

# mission Teen



**Northern Asia-Pacific Division  
Third Quarter 2005**



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Check the box beside the story when used.

# Mission Teen

**On the cover:** Evangelism is friend to friend. Enkhmaa, from Mongolia (top), accepted her friend's invitation to visit the church; Yuki Hiroyama, from Japan, invited his father to church. Background: Osaka, Japan's, Shoman Castle.

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*making missions meaningful*

# Leader's Planner

## **The Challenge**

Developed countries often pose the greatest challenges to spreading the gospel.

In Taiwan 93 percent of the people follow Eastern religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, or profess no religion. Only about 6 percent claim to be Christian, and more than 4,700 are Adventists. Large population sectors have no Adventist presence.

In Japan more than 80 percent of the population claim no personal religion, though most Japanese follow Buddhist or Shintoist traditions, including ancestor worship. Only about 1.5 percent of the population claim to be Christian, and 15,000 are Adventists. That is a ratio of one Adventist for every 8,575 people. The Adventist church in Japan struggles to grow in a secular society with a declining birthrate. Mass evangelism does not work here.

One third of all Koreans claim to follow Christ, and Adventists have a strong presence in the country. But several isolated regions have not yet been entered, including Ulreung Island, a popular tourist destination off the eastern coast of South Korea. Here a handful of believers struggle to grow against tremendous odds.

## **The Opportunity**

Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will provide the means to establish specific ministries in each of these countries. Funds from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help support Global Mission workers in several unentered areas of Taiwan, Ulreung Island in Korea, and an Internet evangelism project in Japan.

## **Northern Asia-Pacific Division**

The Northern Asia-Pacific Division includes the countries of China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and the Republic of China (Taiwan). Within this division live more than 1.7 billion people. For every Adventist in the division, there are almost 3,000 non-Adventists.

This quarter Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan will receive our attention.

### **Japan**

Japan is a densely populated island group off the eastern coast of China and Korea. Though many Japanese profess to follow Buddhism or Shintoism, Japan is a secular society. For most, religious devotion consists of a yearly visit to a shrine to offer prayers for well being for themselves and their ancestors. Most Japanese do not believe in a personal god.

When Adventist missionaries first entered Japan more than 100 years ago, they found receptive hearts, and the church grew rapidly. But between 1937 and 1943 the government dissolved the church, imprisoned church leaders, and confiscated church property.

After World War II interest in Christianity was high, and thousands accepted Jesus. However, as Japan prospered economically, interest in religion waned.

Japan's declining birthrate and the general disinterest in religion challenges the church to find creative ways to share God's love

with the people. Public evangelism has not worked well here, and leaders struggle to find ways to create interest in God's love. The church has established an innovative evangelism plan that includes using the Internet for active evangelism, with online Bible studies and a question-and-answer site. The potential for growth is high, and Adventists in Japan are excited about the prospects of this new evangelistic mode, which they are combining with radio and television programs, satellite evangelism, and other existing outreach methods.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help fund Japan's online evangelistic outreach.

### **South Korea**

South Korea is a notable evangelism success story in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, with almost 175,000 Adventist

### **Gracelink Connection**

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

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

believers, or one Adventist for every 400 South Koreans. In spite of this success, pockets of the population have not heard the Adventist message. One of these areas that is still virtually unreached is Ulreung Island, a popular tourist destination off the eastern coast of Korea.

While tourists bring money to Ulreung Island, the residents see little benefit from the tourist trade. Most of them struggle to make a living farming on the rocky mountainsides or fishing.

A pastor has been assigned to nurture the small handful of Adventist believers on the island and reach out into the community. Residents of the island have expressed a need to live healthier lives; plans include a church and evangelism center where people can get help to stop smoking, prepare healthful foods, manage stress, and find hope in Jesus. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help make a church-evangelistic center a reality for the people of Ulreung Island.

### **Taiwan**

With one Adventist for every 4,800 people, Taiwan is truly a mission field. Many regions along western Taiwan have populations of 15,000 and more with no Christian church at all. Most people in Taiwan follow one of several Eastern religions: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

Many mix their religion with ancestor and spirit worship. Taiwan's materialistic culture and traditional belief systems make evangelism a challenge.

Several areas of Taiwan have no Adventist presence. Church leaders plan to send Global Mission workers into four or five unentered areas to establish groups of new believers. Part of this quarter's Thirteen Sabbath Offering will help fund this Global Mission outreach in Taiwan.

### **The Thirteenth Sabbath Program**

Read the program early in the quarter, and assign the parts to people who will work to make the presentation a success.

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

Draw a simple Buddhist pagoda or a chapel on a large piece of poster board or cardboard. Divide the pagoda or church into 100 segments, each representing 1 percent of the quarter's total mission offering goal. With gold paint or markers, color in the number of segments representing the proportion of the offering goal received each week in Sabbath School. (Ask the church treasurer to advise you of any offerings received in tithe envelopes, so this figure can be added to the total.)

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

### **Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects**

Fourth quarter will feature the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. Special projects will help establish at least two evangelistic centers in Dhaka, Bangladesh; construct 10 chapels in Sri Lanka for existing congregations; construct a classroom block for a new K-12 Adventist school in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

First quarter 2005 will feature Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. The countries featured will be Malawi and Mozambique.

### **Resources**

**For more information** on the countries featured this quarter, check the travel and children's sections of a local library or look up the individual countries in a good-quality encyclopedia or CD-ROM encyclopedia, such as *Encarta*.

**Recipes** from Northern Asia-Pacific appear on pages 6, 8, and 10 of *Children's Mission*. Celebrate the cultures of these countries with an international potluck. Invite the children's divisions to sing the songs they are learning this quarter.

**Embassies** and tourist commissions can sometimes provide information on their country. In the United States, write to the following:

The Embassy of Japan, 2520 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; [www.embjapan.org](http://www.embjapan.org)

The Embassy of South Korea, 2450 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; Korean Consulate, 2320 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; [www.koreaembassyusa.org](http://www.koreaembassyusa.org).

Information Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, 90 Park Avenue, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10016-1301, 212-557-5122, or [www.taipei.org](http://www.taipei.org).

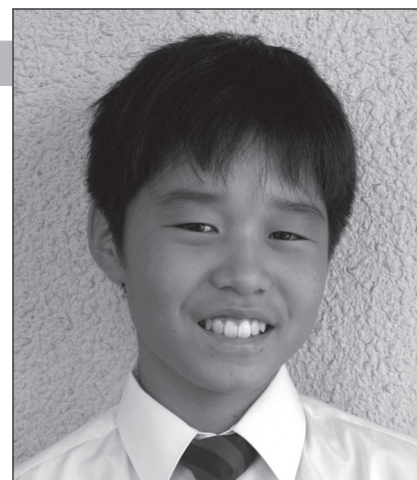
### **Video**

*Mission Spotlight* can be ordered by addressing requests to 4280 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032, or by calling 1-800-229-9696



**GraceLink Connection: Community.**

*First Mother, then Yuki, then Father; one by one faith became a family endeavor.*



Yuki

# A Family Affair

Yuki Hiroyama

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

**M**y mom started something that became a family affair and changed our lives completely. When I was still little, Mom met a woman who lived in our apartment building. This woman was hosting a small group meeting for young mothers who lived nearby. Mother decided to go, and there she really enjoyed the meetings. When the women talked about religious ideas, Mother just listened. She did not have a religious background, and she did not know what the women were talking about. Still she attended the small group, for she enjoyed getting out and meeting other women.

After attending the small group for several weeks, Mother and her new friend started talking about God. Everything was new to Mother, so she listened more than talked. Some of the women had questions about morals, so they

decided to invite a pastor to join the group. The pastor answered questions that the women had, and little by little, Mother was drawn into the discussions. She began asking her own questions.

Six months later the hostess of the small group invited Mother to visit her church. Mother went, and soon she joined the pastor's Bible-study class.

## **Objections Become Cooperation**

My dad did not really like my mother going to the women's group, so when she started attending the church, he was not happy. Then my mother decided to quit eating meat, and that really bothered my dad. Mother tried to explain that it was healthier to avoid eating meat and eat more fruits and vegetables. Finally Dad said it was OK if she did not want to cook meat at home; he would still eat his meat at work.

Then my mom started trying to

get my dad to stop smoking and drinking. Again she explained that it was for his health, but the discussion really made Dad angry. Mom realized that arguing with Dad over these things was not the best way to change his mind. Instead she began to pray for him, asking God to change his heart.

Mom and my brother, sister, and I prayed for Dad together. We went to church together each week. Dad had agreed to drive us to church, and we invited him to come in, but he usually stayed in the car. Mother smiled and urged us children to keep praying for Dad. Slowly he began to yield to our invitations and come to church. Then he joined us as we read the Bible during worship. Dad wanted to be a good example to us, and by this time he was convinced that religion was important, so he began attending church every week. Then last year he asked the pastor to baptize him. Because very few people in Japan are Christians, any baptism is a big celebration.

I was so happy when my dad was baptized! I can't express how I felt.

### A Special School

My brother, sister, and I attended the Adventist elementary school in our town. In Japan schools are very competitive, and they hold classes six days a week. Mom did not want us to have to attend classes on Sabbath. She did not want us to have to face the strong competition, the special tutors, the extra classes that public school students took so they could prepare for the best colleges. The Adventist school was not as nice and as modern as the public schools, but the teachers nurtured us, cared for us, and helped us love to learn. That made a huge difference to us.

When I was ready for junior high, the nearest Adventist middle school was more than an hour away by train. It was too far to travel every day, so in the seventh grade I left home to live in a dormitory at the Adventist school. It was difficult to be so far from my family, but Mom promised to

pray for me every day.

