his uniform and his gun and walked away as quickly as he could. He wore his old ragged clothes, but he was happy, for he could spend his time telling people how much God loved them.

Joseph arrived in a town

where soldiers often stayed when they were on leave. He began sharing his testimony with soldiers there, and before long 12 soldiers accepted Jesus and asked to be baptized.

Joseph moved on, telling people wherever he went about Jesus. In time he was asked to be a gospel evangelist. He was sent to a small village where no Adventists lived. The villagers considered themselves Christians, but they did not like the message that Joseph brought.

"Why do you want to come and stir us up and try to bring a new religion into our community?" they asked him. "We do not want to listen to what you have to say." Joseph prayed that God would touch the people's hearts.

### Attacked by a Snake

One day as Joseph walked home, a cobra darted out of the tall grass and sank its fangs into Joseph's foot. Joseph kicked, trying to shake the snake from his

foot, but its fangs were embedded deeply, and the snake held on tight. Some villagers ran to help him and managed to kill the snake. Joseph pried the snake's fangs out of his foot.

The people stood by shaking their heads sadly. The snake was big; they were sure Joseph would die quickly. They watched and waited for him to collapse.

"I will not die," Joseph told them. "My God will save me if He wants to." Joseph bowed his head and prayed aloud. "Lord, please let me live so that these people will see Your power and believe in You."

Joseph stood and walked home. He washed his foot, but he did not put any medicine on it. That night people came to see whether he had died yet. When Joseph did not die, word spread quickly, and soon many people came to Joseph's house to hear about the God that had saved him from the giant cobra.

A small group of believers now worships in that village where people once resisted God's light. More will come as Joseph and other lay evangelists teach them. Our mission offerings support the work of young people such as Joseph. Thank you for faithfully giving to world missions. 🌍

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Joseph Lagu Gaitano is a gospel evangelist in southern Sudan.

# Let's talk

? Joseph told his commander that he would rather die than give up his faith in God. Who in the Bible faced death because of their faith in God? [Write names on the board as class lists them. Include Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, John the Baptist, Paul, the disciples.]

? Can you think of anyone in the Bible or in history who did die for their faith? [Stephen, the martyrs of the Reformation such as John Huss, and countless believers who were burned at the stake for their faith.] Why does God let some people live and others die for their faith? [In His wisdom God does not protect every believer from evil or death. If He did, some would follow Christ just for the protection He could provide.]

? Why do you think God protected Joseph from the snake bite? [Perhaps so that the people of the village would see that Joseph was His servant and listen to his message.] Has God ever saved you from a bad situation?

# PRAY pray

Pray that God will bless the gospel evangelists who work throughout southern Sudan to bring people to Jesus and the people to whom they minister.



# Program

## Trans-world Challenge

<b>Opening Song</b>	"Lead them, My God, to Thee" <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 653</i>	<b>Offering</b>	Ask children to sing a song in Dutch or Arabic while the offering is being taken.
<b>Welcome</b>	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher	<b>Closing Song</b>	"In Christ There Is No East nor West" <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 587</i>
<b>Scripture Prayer</b>	See responsive reading	<b>Closing Prayer</b>	
<b>Program</b>	"Trans-world Challenge"		

**Participants:** Two people to narrate, plus some teens or young adults to act out the needs in pantomime. *[If you have few people, ask just three teens to pantomime the scenes. While the narrators do not have to memorize their parts, they should be familiar enough with the content that they can present the material with confidence.]*

**Props:** A large hand-drawn map of the Trans-European Division with the Netherlands, Egypt, and Sudan colored or outlined in a bright color. Divide the platform in half. Set up five or six chairs in two rows on one half, and set up a "workshop" (using two sawhorses and a board) and a computer on a table on the other half. The third group will use the center of the platform but needs no props.

\* \* \*

Scripture *(Alternate between two readers)*

You are a chosen generation, . . . His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all, . . .**

Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

**Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us . . . and purify for Himself His own special people.**

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;

**And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**

—From 1 Peter 2, Titus 2, and Matthew 28, NKJV

\* \* \*

**Narrator 1:** Today is Thirteenth Sabbath. This quarter we have focused our attention and our prayers on the Trans-European Division, sometimes called the "trans-world division" because its territories span parts of Europe, Asia, and northern Africa. Let's look at our map and see where our offering today will go. *[Point out the Netherlands.]*

**Narrator 2:** *[As the narrator presents the following, several young people should walk onto the platform and sit down in the chairs as if they are attending church. There should not be enough chairs for everyone, so some will have to stand. One person stands in front of the group as if leading a Sabbath School class or a song service. The "congregation" should be animated throughout the presentation, creating the idea of a crowded and vibrant church service.]*

The Netherlands and much of Europe are in a modern, post-Christian culture today. For most people, secularism or materialism has replaced religion as the focus of their lives. The 4,500 Adventists in the Netherlands are focused on sharing their faith and planting new churches in their communities, using new outreach ideas. Some churches focus on specific age groups, such as a church plant just for children ages 4 to 12, or a Bible club for 10- to 12-year-olds. Other church plants focus on language or ethnic groups. It is a challenge to find appropriate places for these new groups of believers to meet, but the field is working together to provide church homes—even rented ones—for each congregation.