I had studied the Bible in Bible class ever since I started school. I had sat through many Week of Prayer meetings too. But during the Week of Prayer my first year in the junior high school, I felt God speaking to my heart. I wanted to follow Jesus, especially now that my dad was a Christian. I wondered if there was anything I needed to change in my life in order to prepare for baptism. I prayed about this and realized that God accepted me just as I was. He would take care of any changes that needed to be made. I knew that baptism was a big decision, so I kept praying about it. I decided to talk to the chaplain at school. He explained that baptism is not the same as accepting Jesus as our Savior and Lord of our life. It is a step of obedience to God.

I decided to be baptized, but I wanted to be baptized in the church where I grew up. I knew that my parents would come to the school to witness my baptism, but I wanted everyone in my

home church to witness my commitment to God. So during spring break from school, I talked to my pastor about my decision. We talked to my parents and the chaplain at school. Everyone was happy for my decision.

I'm glad to be studying in the Adventist school, where my spiritual life is as important as my physical life. I like learning more about God and having help to build a better foundation for my faith.

When I was born no one in my family was a Christian. Now Christianity is a family affair. Someday soon my brother and sister will follow Jesus in baptism. I can't tell you how much happier our family is now that we are united in Jesus.

Although I live in Japan, which is a modern and wealthy country, just one percent of the population is Christian and the Adventist Church struggles to lead people to Jesus. Pray that people in Japan will listen to God's call.

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**Yuki Hiroyama** is 13 years old and lives in a town outside of Tokyo, Japan.

# let's talk

? Yuki and his brother and sister prayed that their father would accept Jesus and unite the family in Christ. What other things can we do to

- encourage our own family members to give their lives to Jesus? *[We must be Christ-like in our thoughts, words and deeds; we can talk to others about Jesus.]*

? Yuki's family came to Jesus because a neighbor invited Yuki's mother to a small group meeting in her home. What can we do to

- share our faith with our friends? *[Simply live by what you believe and answer your friends' questions when they ask. The opportunity will come to invite them to visit church. Be sure to introduce them to your friends at church. We need to be a special friend to any other visitors as well, so they will want to return to church.]*

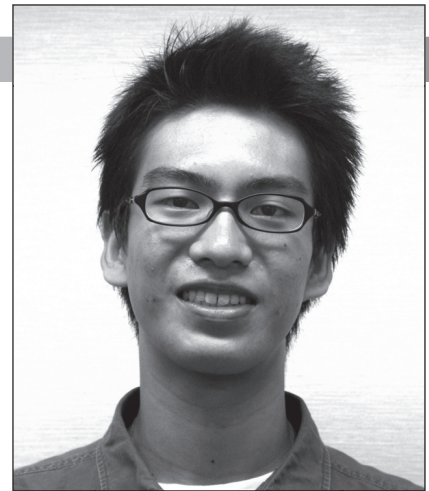
**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that Yuki and his family will continue to let God lead them in their lives and help them share their faith with other people. Pray that members of your Sabbath School class will follow God's leading and share their faith with those around them.*



## GraceLink Connection: Community.

*A teen finds God through Vacation Bible School.*



Toshimichi

# VBS Made the Difference

Toshimichi Wakui

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

I was not brought up in a Christian home. The only religion my family professed was hard work. They constantly encouraged my brothers and me to study harder, work harder.

I attended a public school the first few years. Education in Japan is very competitive, and sometimes that competition flows out of the classroom, creating social problems. Some of the boys in my class began to bully us. When my parents heard about this, they were worried about the effects of the bullying on me. They decided to send my younger brothers and me to a different school. They searched for a long time to find a school that did not permit such a competitive atmosphere. They found an Adventist school that they felt would meet our needs.

My parents applied to enroll my brother and me, but there was no room in my class. My

younger brother was able to begin studying there, but I had to endure two more years of public school before the Adventist school had an opening in my grade.

My younger brother really liked this school, and he did well there. Often he talked about what he was learning in class, especially in his Bible class. I listened with interest to the Bible stories he shared, because I had never heard them before. My parents liked the school, especially how the teachers encouraged the children without making them compete with one another, and they liked what my brother was learning about God. Before long they became interested in the Adventist Church, which sponsors the school.

We began to attend the Adventist church next door to the school. I liked it, for I met new friends who were kind to me.

One day at church a boy told me about a program that was coming during the summer called Vacation Bible School. He

explained that it is not really like school, and we would have fun singing songs, hearing stories, and doing crafts. It sounded like fun to me, so I asked my parents if I could go. They said it was OK, so I eagerly signed up for VBS.

### VBS

I enjoyed Vacation Bible School a lot, and I admired the staff who taught it. I watched them as they directed the program and led out in activities. I really admired how they could make Vacation Bible School so much fun for kids. I decided that when I got a little older I wanted to be a teacher in Vacation Bible School. I wanted to learn to teach, to be a song leader, and to tell a story. These were all things I thought a Vacation Bible School teacher should know.

Some of the assistant teachers and song leaders were only two or three years older than I was, and that thought made me eager to learn to teach. I told some of the leaders that I wanted to help

lead out, and they invited me to practice with them. I really liked spending time with them and learning the songs they taught me.

The young people in the church were learning sign language and practicing to conduct their own puppet ministries. They invited me to join these activities as well. I was happy that they included me in their activities, because I was not a member of their church. I joined them and had a great time learning some of the leadership skills I wanted to master.

My family also was becoming involved in activities of the church. We enjoyed the company of the church members, and as we studied the Bible lessons, we found that the church's teachings agreed with everything we could find in the Bible. The entire family enjoyed attending worship services together.

### Teen Trials and Triumphs

During my teen years I faced

new challenges. I sometimes got into squabbles with other boys at school. Soon I realized that my own selfishness was contributing to these misunderstandings. I liked my school and my teachers and even the other boys, and I knew that I had to learn to be more cooperative and less selfish. I asked God to help me and take away my selfishness, and little by little I became more and more cooperative.

I continued to pursue my goal of becoming a youth leader in the church. I discovered that I enjoy singing, and I sing whenever I am given the opportunity. Some of my friends taught me to play the guitar, which made singing that much more enjoyable. I found that whenever some of us young people got together, we'd sing. That was great!

I joined the Vacation Bible School staff, where I lead singing and play the guitar. I also play for song service when I am asked. I am seeing firsthand how God is

working in the lives of children who are just as I was a few years ago. It is a joy to see our Vacation Bible School program growing too. When I first attended, we had just 20 children; last year about 150 children took part.

My younger brothers enjoy helping out with Vacation Bible School, too. One of my brothers has a beautiful voice, and he has recorded a CD of Christian songs. I enjoy hearing him use his talent to honor God.

My life has changed so much since my introduction to Vacation Bible School. I have met Jesus as my personal Savior, and I realize that I cannot do anything without God's help. I know that with God living in me, I can do anything He asks me to do. He has said that He will never leave me or forsake me, and I pray that I will always depend on Him for everything I need. I feel privileged to be able to make a difference in the world.

Your Sabbath School mission offerings help churches around the world hold programs such as Vacation Bible School, where kids such as I can learn that God loves me. Thank you!

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**Toshimichi Wakui** is 18 and lives in Tokyo, Japan.

# let's talk

? How did Toshimichi, the boy in today's report, describe his family's religion when the story started? How was his family introduced to Christianity? What specific activity did Toshimichi credit with changing his life? *[His family had no religion; his parents urged him and his brothers to work harder and achieve their own success. Trouble with bullying in his school led his parents to look for a better school. They found the Adventist school, and eventually visited the church. Vacation Bible School showed him he needed a personal relationship with Jesus.]*

? Why are programs such as Vacation Bible School an important evangelistic outreach? *[VBS is a fun activity to introduce adults and children to Jesus. When church members invite their friends to VBS, it is a non-threatening way to introduce them to the church.]*

? After his experience with VBS, Toshimichi wanted to learn to teach, lead, and sing in church. What programs could you become involved in that would help teach people about Jesus?

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that God will show you how you can share your faith with others through programs offered in your church.*



**GraceLink Connection: Worship.**

*A young girl searches for God only to find  
that He's been there all along.*



Chiharu

# Finding God in Japan

Chiharu Matsumoto

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

**M**y father was not a Christian and did not like it when my mother attended church. Often they argued about religion, but Mother remained firm in her faith and taught my brother and me to love God. Mother convinced Father to let me attend an Adventist school, and I loved it.

## **Baptism Dilemma**

When I was 10 years old one of my classmates was baptized. I asked her why she had decided to be baptized, and she told me that she wanted to go to heaven. I thought a lot about her answer and decided that I wanted to be baptized too. So I joined the pastor's Bible-study class in preparation for baptism.

I was eager to get to know Jesus better, and I yearned to be filled with God's joy. But no matter what I did, I could not find that joy. I felt confused about Christianity. Perhaps it was the discord I felt at home. Questions

swirled in my mind. *If God is the God of love, I thought, then He must love those who are not baptized as much as those who are baptized. And if God does love everyone the same, then why do we need to be baptized?*

When it was time to be baptized, I hesitated. Even though I wanted to be baptized, I felt that it was not honest to be baptized without a personal conversion experience first. But I continued to study in the baptismal class. One day the pastor asked me what was keeping me from making my decision to follow Christ in baptism. I told him that baptism is between God and me. I wanted to wait until I was ready before being baptized.

Finally in the ninth grade I decided it was time to take my stand for Jesus and be baptized. I was still struggling with my feelings, and often I prayed, "Jesus, please touch my heart; let me feel Your presence." But then I added, "If You do not, then I will cancel my baptism." I continued to struggle to make a connection with God.

## **Hearing God Speak**

I felt especially close to one of my teachers who often invited me to her house to sing and pray together. One day when I was especially tired and frustrated, I went to her house and listened to music. As I sang along with the music on the tape, I suddenly realized that the song I was singing was an invitation to give my heart to God. I stopped singing and listened—really listened—to the words. I realized that all this time when I was struggling to find God, God was right there beside me, seeking me.

I bowed my head and surrendered my life to God right then and there. It was so easy. There was no struggle, no clap of thunder, just peace. Joyfully I signed up for the baptism that I had put off for so long.

From that moment on I realized that God would not let me go. If I ever lost track of Jesus, I could return to this day, this experience, and find Him again.

In high school I spent more time with my friends than with my studies. I loved art and music,

and I decided to major in a field where I could use these talents. Somehow I made it through with good grades.

I graduated from high school and returned home for the first time in six years. My family expected me to spend time with them and settle down to prepare for college. But I spent most of my time going out with my friends, coming in late at night. My parents were disappointed, I know.

During my first year of college I drifted away from God. I thought only of myself and my own problems, not about my family or God. One day I realized that I had not gone to church in months. I realized something was missing in my life, and when I let myself think about it, I knew it was God.

### **Finding God Again**

Then a friend invited me to go to Korea as a student missionary. I knew that going would help me find God again, but I wanted to continue my education. I was torn between going to Korea and finding God again, and continuing my

education—and my downward spiral. I decided to go to Korea.

I enjoyed teaching Japanese in Korea, but something still was missing. I realized that I had not been studying my Bible as I should. I began reading the Bible again faithfully. I prayed again, my first honest prayer in months. I asked God to show me Himself through His Word. My faith began to revive.

Then I asked God to send His love through me to the students I was teaching. He sent me a student to tutor. She was so discouraged and needed so much help. I urged her to pray, even when my own prayer life was hollow. But she prayed, and this precious girl gave her life to God.

I surrendered my life to God once more, and He humbled me and took away my pride. It hurt. I lost my singing voice and could hardly talk. Then my friends left Korea, and I was alone. I railed at God for taking them from me. My language classes dwindled until I had only one student. "What are You doing, God?" I cried. He told

me that I was not there to work hard, but to lean on Him.

I was praying for those I loved, especially for my father. Then I rejoiced to learn that my father was studying the Bible. God had to make that miracle happen, not me. I wanted to return home to my family and my studies.

I have returned to Japan, where I know it will be difficult to keep my faith alive unless I lean totally on God. And that is what I am doing. Japan is a huge mission field, and I want to be open to God, to serve Him wherever He wants me. God has led me into a youth ministry in my church in Tokyo, and I praise God for leading me here.

Japan lies on the eastern edge of the 10-40 window. Only about one percent of the people in Japan are Christians. It is difficult to work for God here, but God has many children in Japan who are seeking Him. I want to find them and lead them to Jesus' feet.

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**Chiharu Matsumoto** *lives in Tokyo, Japan.*

# let's talk

- ? Why did the girl in today's story struggle with her faith? Why do many Christians face these same struggles? *[God tells each of us to "work out our own salvation" (Phil. 2:12), to put into practice what we have learned from God. Often we must struggle to understand or to make God's truths a part of our lives.]*
- to "work out our own salvation" (Phil. 2:12), to put into practice what we have learned from God. Often we must struggle to understand or to make God's truths a part of our lives.]
- ? What should we do when we find ourselves struggling with our faith? *[Pray for God's Spirit, read the Bible, seek encouragement from other believers.]*
- from other believers.]

# PRAY pray PRAY

*Pray that the girl in our story today will continue to lean on God and let Him lead her. Pray that each member of your class will seek a closer walk with God.*



## GraceLink Connection: Community.

*When his mother urged him to study English at the Adventist language school, she never dreamed it would change his life.*



Kibin

# A Difficult Road

Lee, Kibin

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

**W**hen I was in high school my mother took an English class at the Adventist English Language School in Seoul, Korea. She liked the program and encouraged me to sign up when I graduated that spring.

Mother is a firm believer in eating right. So when Mother discovered that Adventists have a strong health message, she was excited and often talked with the pastor about health.

But while Mother was interested in health, she was not interested in learning about Adventist beliefs. "We have our own church," she told the pastor.

### Only the Beginning

With Mother's urging, a friend and I signed up for English classes at the Adventist language school. I knew how my mother felt about this religion, so when one of the school pastors offered to study the Bible with us, I said no. But he did not give up. "It is

important to know your Bible," he said, "and know what different churches believe."

My friend and I agreed to study the Bible with the pastor. I expected the course to be boring, but I found it really interesting. I had never learned these stories in my family's church. The pastor saw my interest in early world history and gave me a book called *Patriarchs and Prophets*. I enjoyed the book, so the pastor gave me others in the series. I read the entire *Conflict of the Ages* series and some other books by Ellen White.

I had a lot of questions about things I had read in these books. Was Sunday really not God's holy day? Explain Daniel's prophecies. What about the immortality of the soul? Do Christians really need to be baptized as adults? The pastor and I had some good discussions on these topics. He showed me texts from the Bible to support every Adventist doctrine and explained how I could find answers to my other questions.

### A Difficult Decision

After two months of Bible study, I began attending the language school church on Sabbath. But I also attended church with my parents on Sunday. Little by little I told my parents about some of the things I was learning. But they were firm followers of our Sunday church and did not want to hear what I had to say. They became angry when I talked about the Adventist Church.

I was afraid that if I told them too much at once they would reject Adventist beliefs completely, so I shared only a little at a time. I did not tell my parents when I decided to be baptized because I knew they would be very angry.

At a family reunion in our town, my mother told an uncle that I was attending the Adventist English Language Institute. My uncle, who was a military captain, told my mother about some Adventist soldiers who were persecuted and even jailed for their religious beliefs. His

comments worried my mother. She did not want me to become an Adventist and suffer when it was time for me to serve in the military.

“Please don’t do anything foolish,” my mother urged me. “Maybe you should drop the English classes. I hate to think of you being thrown in jail because of a strange religion.”

I had to tell my mother that I had decided to follow God no matter what, and that I was convinced that the Adventist Church was where God wanted me. My mother became even more determined to shield me from these Adventists. She gathered a group of strong men to threaten the pastor and me. And one Sabbath she even came to force me to leave the worship service. I left with her because I did not want her to disturb the service, but I returned the following Sabbath. When all of these tactics were unsuccessful, my mother asked me to move out of the house.

I enrolled in college for one year before I was called into the

Korean military. All young men must serve one term. I signed up for the medic program that was designated for conscientious objectors. Even here, where I did not have to bear arms, I found it difficult to keep the Sabbath. But I discovered that I had understanding commanders who allowed me to keep the Sabbath and even give Bible studies to other soldiers. At last my term of service in the military ended, and I was free to continue with studies.

My parents were determined that I give up this crazy religion. But by this time I felt God was calling me to the ministry, and I was looking into studying theology. I realized that I would need to leave home again, and I had no idea how I would pay my tuition at the Adventist university in Seoul. But I knew that I could trust God to lead the way.

#### **Standing Firm**

I sat down and talked to my mother one evening. Our discussion lasted all night. I told her that I was convinced that God had led me to the Adventist

Church, and that I wanted to study theology. She tried hard to dissuade me, but when she saw that my mind was made up, she told me she would continue to support me. She said it was more important that I remain a member of the family than anything else.

I enrolled in the Adventist university in Seoul, but it took a long time to find a way to tell my father of my decision to study for the ministry. My decision to leave my family’s church and become an Adventist was not an easy one. It is even harder now that I have decided to become a pastor. I pray that God will continue to guide me and give me strength as I continue to put my trust in Him to work everything out according to His will.

Your mission offerings helped change my life, for those offerings help support the many Adventist language schools in Asia. Thank you for making a difference in my life.

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**Lee, Kibin** is a theology student at Sahmyook University in Seoul, Korea.

# Let's talk

- ? God has a thousand ways to lead someone to Jesus and to the Adventist Church. How did Kibin learn about Adventists? What was his initial impression? How did his early impressions change as time went on? *[Patient and friendly pastors working with the English students offered to study the Bible with them. They used Kibin’s interest in history to share books that led him to a closer walk with Christ.]*
- ? Why was Kibin’s family unhappy about his interest in the Adventist church? What most concerned his mother about his interest in this “strange religion”?
- ? Have you faced opposition from family members or friends because of your faith? What did you do about it? Tell the class what happened?

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that Kibin will remain faithful and that his family will see the beauty of his faith in Jesus and want to follow his example. Pray that Adventist young people serving in the Korean military will remain faithful to God and their faith in spite of persecution.*



**GraceLink Connection: Service.**

*Thousands of people have come to Christ through English language schools the Adventist Church established in Korea and across Asia. Here is one story.*



Yun Mi

# More Than Just English

Kim, Yun Mi

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

I had always wanted to learn English. I taught myself the basics and started reading any English books I could find. I studied English at school, but I wanted to know far more than I could learn in class.

A friend told me about the Adventist Language Institute of Korea, where I could improve my English language skills. It sounded interesting, but when she told me it was a Christian school, I hesitated. I thought Christians were hypocrites who said one thing and did something different. Then someone told me that Adventist Christians are especially strange. I wanted nothing to do with the Christians' God. I did not even think He existed, and I did not want to talk about Him. I guess I was an atheist. I did not want to study at a school where the teachers talked about God, and I especially did not want to have to bow my head when the teacher prayed to a God I did not believe in. So I

forgot about the Adventist Language Institute for a while.

But my desire to learn English overcame my fears about studying at a Christian language school. I knew that the Adventist school was close to my home and my school. I could afford the tuition to study there. Finally I decided to give the Adventist Language Institute a try. I wanted to learn from native English speakers, and I decided I could ignore what they said about their God.

## **A Step in the Right Direction**

I enrolled in the Adventist language school and found that it was not as bad as I had feared. The teachers did a good job, and they did not talk about their God all the time. My English improved, and I moved ahead quickly. I even made friends with my teachers.

In spite of my promises to myself, I became curious about Christianity. I had never had close contact with Christians before, and I wondered about their beliefs. One day I asked my teacher, Kevin, some questions

about what he believes.

Kevin answered my questions and gave me a book called *Steps to Christ*. My eagerness to read a book in English overcame my caution about Christianity, and I started reading it. I found new words to learn as I went, but the more I read, the more I focused on the book's message rather than the English words and sentences. I began to realize that I had been wrong about God and Christianity. God really *does* exist.