However, one congregation, the Ghanaian [gah-NAY-an] believers in Amsterdam, faces an especially difficult situation. The immigrants live in a community that does not contain any church buildings. There are no churches to rent or share, and it is nearly impossible to buy land and build in this high-cost area. So they spend thousands of euros (dollars) a month to rent a day-care center for several hours on Sabbath and a short time on Sunday evening.

The Ghanaian congregation is a vibrant worship community. It has grown to more than 200 active members. This close-knit group yearns to serve the larger community through outreach ministries in their neighborhood. But without their own building, they are limited in what they can do. Many Ghanaian believers are not worshipping with the congregation because there is no room in their rented facility.

Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help provide a church building for this immigrant community. It will be far more

than a place to worship. It will be a lighthouse from which the members can reach out to others in their neighborhoods with the gospel of Christ.

**Narrator 1:** *[As the speaker begins, two boys pretend to measure and saw or hammer on the board while a girl pretends to type at a “computer” set up on a table.]*

Egypt. *[Point to Egypt or place an arrow on the map.]* The name brings to mind images of sandy desert, ancient pyramids, and pharaohs. Today Egypt is 90 percent Muslim. The remaining 10 percent are almost all Orthodox or Coptic Christians. Fewer than 800 Adventists worship here. Adventists have just one church for every 3.9 million Egyptians. Young people dream of leaving Egypt to make a better life elsewhere. And when Adventist youth leave the country, so does the future of the church in that ancient country.

Nile Union Academy outside Cairo is trying to change that. They offer a high quality secondary school education that is accredited by the Adventist educational system and the British government. But most students who graduate cannot go on to university, and without marketable skills they face a bleak future.

The school is developing a vocational training program for students, training that will provide them with skills in one or more fields—carpentry, welding, plumbing, auto mechanics, secretarial skills, or home economics. With these skills students will be able to start their own business, earn a decent living, and remain in their country.

Many of the students at Nile Union Academy do not come from Adventist homes. But they leave having met God, knowing the Bible, and often having found

a personal relationship with Jesus. This school may be our best hope to reach the people of Egypt with the gospel in the years ahead.

Part of today’s offering will help fund the vocational school at Nile Union Academy to help assure that the future of the church in Egypt is vibrant and healthy.

**Narrator 2:** *[As narrator begins speaking, ask two or three young people to walk in, stretch, yawn, and lie down on the platform to “sleep.”]*

These are the projects that our Thirteenth Sabbath offering will support today.

Wait! What are you doing—sleeping here? *[One student gets up and whispers to the narrator for a moment, then returns to sit on the stage.]*

We have an unusual development this quarter. We have another project, an overflow project, if you will.

The students at the only Adventist secondary school in Sudan live in mud-brick dormitories with thatched roofs. These buildings are time consuming to repair and expensive to reroof. The school would like to build more permanent and healthful dormitories for its students. Any funds that exceed the division’s goal for the projects in Egypt and Netherlands will go to this worthy project.

**Narrator 1:** *[As stage participants leave]* Let’s give liberally today to let the believers in Netherlands, Egypt, and Sudan know that God cares and we care.

Your offerings *do* make a difference. Every day, somewhere in the world, your mission offering and your Thirteenth Sabbath offering will change a life forever.

*[Offering]*

## Report to Stockholders

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to the Trans-European Division in 2004 is working miracles.

### Israel

Because of your generosity, the Israel Field is fulfilling its gospel commission.

The work is difficult, but believers there are committed to sharing the gospel. Funds from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering are helping to plant new and strong churches in 14 locations in Israel, including churches in Tel Aviv and Nazareth.



*Believers in Israel worship in the facilities provided by your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Thank you.*

### Sweden

Sweden shares a problem common among many developed European countries—a general lack of interest in religion. Simple invitations to evangelistic meetings will not generate interest or attendance. Therefore new methods of evangelism need to be explored. And Sweden is using its portion of the 2004 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in creative ways.

For years television has been controlled by the government. Now smaller independent stations are opening. The church has translated and aired Adventist programming on these channels.

Swedes rank near the top of those people with access to the Internet. The Swedish Union has used part of its Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to increase the visibility of the Adventist Church in Sweden and is offering Bible studies, videos, and other teaching materials through the Internet. Thank you!

Charlotte Ishkanian  
EDITOR

Hans Olson  
MANAGING EDITOR

Emily Harding  
LAYOUT EDITOR

Katie Gulbraith Dillon  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### Office of Adventist Mission

Gary Krause, Director  
Rick Kajiura, Communication director  
Nancy Kyte, Marketing director  
Marti Schneider, Programs director  
Homer Trecartin, Planning director  
Dan Weber, Video producer

For subscription inquiries, e-mail Julie Haines at [jhaines@rhp.org](mailto:jhaines@rhp.org) or call 1-800-456-3991 or 1-301-393-3280. Annual subscription rates per edition: domestic, US\$7.50; international, US\$14.50.

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E-mail: [GoMission@gc.adventist.org](mailto:GoMission@gc.adventist.org)  
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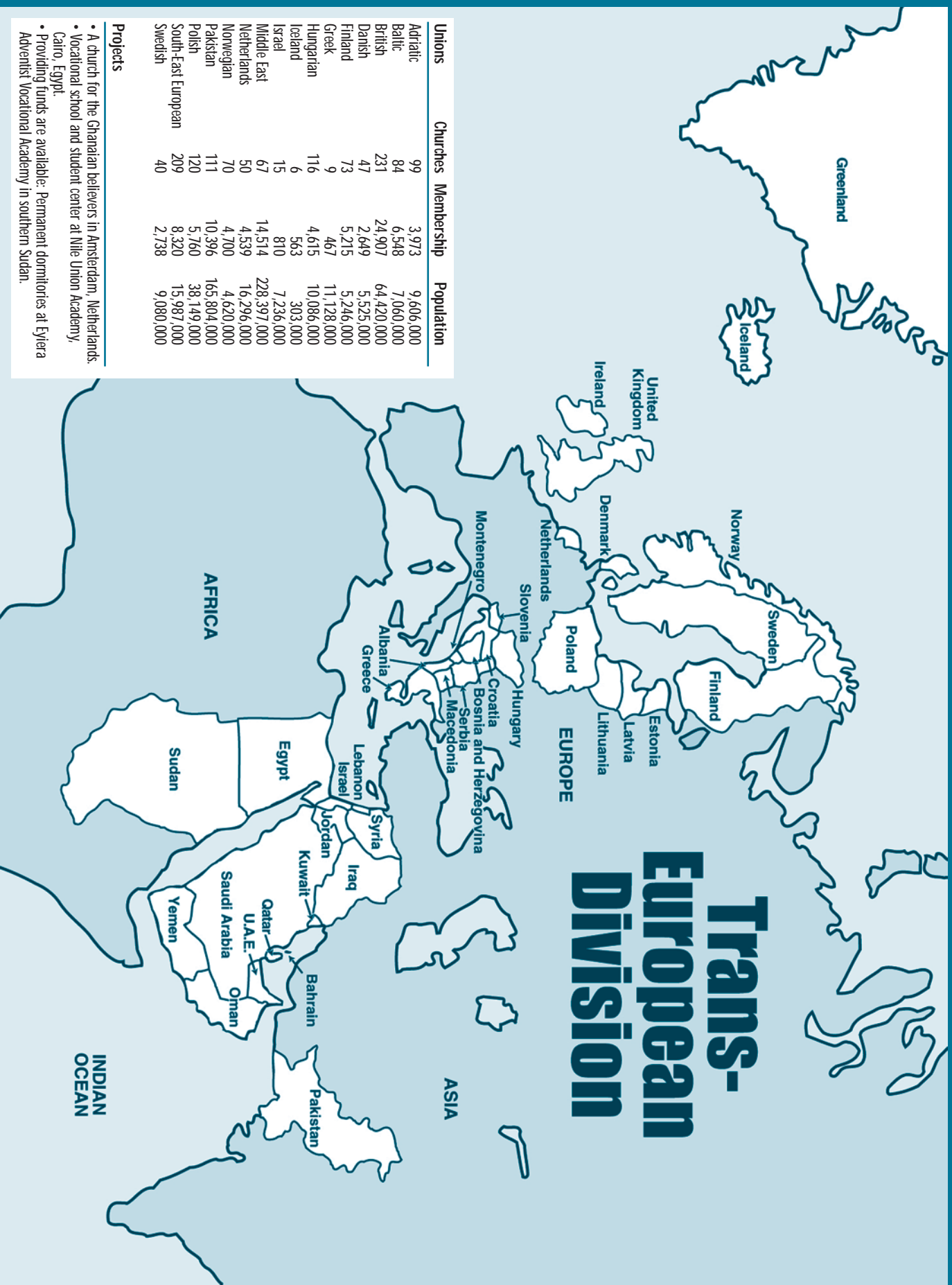
Printed in U.S.A.

Vol. 53, No. 2

Second Quarter 2007  
Trans-European Division

**mission**  
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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.



Unions	Churches	Membership	Population
Adriatic	99	3,973	9,606,000
Baltic	84	6,548	7,060,000
British	231	24,907	64,420,000
Danish	47	2,649	5,525,000
Finland	73	5,215	5,246,000
Greek	9	467	11,128,000
Hungarian	116	4,615	10,086,000
Iceland	6	563	303,000
Israel	15	810	7,236,000
Middle East	67	14,514	228,397,000
Netherlands	50	4,539	16,296,000
Norwegian	70	4,700	4,620,000
Pakistani	111	10,396	165,804,000
Polish	120	5,760	38,149,000
South-East European	209	8,320	15,987,000
Swedish	40	2,738	9,080,000

**Projects**

- A church for the Ghanaian believers in Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- Vocational school and student center at Nile Union Academy, Cairo, Egypt.
- Providing funds are available: Permanent dormitories at Eyiera Adventist Vocational Academy in southern Sudan.