I took the little book everywhere I went and read a page or two whenever I had an opportunity. One day while riding the subway, I was reading about how God loves us so much that His Son, Jesus, died for us. I had never heard of that before, and it really touched my heart.

I did not have a Bible, so my teacher, Kevin, gave me one. I started reading in the New Testament, as he suggested. Again I was reading in English, but this time I read for content, not looking for new words or ways of expressing myself in English. The

Bible told me many things about God that I had not known. *Steps to Christ* had talked about giving our lives to Jesus, and I began to feel a strong desire to do just that.

I started asking Kevin questions about what I was reading. He answered my questions and explained words I did not know, such as the Sabbath. Then he explained that God has set aside the Sabbath hours to spend with His children, and that is why Adventist Christians do not work on Sabbath. This Sabbath idea—time to spend with God instead of studying or working—made sense. It was a beautiful picture of a God who truly loves His creation.

### **A Complete Turnaround**

Kevin introduced me to an Adventist pastor, and I started studying the Bible with him. The pastor was very patient and helped me to understand a lot of things about the Bible. He encouraged me to ask questions, and I did. I studied on my own and with the pastor. After two months, I gave my life to God.

My decision to become a

Christian was a big surprise to my family and friends because I had always been against Christians. But I did not keep my new faith in God a secret. I told my friends in school that I had become a Christian. Every chance I had I shared my faith and my testimony of how God had led me to find Jesus.

One of my friends, Hyun Mi, noticed the changes in my life and asked me what had happened to me. I told her I had found Jesus, and she asked to study the Bible with me. So we started studying together, and whenever we came to something we did not understand, we asked the pastor. Hyun Mi decided she wanted a part of the happiness I had found, and she gave her life to God, too.

My older sister, Yun Joo, often had heard me say how much I disliked Christians. So she was especially surprised when I became a Christian. We had often talked about how God does not exist. Then suddenly I became a Christian. She wanted to know what was happening to me. Yun Joo asked me lots of questions about God, and I shared with

her what God had done for me. I showed her Bible verses that explained what I now believe, and Yun Joo decided that she, too, wanted to accept Jesus as her Savior. Yun Joo was baptized three months after I was.

But not everyone in my family is happy about my new faith. My parents do not understand the sudden change in my faith and my attitudes. I am praying that God will help me say the right things to them so they will understand that Jesus loves them as a father loves his child.

I am praying that God will open my eyes to what He wants me to do with my life. I want to share with others the good news that I found in Jesus, and help them make better lives for themselves.

Your mission offerings, the offerings you give each week in Sabbath School, have helped thousands like me learn of God's love through language schools, Branch Sabbath Schools, and other outreaches of the Adventist Church. From all of us, thank you.

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**Kim, Yun Mi** (*Kathryn*) studies at a university in Seoul, Korea, and teaches English at an English Language Institute.

# Let's talk

- ? How did Kathryn (the girl in today's report) feel about God and religion when she first enrolled in the Adventist Language Institute?
  - How did her attitude about God change once she enrolled in the language school?
- ? Her change of heart was quite a surprise to those who knew her. How did the changes in her life help her share her faith with others?
  - *[Friends and family members knew that she had been anti-Christian. They asked her questions about her change of heart, which opened the door for her to tell them what God was doing in her life.]*
- ? List three ways we can share our faith with someone this week. How can our actions cause a transforming ripple-effect in other people's lives?
  -

**GraceLink Connection: Service.**

*A teenager's struggle with a life-changing disease offers hope and challenge for others.*



Yiling

# The Girl Who Won't Give Up

Yiling Ko

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

**Y**iling Ko is a warrior. When a tragedy strikes or an epidemic threatens her island home of Taiwan, Yiling is likely working to raise public awareness of the problem or soliciting funds to help the victims.

Yiling understands what it is like to need help. She was born with congenital muscular dystrophy\*, a disease that weakens muscles and has robbed Yiling of her ability to walk. But it has not dimmed her passion for life.

Yiling spent the first years of her life living on an Adventist campus where everyone knew everyone, and everyone watched out for her. "Everyone was wonderful to me," Yiling says. "My friends knew that I could fall easily, that I could not run or climb stairs; so they helped me. I felt protected and safe."

## **Facing the Foe**

Then Yiling's family moved to Singapore, where her father

pastored a Chinese-speaking church. Life in Singapore was different for Yiling. "I could still walk then, but I could not run and play with other children. They did not understand my needs, and I was lonely."

Yiling focused her energies on improving her health. She exercised, ate well, and thought positively. "I wanted to be healthy and do the things my friends did. But no matter how hard I tried, my condition grew worse. By the time I was 13, I could no longer walk; I needed a wheelchair. I still needed lots of help, especially getting up and down stairs. I had to depend on others to go places or do things. My parents and brother were wonderful, but sometimes my brother had other plans and was not there to help me when I needed him. Sometimes we argued, and that caused a lot of frustration and sadness. Now I realize how difficult my needs were for him to deal with and how patient he has been with me.

"Countless times I prayed that

God would heal me, but healing did not come. Sometimes I would get angry about my disability, especially when it meant I could not take part in activities with my classmates."

## **Hope and Despair**

When she was 14, Yiling and her family returned to Taiwan. Shortly after their move, her family learned of a surgery that could help stabilize her back. The family decided the surgery was worth the risks and began raising money to travel to America for the surgery.

Yiling loves to write and had spent many hours writing poems and essays on her perspective of life. While the family laid plans for her surgery, an organization saw some of Yiling's writing and learned about her medical condition. They gave her their Passion for Life Award. When the news media learned of the award, many asked her for interviews. "This was the low point in my life," Yiling said. "The media wanted a story about a brave girl;



but I wanted to tell them that I was lonely and that I have my fears and problems to cope with. I was not born immune to doubts and fears." That award was a low point in Yiling's life.

The church family rallied around Yiling and her family and helped them raise the funds to travel to America for the surgery. Their love and support encouraged Yiling and her family.

The surgery stabilized Yiling's back, but it could not halt the progression of her disease. However, Yiling continues to fight back with physical therapy several times a week to strengthen her weak muscles.

### Living Life to the Fullest

While Yiling becomes frustrated with her weakened body, nothing is wrong with her mind! She loves to read literature and history and stays in touch with friends via e-mail. "I want to know everything about everything," she says. Yiling writes a column for a monthly

newsletter for Chinese Adventists and teaches an adult Sabbath School class. "Teaching this class adds a lot to my life," she says.

Yiling has a strong sense of responsibility, not just to her family and her church, but to her city, her country, her world. Her parents have helped her form strong principles that guide her life and help her make the right choices.

During the recent SARS<sup>†</sup> epidemic in Asia, Yiling sought information that would dispel fear and help people react responsibly to the situation. Then when the tsunami [soo-NAH-mee] devastated parts of Southeast Asia, she worked to raise funds for relief.

"I am so grateful that I have parents who love me, who have taught me to live by strong principles. It must be difficult for young people who are not taught how to live by principles. We talk a lot about how to deal with problems and make wise choices. Muscular dystrophy is an ongoing battle, so I am glad that I

have people around me who help make my journey smoother and a lot more meaningful."

Yiling has faced many fears and dealt with them. "I remember telling a teacher that my greatest fear was losing my ability to walk," she recalls. "But when the time came, I faced that fear and accepted it. I have prayed for healing, but I am learning to accept the fact that it may never come. I concentrate on using my mind to help others. I know that despite my physical limitations I can make a positive difference in the world.

And those who know Yiling know that she already has made a huge difference in her world.

*\* Congenital muscular dystrophy (CMD) is a disease characterized by progressive muscle weakness, often accompanied by other symptoms. Many children with CMD learn to walk and remain ambulatory for varying lengths of time. Although the disease typically progresses slowly, the severity can vary dramatically from one child to the next.*

*† SARS stands for severe acute respiratory syndrome, a pneumonia-like illness caused by a virus. The highly contagious disease first appeared in China and spread quickly to other parts of Asia, spreading panic and causing closure of many public meeting places, including schools and churches.*

**Yiling Ko** is 19 years old and lives in

# let's talk

- ? What challenges has Yiling faced in her struggle with muscular dystrophy? How has the disease affected her life, both positively and negatively?
- ? Yiling is unable to walk, but she focuses on her abilities, not her disabilities. How does she do this? [She reads a lot, writes poetry and prose, has pen pals with whom she corresponds, and she teaches a Sabbath School class. These activities help her cope with her challenges and inspire others as well.]
- ? Have you ever been tempted to feel sorry for yourself? What brought your self-pity on? What did you do about it? How does Yiling's story inspire you to focus on the positive things in life?
- ? What can you do to help or inspire people around you? [Make a list on the board as class members offer suggestions. Encourage class members to find at least one activity and act on it.]

# PRAY pray PRAY

*Pray that Yiling and others who deal with physical, mental, or emotional challenges will trust God and look to Him to make their lives whole in Jesus.*

## GraceLink Connection: Service.

*Taiwan teens demonstrate that persistence and faithfulness to God's commandments pay off.*



Shiang-Long

# Staying Faithful in School

Liu, Shiang-Long and Du, Yi-An

### Mark's Lunchroom Problems

**M**ark Liu opened his lunch box. It was Mark's first day at this school, and he was not used to eating meals prepared by the school for its students. Pieces of pork lay among the noodles in the lunch box. He carefully picked out the pork with his chopsticks before eating the noodles.

"What are you doing with your meat?" asked one of Mark's classmates. Mark told him that he does not eat pork. He was not sure if the boy understood, so he explained about clean and unclean meats.

"Hey, if you don't want the pork, may I have it?" one of the boys interrupted. Mark nodded, and the boy eagerly took the pork from the edge of Mark's lunch box. Mark finished the noodles and laid down his chopsticks. He was still hungry. *What shall I do?* he wondered.

Then he remembered a little noodle shop just outside the school grounds. He asked his teacher to let him go and buy some noodles.

### Pork Again

The next day Mark again found pork in his lunch. This time some of the other students asked right away whether they could have the pork. Mark gave it to them. Every day that week Mark found pork in his meal. Sometimes it was cut so small that he could not separate it from the noodles. Then he gave his entire lunch to a classmate and went to the noodle shop to buy something to eat.

Mark went to his teacher. "Teacher," he said respectfully, "my family pays for the meals we are given at school. I am not allowed to bring my lunch from home. But I do not eat pork, and every day this week the lunches have had pork in them, so I could not eat them. How can I get food without pork in it?"

The teacher sent Mark to the kitchen to speak with the cook. Mark bowed politely to the cook and said, "I am a Seventh-day Adventist, and we do not eat pork or shellfish. Can you provide lunch food that does not contain pork or shellfish? There are several other Adventists at this school,

and none of us can eat the lunches that have pork in them."

The cook said nothing for a moment, and then she replied, "I can make special meals for the students who do not eat pork."

Mark thanked the cook, and hurried to his classroom.

### Sticking to It

But the next week Mark's lunch still had pork in it. *Maybe the cook was too busy, he thought, or maybe she forgot.* So Mark did not say anything. But when the pork continued to appear in his lunch box, Mark visited the cook and asked again to provide meals without pork or shellfish. Again she promised to make the meals. But when Mark continued to find pork in his food, he went to the cook.

"You promised to make a meal without unclean meat," Mark told her.

"Did you really want me to make special meals?" the cook asked.

"Yes, ma'am," Mark said. "I want to eat a meal with no unclean meat in it."

The cook told Mark to come to the kitchen to eat his meals. So the next day at lunchtime, Mark and the other students who did not want to eat pork went to the kitchen, where the cook had prepared a large bowl of food without meat. She dished up a plate for each child and showed them where to sit to eat.

From then on Mark and his friends ate their meals in the kitchen. The students thanked the cook every day for their special meals. And when some of their classmates quizzed them about why they ate in the kitchen, they answered simply that they chose to eat plain rice or plain noodles than to eat the meats that most people love. To them eating in the kitchen was just one more opportunity to share their faith in God and teach others about the Bible.

### **Yi-An Puts God's Sabbath First**

Adventist students at other schools in Taiwan also have difficulties.

Yi-An was one of the fastest runners in her village. She attended a junior high school that had a good sports program. Yi-An was one of the school's top athletes in track and field.

One day, the physical education teacher announced that the school had been invited to take part in some important national and international sports events. The students would have the opportunity to compete against schools in Taiwan as well as in Japan and China. The students listened intently as the teacher listed the dates for the upcoming sports meets. They eagerly chattered among themselves about this exciting news.

But Yi-An sat quietly. Some of the sports meets were on Sabbath. She had made a commitment to God to obey all of His commandments, and she wanted to keep His Sabbath holy.

Yi-An's parents, along with the parents of several other Adventist students, had spoken

to the school officials before they enrolled their children. The school officials had promised that the school would not interfere with their Sabbath observance.

But now the sporting events that had been scheduled for Sabbath meant that Yi-An had to choose whether to follow God's commandments or take part in the sporting events. Yi-An spoke to other Adventist students who were involved in the sports program, and they all decided that no matter how much they wanted to compete in the sporting events, they would obey God. Together the group of Adventist students went to the physical education teacher and told him that they could not attend the meets that fell on Sabbath.

The teacher was very disappointed. Several of the Adventist students were strong team members, and Yi-An was the best runner in the school. He needed them. But the students stood firm. They took part in the sporting events held other days, but on the Sabbath they worshiped God.

Yi-An and Shiang-Long have learned to stand up for their faith in the midst of opposition. They urge everyone who hears their story to do the same.

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**Liu, Shiang-Long, 16, and Du, Yi-An, 17, live in Taiwan.**

## Let's talk

? Adventists who follow the health teachings of the church do not eat pork or shellfish. These choices make a big difference in Chinese cultures, with its use of pork as a primary meat source. When Mark found pork in his lunch, it was not an unusual occurrence. What did he do about it? How did Mark and the other Adventist students in the school solve the problem?

? Most sporting events at Yi-An's school were held during the school day, so they did not force the Adventist students to choose between their faith and their sports. What was different about the sporting events the teacher announced? *[They were international events.]* What decision did Yi-An and her Adventist classmates make regarding the sporting events that would be held on Sabbath? How did their decision impact their team? Their coach? Their school?

? Have you had to stand up for your faith at school or while taking part in other activities? What choices did you have to make? What did you do? How did your decision and your actions honor God?

**PRAY** pray **PRAY**

*Pray that students in Taiwan, the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, and around the world stand firm in their convictions to honor God's laws.*



## GraceLink Connection: Worship.

*For three teenage girls, going to church is worth the effort.*



Mongolmaa, Byato, and Enkhmaa

# Sneaking Off to Church

Mongolmaa, Byato, and Enkhmaa

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

I live in Ulaanbaatar [ooh-lahn-BAH-turh], Mongolia. When I was 13 years old my grandmother and I moved to another part of the city. I missed my friends, but in time I made new friends.

An elderly neighbor was very kind to us. One day she invited me to her home. She told me she was a Christian and invited me to attend her church. "It is not far from here," she said. "Ask your grandmother if you can go with me." I did not know much about Christians, but I was curious to see how Christians worship, so I asked Grandmother if I could go.

"No," Grandmother said. "I don't like Christians." Grandmother had heard many strange things about Christians, and she did not think it was wise for me to get mixed up with them.

### Curiosity Wins

But I was really curious. I decided to go to my

neighbor's church, even though Grandmother had said no. On Saturday morning I hurried out the door as if I was going to school, but I walked to the neighbor's apartment. Together we went to the church.

I liked the church service. These Christians sang lovely songs, and they seemed so happy. They hugged one another and smiled a lot. I decided that Christians were not so bad after all. I decided to return to the church every time I could. I learned to pray as Christians do, to Jesus and to God. I prayed that my Grandmother would allow me to go to church, so I would not have to sneak out of the apartment.

I made many new friends at the Adventist church, and I began to feel at home there. People told me they missed me when I did not come.

By the time Grandmother found out that I was going to church on Saturdays, I had decided that I wanted to be a Christian. What they taught me

made so much more sense than worshipping idols made of wood or brass, idols that never changed their expression, never seemed moved by Grandmother's prayers.

Grandmother was angry that I had gone against her wishes, but she realized that I was determined to go.

When my older brother came home for a visit, Grandmother told him to try to talk some sense into me about going to church. But my brother surprised her and said, "Why should she stop? Church is good. Let her go." Later I learned that while he was away, he had visited a Christian church and had learned that Christians are good people.

Since my brother had defended me, my grandmother stopped objecting to my going to church. I have been going for two years now. I have invited many of my friends to come to church with me.

### Byato

Byato [bee-AH-toh] was the first person I invited to church.

I took her to meet my Christian neighbor. The old woman showed us some children's books and a children's Bible. Byato wanted to read the books. Later when I invited her to go to church with me, she said she would.

Like me, Byato did not tell her family where she was going. She was afraid they would not approve. But after a few weeks Byato's mother became suspicious and asked to see the school work she was doing on Saturday. Byato began doing extra work on Friday, so when she returned home from church on Saturday she would have something to show her mother. Byato did not yet know that lying is a sin.

Byato's mother suspected that she was going somewhere else, because the public schools did not hold classes every Saturday. Byato's mother knew that Byato kept a diary, so one day she read it and learned that Byato was going to church instead of school. When Byato got home that day, her mother asked her again where she was going on Saturday. Once more Byato told her she was going to school.

Her mother just smiled as she listened to Byato explain where she had been. She knew that Byato had not gone to school. After that, Byato had to stop going to church for two months. Then one day her mother told her that she had read some articles about Christians and decided that it was OK if she went to church again. Byato was so happy, and so was I! Now the two of us could go to church again together.

### **Enkhmaa**

Another friend that I invited to church is Enkhmaa [ENKH-mah]. First I invited her to visit my neighbor friend, just as I had invited Byato. We talked about God and prayed together. Enkhmaa knew a little bit about Christians, but she had never gone to a Christian church. She liked what the neighbor lady told us and decided to go to church with Byato and me.

We decided to meet at a certain place and walk to church together. Enkhmaa told her grandmother that she was going to church, and her grandmother told her parents. At first they did

not like that she was going. They tried to stop her from attending church by giving her extra work to do on Saturday mornings. Sometimes she asked her parents to wake her up early on Saturdays so she could finish her work in time to go to church. But her parents slept in and did not wake her in time.

Finally after a year of sneaking off to church, Enkhmaa's parents agreed to let her go. Now all three of us can go to church together. We love going to church because we have found God there. We have learned to pray and know that we can ask our pastor and Sabbath School teacher to pray for us. Our parents are happy at the changes that they see in our lives.

Thank you for giving your mission offerings in Sabbath School. Those offerings have helped people like me learn about God.

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**Mongolmaa, Byato, and Enkhmaa** are 15 years old and in the eighth grade in the same school in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

# Let's talk

- ? When was the last time you heard something so exciting that you had to tell your friends. What was it that excited you? Have you
- shared your faith with a friend? What happened? What happened when Mongolmaa [MAWN-gohl-ma'a] shared her faith with her friends? Do you think they would have learned about Jesus if Mongolmaa hadn't invited them to church?
  - ? All three girls lied about what they were doing on Sabbath mornings. What would you tell a friend who was lying in order to
  - attend church? Is it ever OK to lie, even for a good reason, such as going to church?

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Praise God that now these girls have found Christ and are allowed to attend church. Pray that they will continue to be a shining light to their families and that their families will come to know Jesus as well.*

## GraceLink Connection: Service.

*Tsoge tried many different ways to share her faith with her sister.*



Tsoge

# Sisters in Christ

Tsolmontuya

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

I am Tsoge (t'SOH-geh), and I live in a town in Mongolia.

One day some people came to our door and invited us to attend a meeting that night in the town's culture hall. They gave me a paper telling about the meeting, and I decided to go.

People were singing as I entered the hall. I realized this was a Christian meeting. I did not know much about Christians, but I was interested, so I sat down to listen. A Mongolian man talked about what happens to us when we die—that we know nothing. But when Jesus comes again, those who love Him will go to heaven to live with Him. This was all new to me, but I decided to attend all the meetings.

### An Invitation and a Dilemma

After I attended several meetings, someone invited me to church on Saturday. I told them I could not go because Saturday is the only day our apartment has

hot water, and I must help Mother wash clothes that day. Later the speaker talked about Sabbath, God's special day, the day He wants us to spend time especially with Him. I decided to try to go to church.

But the laundry still had to be done. So on Sabbath morning I got up extra early and washed the clothes as quickly as I could so I could go to church.

"Why are you hurrying?" my mother asked.

I did not think she would allow me to attend a Christian church, so I told her I was going to a church to learn Korean. It was a lie, but I rationalized that the leader *did* teach Korean at the church, but not on Saturdays. I held my breath waiting for my mother's response.

"You may go," she said, "but hurry back, and don't listen to any religious nonsense."

I finished the clothes as quickly as I could and hurried to the church. From then on I got up early to wash clothes before church. I prayed that when my mother

found out I was going to church to worship, she would understand and not forbid me to go.

### Praying Together

My older sister, Tselmon [SEHL-mawn], came home from university for the summer. She saw my Bible and told me that she had become a Christian, too. "What church do you attend?" she asked.

"The Adventist Church," I replied.

"That is the wrong church," Tselmon said. "But there are no Sunday-keeping churches here. When I finish college, I will start a church here. Then you can attend church with me."

"But I like my church," I told her.

I asked my sister if we could pray together, and she agreed. I prayed first, then my sister prayed. After a few moments, she started saying things I could not understand. I was surprised and tried not to laugh.

"Why did you talk like that?" I asked after we prayed.



“Speaking in tongues is a gift from the Holy Spirit,” Tselmon said.

She explained what she believed, and she listened as I tried to explain what I had learned and why I go to church on Saturday. She insisted her church was right, and turned down my invitations to visit my church.

### A Turnaround

Every chance I had I invited Tselmon to church. When I told her that several young people her age attend the church, she finally agreed to visit. She is a natural leader, and soon she was teaching us Christian songs. I asked the church members to pray with me for Tselmon.

Some of the church leaders and I decided on a way to get her to come to church on Sabbath. I told her they wanted to talk to her, and she agreed to come. The church leaders prepared a special sermon explaining the Sabbath.

Tselmon realized that God had not changed His Sabbath to Sunday. She asked her church pastor about the Sabbath, but she was not satisfied with his answer.

Tselmon found it difficult to leave her home church, and she asked me to pray for her while she sorted out her dilemma. The whole congregation and I prayed that Tselmon would follow God’s will.

Tselmon decided to leave her church and worship with the Adventists. Her pastor came all the way to our town to try to convince her to change her mind, but she stood firm. She told him, “I have prayed about this, and God has shown me a better way. I must follow.” A few months later my sister and I were baptized together.

### God’s Unexpected Plan

My parents were concerned that I was spending too much time in church. They sent me to a school far from home where I would focus on my school work instead of religion. The school director told me that if I shared my Christian faith I would be expelled.

I knew no one and was lonely living in the dormitory. Then I saw some girls talking, and I joined them. One girl’s wallet was open, and I saw a card that said, “God loves you.” Later I asked her if she was a Christian. She was! God had sent me to my prayed-for friend.

When I went home for vacation, I returned to church. My friends at church said God had sent me to the school to share my faith. They gave me literature about the effects of smoking and drinking. During a discussion on health, I gave the literature to my classmates. The teacher liked that.

The next time I returned home, I took back some books and Bibles to share. My Christian friend’s parents own a café near the school, and they let us use it for meetings on Saturdays. Some Adventists from Australia came to town. They held a health fair and gave out literature and clothes. Even the school’s director came to the fair to have her blood pressure checked. The people loved what we did for them, and I did not get into trouble with the school. My parents had sent me away to separate me from my church, but God sent me there to share His love.

Thank you for giving your Sabbath School mission offering every week. That money bought the Bibles and literature I shared with others. I am so happy that God has used me to influence my sister and my classmates. I don’t know what my future holds, but I know that God has a plan for me—and for you.

---

**Tsoge (Tsolmontuya)** is 17 years old and is studying in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

# let's talk

- ?
- How did Tsoge, the girl in today’s story, help her sister discover God’s true church? *[She did not hide her faith from her sister, but asked her to pray with her. She invited her to church programs, even inviting her to teach the members Christian songs. She invited friends her sister’s age to their home and urged her sister to join them for activities in church.]*
  - How have others shared their faith with you and helped you grow in your knowledge of Jesus? How can you share your faith with someone in your family or neighborhood who does not know God as you do? *[Ask for specific responses and write them on a board for all to see.]*

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that Tsoge and her sister’s faith will draw other members of their family to want to know Jesus.*

## GraceLink Connection: Community.

*A young boy follows friends down a dangerous path. Then God helps them onto the right path.*



Otgoonoo

# A Matter of Influence

Otgoonoo

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

I was 9 years old when I first heard about Jesus. My best friend invited me to church, so I went. I learned that God loves me, but at the time religion did not seem important. I decided I would rather hang out with my friends than sit in church.

### A Glue Habit

I wanted my friends to respect me, so I tried being tough. I became a bully. Other kids learned not to mess with me. Some guys introduced me to smoking and drinking. I stopped caring about school, and I rarely did any homework. I spent a lot of time with these older guys, doing whatever they did. They sniffed glue to get high, so I tried it. At first I did not like it, but soon I was craving the high.

My friends and I spent all our money on glue. We discovered that if we sniffed enough glue we would have hallucinations. I heard noises that were not there

and saw things that did not exist. When we were high, we would laugh at one another for no reason. I thought we were having a great time.

One day we sniffed so much glue that we passed out. When we regained consciousness, we were in the hallway of an apartment building. We had no idea how we had gotten there. But we were still high and did not care. We had spilled glue on our skin and clothes. We knew the glue was flammable, but we started lighting matches and tossing them back and forth, laughing like giddy children.

Some friends found us and managed to make us stop lighting matches. "Go home and sleep this off," one of them urged. We did. When we were sober again, we saw the glue all over us and were disgusted at how we had put our lives in danger.

### A New Habit

We all knew that sniffing glue was dangerous and we should stop, but we were so addicted

that we wondered if it was possible to quit.

One day we went out to play pool. As we prepared to start playing, we heard noises coming through the wall. Someone was singing. I'm not sure what prompted our next action, but we dropped our pool cues and went to investigate. We walked next door and peeked in through the partly-open door. The people were watching a movie. It looked interesting, so we stood outside and watched. After the movie, a man stood to speak.

We realized this was a religious meeting. We were curious, but too embarrassed to go inside. So we listened through the door. At the end of his presentation, the speaker invited everyone back the next evening. My friends and I decided to return to hear what *he* would say.

For four days my friends and I stood outside the door of the hall listening to the meeting. On the fifth day we decided to go inside and sit down to listen.

"You go first," I said to one of

my friends.

"No, you go first," he said.

After a few minutes to gain our courage, we walked inside together. Some people standing near the door greeted us warmly and showed us to some chairs. It felt good to sit down after all that standing! We attended the entire seminar, four days outside and five days inside the church.

On the last night of the meetings, the pastor gave out cards inviting those present to fill out their names and mark any of the boxes they wished. My friends and I decided to fill out the cards and ask for Bible studies.

We knew we needed to change our lives, and we decided that it would be easier to make the change together. So the same friends I used to sniff glue with, smoke with, and get drunk with now spent our time discussing what we were learning from the Bible. We helped one another

when the temptation to smoke or sniff glue was too strong. Since we were all studying together, we grew spiritually together. And best of all, there was no one to tempt us to return to our old ways. Together, with God's help, we overcame our bad habits and stuck with our new lifestyle.

When we completed our Bible studies, all four of us decided to become followers of Jesus. We were so happy that God had drawn us into the church and brought us to a faith we had never known.

### **Making Music**

We started singing in the church choir and then started our own little singing group. One of the church members taught me to play the guitar. When the pastor went to the capital city for a seminar, he left us in charge of the church music. We were honored by the pastor's trust, and did our best not to disappoint him. It felt

good to know that our church needed us.

We continue to study the Bible with our pastor. He plans to start another worship group in another part of town, and he has asked us to help him lead this new church. We want to be ready to take our place as church leaders.

I have made some grave mistakes in my life, and I thank God for saving me from myself. I now understand the importance of education and I am praying for a way to complete my schooling. I know that God has good things in store for me, if I only trust Him.

When I think of my life so far, and the terrible detour I took with drugs and alcohol, I praise God for putting me back on the right path toward eternal life. I was trying to find happiness my own way and was going nowhere. But now I have found God, who can give me true and lasting happiness.

The mission offering you give in Sabbath School pays for the hall in which we worship and for the books and lesson guides we use. Your offerings helped lead me to Jesus. Thank you!

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**Otgoonoo** [AWT-gawn-aw] is 19 years old. He is studying accounting in Erdenet, Mongolia.

# let's talk

? Trace Otgoonoo's decline into his dangerous lifestyle. What did he list as the first symptom that something was not right? [He became a bully.] What led to Otgoonoo starting to sniff glue, and why did he continue doing it? Discuss the dangers of sniffing glue. What makes it so popular? [It is cheap and readily available; it seems so "harmless." But it is as dangerous and addictive as many hard drugs.]

? When Otgoonoo was younger, he found church boring and decided not to go. What drew Otgoonoo and his friends back to God? What does their experience tell you about God's loving care for each of us?

? Influence is a powerful force. Otgoonoo let his friends draw him into drugs, and eventually he and his friends decided together to attend the religious meetings and study the Bible. They helped one another trust God to help them break their old habits. Think about how your friends influence your life. Do they influence you for bad? For good? How do you influence your friends' lives? What can you do to influence one of your friends for Jesus?

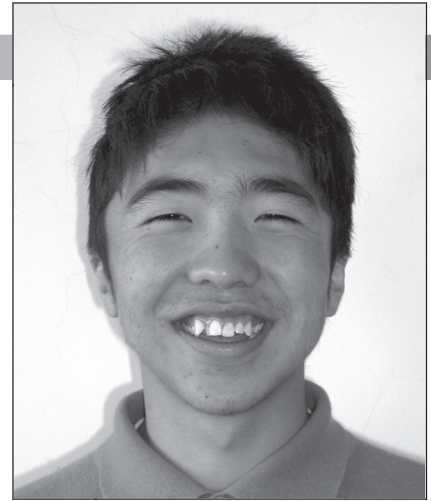
**PRAY** pray **PRAY**

*Pray that God will use Otgoonoo and his friends to lead other searching teens to Jesus. Pray, too, that God will show each member of the class how they can influence someone they know to follow Christ.*



**GraceLink Connection: Worship.**

*When a boy in Mongolia learned the truth about Christians, it changed his life.*



Enkhtaivan

# Changing My Mind About God

Enkhtaivan

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

I hated Christians. I did not know much about them, but I knew I hated them. They were always calling on God to fix everything for them. They ignored people around them and lived in their own little world. I had no time for anything Christian. I spent my time playing video games with my friends.

## **A Life-changing Movie**

Then one day as I was flipping from one TV channel to the next, I stopped at what looked like an interesting movie. As I watched the movie I realized that it was about a Christian man who lived in America. I realized that Christians are nothing like what I had thought. They love others, and they share their faith and their possessions with others. I thought about my own life. I did not love others as Christians did.

I did not help others who were in need. The movie made me think about God; it made me think about becoming a better person.

"God," I prayed, "if You are real, if You live, please let me know. I want to find You."

The next Saturday as I walked along the street, I met a friend of mine named Od. I had not seen Od for more than a year, and he looked different. Better. Happier. I was glad to see him, and he seemed glad to see me, too. But he could not stop and visit. I asked him why he was hurrying, and he explained that he was on his way to church. "Come with me," he invited.

Od's invitation surprised me. I did not know he was a Christian. But I realized that my friend's invitation was an answer to my prayer. I turned around and walked with him to a nearby church.

I had never visited a Christian church, so I was a little nervous. But the people welcomed me and

seemed genuinely happy to see me. I sat next to Od and shared his Bible during lesson study. Later, as I listened to the sermon, I felt sure that God was speaking to me.

After I returned home that afternoon, I wished I had asked for a Bible. I knocked on a neighbor's door and asked if he had a Bible. "I do," he said. He went to get it and held it out to me. "I never read it," he said. "You are welcome to borrow it if you want."

## **Life-changing Book**

I thanked him and returned to my home to start reading the Bible. Once I started I could not stop. I read that Bible every free minute. I took it to school and read during class. I did not understand it all, but I could not keep myself from reading. It was all so new, so wonderful, to me. During breaks at school when I would usually talk to my friends, I sat and read. At night when I

was supposed to do my homework, I picked up the Bible. I read through Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. I read all the way to Isaiah before I saw Od again.

When I told Od what I was reading, he suggested that I read the New Testament, which contains the life of Jesus. So I turned to Matthew and started reading. I read straight through to Revelation. I was so excited to learn about God. I realized that living according to God's Word would change my life.

### Changing My Life

I joined the new believers' class at Od's church. There we studied more deeply into God's will for His children. I compared all the things I was learning in church with what I was reading in the Bible, and I realized that it all was true. When I learned about the Sabbath, I started keeping the

Sabbath day holy. When I learned that my body is God's temple, I threw away my cigarettes.

But some things about my lifestyle were harder for me to change. Playing video games was a huge part of my life. I had spent many hours and lots of money playing them. Sometimes I even stole money from my mother so I could play these games at the video arcades. I realized it was wrong for me to spend so much time playing games, time I should spend studying, praying, and doing my homework. I prayed that God would help me spend more of my time with Him and less playing video games.

God pointed to other bad habits that needed to go, such as my bad language. As I saw each habit for what it was, I spent time praying about it. And God has given me the victory, helped me to change those bad habits for good

habits. Through this experience God has shown me that He has the power to help me overcome.

My family was surprised when they saw the changes in my life. I told my mother that I had given my life to God, and I invited her to come to church with me. But she was not interested. "I am glad for what church has done for you," she said. "You seem happier. And you are easier to get along with! But church is not for me."

I did not give up, but kept inviting her to visit the church. Finally, several months later, my mother agreed to visit the church with me.

### A Life Changed

I am a changed person. I have a long way to go, however, and I continue to ask God to have first place in my life and to help me through life's temptations. I want to tell others what Jesus has done in my life. So many people in my homeland of Mongolia do not know Jesus. I want to tell them that Jesus loves them so much He died for them. Mongolia needs pastors, and if it is God's will for me, I want to answer God's call and work for Him.

---

**Enkhtaivan** is 18 years old and lives in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

# Let's talk

- ? What did Enkhtaivan think of Christians at the beginning of his story? What happened to change his mind? [*He saw a movie on television about a Christian man in America and realized that Christians are kind, generous, and loving.*]
- ? What was Enkhtaivan's prayer in response to his new understanding of God? [*"God, if You are real, if You live, please let me know. I want to find You."*] How did God answer Enkhtaivan's prayer? [*Enkhtaivan met his friend Od, who was on his way to church. God impressed Od to invite Enkhtaivan to join him, and he did.*]
- ? Name some changes in Enkhtaivan's life. How do these changes show that God was giving him strength to overcome? [*Enkhtaivan began reading a Bible and could not put it down. Enkhtaivan saw other areas of his life that needed changing. With God's help, Enkhtaivan found victory over foul language, wasting time playing video games, and other bad habits.*]
- ? Think about the changes Enkhtaivan made. What areas in your life need to become Christ-like?

**PRAY** pray  
**PRAY**

*Pray that class members will let God show them areas of their life that need changing.*

## GraceLink Connection: Worship.

*A young girl accepts an invitation to play basketball that changes her life and her family forever.*



Munguntseeseg

# A Game, a New Hope

Munguntseeseg

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

**M**y name is Mungoo [MUHN-goo], and I live in Mongolia. I learned about the Adventist church when a friend invited me to play on a girls' basketball team. When I arrived at the gym, many people were waiting to start. But before the game began, players on both teams formed a circle and prayed together. I had been to a Christian church before, and I had seen people pray. But this was different. Everyone held hands while one person prayed from her heart. I liked that.

We had great fun playing, and after the game we shared a snack and some prizes. Then the pastor invited everyone to visit his church. Three other girls and I decided to go.

We arrived at the church and found just a few people there. We sat down and listened to them sing. As more people came in, they welcomed us so warmly.

I don't remember much about

that first church service except that the people were so nice and seemed genuinely glad that we had come. We felt as if we belonged, and we decided to come back again.

My friends and I attended church as often as we could. We all live far away, and we do not always have the bus money to travel to the church. And on those Sabbaths when we cannot come, we are sad, for we miss the people and the love we have been shown there. We like to listen to the pastor's sermons because we know that what he says is from the Bible. We also like the new songs we're learning to sing.

Soon after we started attending the church, the pastor invited us to join a special Bible-study class for new believers. I decided to go. The first lesson we discussed taught that everyone is a sinner. I had never thought of myself as a sinner; I am a good girl. But as I listened, I realized I *am* a sinner and I make many mistakes. After a few weeks the church had a little evangelistic meeting, and a

student missionary from America came to speak. I learned many things at those meetings.

### Objections Arise

When I first started going to church, my mother was not too concerned. She knew that often I started things but soon gave them up, and she hoped that's what would happen with my interest in religion too. But my desire to attend church grew stronger each day, and after a couple months, Mother became worried.

When I returned home from church I often told my sister what I had learned. One day she asked me, "Why do you have to worship just one god?" She told me that she thought that there were many gods, and they all live peacefully, so why don't we worship them all, or at least several. Why do we worship just one God? My sister was studying Buddhist teachings and was thinking of becoming a Buddhist nun.

I was not sure how to answer her question, but I answered the best I could and continued shar-

ing what I was learning in church each week. Little by little my sister became more interested in religion. One day she said, "Now I want to go to church with you."

My mother was not sure what to think when my sister started attending church with me. Mother did not want my sister to become a nun. She wanted her to marry and have children. But when my sister started attending church with me, Mother was not sure what to do with us. I know that my father does not like us going to the Christian church, but he does not say anything unless we arrive home late. I thank God that we have this much freedom.

I'm happy that my sister is attending church with me. I can tell that she is open to God's teachings, and I pray that soon she will give her heart to God. I thank God that I can talk to her and share my concerns and my hopes with her. It makes it easier to be a Christian in a non-Christian home. My sister has invited a friend to come to church with us, and I have invited a neighbor.

### Asking for God's Help

I know that my parents are watching me, watching what I say and do. One Friday evening I told my mother that I was going to church the next day. She told me that she was going to be home and wanted me to stay home as well. We had a little disagreement, and I said some unkind words.

The next day I woke up feeling bad about what I had said to my mother. I remembered something the pastor had said, that we cannot come to worship and praise God if we have had a disagreement with someone. I prayed and asked God to forgive me, then I went to my mother and apologized to her. She was surprised and touched that I had asked her forgiveness. She forgave me. I asked Mother to help me be a better person. She smiled and gave me bus money so I could go to church. But she urged me to hurry home as soon as church was over.

I hurried off to church having learned a new lesson: if I do not love and respect my parents,

how can I love and respect God? I rejoiced that day, knowing that God had helped me make things right with my mother.

Others noticed that I was changing and asked what had happened. In Mongolia it is considered rude to pass someone you know on the street and not stop to talk for a few minutes. I did not like to stop and talk before, but I have learned that it is important to be friendly. Now people are noticing that I am more interested in them than I once was.

That basketball game turned out to be a life-changing event for me. And I thank God for the friend who invited me to go. I want to invite others to experience God's love, starting with my own family.

The mission offerings you give every week in Sabbath School are building up the church in Mongolia. Thank you!

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**Munguntseeseg** is 17 and lives in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where she is in her last year of high school.

# Let's talk

? In this story how did God use young people to bring someone to know Jesus? *[A friend invited Mungoo to a basketball game; the pastor invited those at the game to visit the church; Mungoo attended and invited others, including her sister and a neighbor; her sister has invited a friend.]*

? Mungoo misses church when she cannot attend. Why is it important that we attend church? Can't we worship God just as well at home? *[Worshipping with other Christians and fellowshiping with them helps build our faith and gives us the opportunity to encourage others. The Bible says we should not "give up meeting together . . . but let us encourage one another. . . ." (Hebrews 10:25, NIV).]*

**PRAY** pray **PRAY**

*Pray that Mungoo and her sister will continue to grow in Christ and will continue to share their new faith with their family and friends.*



# Program

## “Into All the World”

**Congregational Song** “Christ for the World,”  
*The SDA Hymnal, No. 370*

**Welcome**

**Scripture** See below

**Prayer**

**Program** “Into All the World”

**Offering** Ask kindergarten and primary children to sing one or more of the songs they have learned this quarter as the offering is taken.

**Closing Song** “Lift High the Cross”  
*The SDA Hymnal, No. 362*

**Participants:** Several narrators (four are listed, but use more or fewer persons as your situation permits). *[Choose participants who will practice their parts and present them clearly. While participants do not have to memorize their parts, they should be familiar enough with the content that they can present the material with confidence.]*

\* \* \*

**Scripture:** “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14).

**Narrator:** We have often thought of the mission field as being “over there,” somewhere far from home. We tend to think of the mission field as being a poor land, where people struggle to survive, where they live in simple housing and tend a small garden plot to feed their families. While this picture may be wrong, some of the most challenging mission fields are in the most affluent countries. Today we will hear about three of these countries

in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. We should come away with a clearer idea of the challenges of mission to the affluent.

**Presenter 1:** Japan is a land of contrasts. Huge manufacturing plants produce cars, cameras, and sophisticated electronics. Women dressed in traditional kimonos [kee-MOH-nohs] bow gracefully in greeting in the shadow of Mount Fuji. Water trickles through well-tended gardens, and around miniature pagodas and Asian altars. The Japanese people are a study in contrast. While the older generation still cherishes the traditions of ancestor worship, hard work, and loyalty, young people reach out and grasp modern materialism.

Japan is modern; it is materialistic; and it is secular. Most Japanese claim no personal religion, though many still follow some religious traditions, such as honoring their ancestors with gifts and prayers on the New Year. But religion makes little difference in their daily lives.

Only 1.5 percent of the population of Japan claim to be Christian. And it seems that the rest of the people are not interested in learning that Jesus loves them. When Adventist missionaries first entered Japan more than 100 years ago, the people responded and the church grew rapidly. But as the Japanese economy prospered after World War II, interest in religion waned. Materialism became the god of the Japanese.

While Japan’s economy soared, its birthrate has decreased. It has become difficult for the Adventist Church to maintain a constant membership. Public evangelism has not worked well in Japan, and only a handful of new believers are baptized each year.

How does one reach people who are too busy or too preoccupied to care that Jesus loves them? Radio and television programs have had a measure of success. But church leaders believe that the future of evangelism lies in the Internet. They have developed an innovative plan of evangelism cen-

tered on the World Wide Web. Interactive Web sites, streaming audio and video allow people to watch or listen to God's word in the privacy of their home. And online Bible studies will answer their questions. Every outreach program will tie into the Internet in some way.

The potential for this new thrust of evangelism in Japan is high, and Adventists of all ages are excited about the prospects. Young people are helping design the Web site and maintaining it. Others host the chat areas and question-and-answer sites.

All of this costs money, more money than the believers in Japan have. Part of today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help fund Japan's online outreach.

**Presenter 2:** Korea is another sophisticated country. One third of South Koreans are Christians, and more than 175,000 are Adventists. That makes a ration of one Adventist for every 400 people in Korea. But there are still areas where there is no strong Adventist presence.

One of those regions is a popular island vacation spot, Ulreung [OOL-reng] Island. The majority of people living on the island worship at the shrines and pray to their ancestors. Several Christian churches dot the island, but so far, no Adventist church has been established.

While tourism brings money to the island, little of it benefits the average resident of this mountainous island. Most residents eke out a living fishing for cuttlefish or farming on steep hillsides.

Ahn and Soon are in their 70s. They raise a few vegetables on a small plot of land in the mountains of Ulreung Island. During the fishing season, Soon mends nets for the fishing boats to earn money for clothes and other necessities. Ahn injured his foot, and it would not heal. The wound

became infected, and he could not walk on it. If he wanted to go somewhere, someone had to carry him.

One day, Soon met the Adventist pastor who had recently moved to the island. He learned of Ahn's injury and suggested she put a charcoal poultice on her husband's wound. Soon did, and the wound improved immediately. Before long Ahn could walk again. The couple was impressed that this Christian man cared enough to help them. They invited the pastor to tell them about his God, and not long afterward Ahn and Soon were baptized. The couple still has challenges, but they are trusting God to help them instead of the idols that once sat in the corner of their home.

One Sunday, Soon received a phone call from the police. They were holding one of her sons in jail and demanded one million won (\$1,200) in fines. Soon did not have the money, and no one in her family had that much money. She had no idea where she could get the money to secure her son's release.

Soon offered the police the little money she had, but the police refused a partial payment. Soon went to her pastor to ask what she could do. The deadline was just hours away, so the pastor and Soon prayed until she felt peace. The pastor convinced the police to give the family another day, and the family managed to borrow the needed money from friends.

When Soon's son was released from jail, he cried. He could not believe that his parents and their friends would help them in this way. He had been cold toward his parents' new faith, but after seeing how Christians help one another, he agreed to attend worship with his parents and the handful of believers on the island. Recently Soon's son and daughter-in-law were baptized, and he is trying to repay the debt his par-

ents incurred for him.

Neighbors have seen the changes in this family, and they wonder what has happened to change them. Soon and Ahn tell them that Jesus has saved them and is changing their hearts.

The family still is poor, but they are experiencing God's blessing.

The green hills of Ulreung Island are barren of the Three Angels' Messages. Until recently only four believers lived here. The Ahn family and two other new believers joined the group as the first native believers on the island. They meet in the front room of the pastor's home, located on a quiet lane on the side of the mountain. They need to grow, but they cannot without a larger place to worship.

Part of today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a church and evangelistic center for Ulreung Island. The members have determined that the community needs a children's center, a preschool, classrooms to teach computer skills, cooking, stress management, stop smoking classes, English lessons, and Bible studies. All of this can be done in a simple chapel with one or two classrooms; it will make a world of difference to the people who struggle to live in paradise.

**Presenter 3:** Taiwan combines the modern and the ancient. Cars, trucks, and motorcycles clog the busy streets of Taiwan's cities, but along residential streets one finds evidence of ancient rituals and religions. A month-long festival honors the dead. People light lanterns and set them afloat on rivers to help the spirits of the dead find their way; pigs also are sacrificed to the gods, and plates of food are offered to the gods who, they believe, wander the island until the gates of Hades are once more closed.

The Adventist Church has

made progress in Taiwan, but so much needs to be done yet. Fewer than one out of every 5,000 people in Taiwan is an Adventist. Some regions of this small island have no Adventist presence.

Part of today's offering will help fund teams of Global Mission pioneers to establish new congregations in five of these unreached regions of Taiwan. These local lay people, living on a small stipend, will stay at least two years, living with and working with the people, seeking to share God's love with them and leading them to the Savior who created and redeemed them. These people need to know that the dead do not wander the streets searching for food or for help reaching the next reincarnation. They need to be freed from the devil's lies and pointed to the Savior.

**Narrator:** Three countries, three distinct cultures, three distinct needs. But they all have one thing in common. Believers in each country want to share the love of Jesus with their neighbors, and they need our help. We can supply that help today with our offering. We can send a message to hearts bound by fear and superstition that there is no fear in Jesus. God loves them and wants them to spend eternity with Him. We cannot go to tell them, but we can pray, and we can give, so that others can go. Will you pray? Will you give so someone can tell these children of God that He wants them to come home?

*[Offering]*

## You Do Make A Difference!

*By-ihrd la!* That is how Mongolian believers express their gratitude for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to Northern Asia-Pacific Division three years ago. Part of that offering helped to provide meeting places for believers throughout Mongolia. When the offering was taken, Mongolian Adventists numbered just over 200. Today they have more than tripled their membership. The central church, which once met in a room in the mission office, now worships in a lovely new church in the heart of the capital city, Ulaan Baatar.

Several other congregations meet in and around Ulaan Baatar, including the Amazing Grace Church, which meets in this *ger*. The Adventist Church helped them purchase a larger

*ger* when they outgrew their other places of worship.

Two years ago the believers in Darhan, the second city in Mongolia, met in a rented hall. Today they meet in a former wedding hall that stands on a hill where all can see. Such meeting halls will help the Church in Mongolia grow in strength and in numbers. And for this, our brothers and sisters in Mongolia say "by-ihrd la," thank you!



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# Northern Asia-Pacific Division

