



mission
Teen

**East-Central Africa Division
Fourth Quarter 2006**

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Mission Teen

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Leader's Planner

East-Central Africa Division

The Challenge

The church in eastern Africa is growing rapidly and now has more than 2.1 million members. A healthy growth in membership requires additional churches, and churches require pastors, teachers, and other workers.

The countries being featured this quarter are suffering economic hardships and times of uncertainty. They will focus their attention and the funds they will receive from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on improving the quality of life through medical care and education.

The Opportunities

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

- A maternity-surgical ward at Songa Adventist Hospital in southern Congo. It is the only medical facility within hundreds of miles.
- A new union mission office in northeast Congo, an area of high church growth.
- A classroom block for Ethiopia Adventist Secondary School, a school of about 1,000 students in southern Ethiopia that now holds classes in the Adventist college with which it shares a campus.
- A health center on the campus of Bugema University, which will serve the university and the surrounding population, which have no other medical recourse.
- Surgical suite and ward at Kendu Adventist Hospital in western Kenya.

GraceLink Connections

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

Service	5, 11, 15, 19
Grace	9, 17, 23, 27
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East-Central Africa Division

The East-Central Africa Division includes Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Congo

Democratic Republic of the Congo is a country whose people have suffered from decades of war, natural calamities, and political mismanagement. This quarter two projects will receive help from our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

Songa Adventist Hospital in southern Congo is the only urgent-care medical facility within several hundred miles. Besides offering medical treatments, its staff fans out into surrounding villages to care for those who cannot get to the hospital. Songa needs a maternity ward to help assure a safer environment for newborns and their mothers.

The church has grown rapidly in the East Congo region in spite of years of war and natural disasters. (A volcanic eruption in early 2002 nearly destroyed the city of Goma and killed dozens of residents.) The region has established a new union mission and needs an office from which to serve the expanding church in the region. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth

Sabbath Offering will help provide the office space for this new field.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the oldest nations in the world and one of the first Christian nations. Even so, about 40 percent of Ethiopians are Muslim.

The first Adventist missionaries arrived in Ethiopia in 1921 and established schools, clinics, a press, and a hospital in the capital city (which was taken over by the government in 1976). Ethiopian Adventist College first opened its doors as a training school in 1947. It now has about 500 students. The secondary school at the college now enrolls more than 1,000 students, many of whom come from non-Christian homes.

The college and high school must share the college's administration building and classroom block, which makes learning difficult. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a separate classroom block for this large secondary school in southern Ethiopia, which hosts many non-Christian students.

Uganda

Uganda is a fertile land that had a healthy economy until the 1970s when political tyranny and war nearly destroyed the nation. Today warfare in the

north and west continues to trouble the people, and AIDS has ravaged the population, leaving millions in deep poverty.

Amid the economic woes of this nation, Bugema University, the Adventist university located an hour outside of the capital city, Kampala, spreads light and hope throughout Uganda. The school reaches out to help its neighbors while it educates its students for service.

Bugema has had a small health center that was designed to meet the medical needs of its staff and student body. The people living around Bugema also rely on this health center for their urgent medical needs. However, construction of a new road means

that the health center must be relocated. Part of this Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a larger and more comprehensive health center on the campus to serve Adventists and their neighbors who have no other medical facility nearby in times of medical crisis.

Kenya

Kenya is a predominantly agricultural economy that relies on tourism for needed income. But recent political unrest has hurt the economy. The Adventist Church is one of the largest Protestant denominations in the country, with almost 550,000 members, or roughly one Adventist for every 60 people.

Kendu Adventist Hospital lies near the shore of Lake Victoria in western Kenya. It is the primary medical facility in a region that suffers from malaria, a leading cause of sickness and death. This hospital includes a nursing school, which has trained nurses for many years. But recently the Kenyan government upgraded its requirements for nursing schools and the hospitals that host them. This means that the hospital must build a surgical suite and surgical ward that are completely separate from the medical ward. Part of this quarter's offering will help complete that surgical suite and ward, which are already under construction.

Resources

The *SDA Encyclopedia* (available in book form and on CD-ROM) contains more detailed information on the history of the church's work in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

National Geographic has featured articles on eastern Africa in the following issues: October 2005 (Danakil Desert, Ethiopia); September 2005 (special issue on Africa); October 2001 (Swahili coast); November 2002 (Kenyan wildlife), and November 1998 (colobus monkey).

Recipes for an international potluck to celebrate the foods and cultures of eastern Africa appear on pages 6, 8, and 10 of *Children's Mission*. Invite the children's divisions to sing a song in the languages of the featured countries.

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

Embassy of Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1800

New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington DC 20009 (202-234-7690) or fax (202-234-2609). Or contact the consular office, 1726 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 (202-234-7690 or 7691). For further information on this country, check the following Web site: www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0198161.html.

The Embassy of Ethiopia, 3506 International Dr., NW, Washington, DC 20008 (202-364-1200) or at info@ethiopianembassy.org. Embassy of the Republic of Kenya, 2249 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008 (202-387-6101), fax (202-462-3829), e-mail information@kenyaembassy.com, or visit their Web site at www.kenyaembassy.com.

Embassy of the Republic of Uganda, 5911 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011 (202-726-7100), fax (202-726-1727), e-mail ugembassy@aol.com, or visit their Web site at www.ugandaembassy.com.

For general information and photos from countries featured this

quarter, go to www.africaguide.com, and click on the country and information you wish. For wildlife photos, go to www.africaguide.com/wildlife.htm.

Video/DVD: The General Conference Office of Adventist Mission has produced a DVD video highlighting stories from the East-Central Africa Division and around the world in 3- 5- and 10-minute segments suitable for Sabbath School, church, or the interim period between these services. To get a copy of the DVD, contact Adventist Mission at www.AdventistMission.org/DVD.

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

During first quarter of 2007 the Euro-Africa Division will be featured. The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering projects include evangelistic outreach in Geneva, Switzerland, and Turkey, and the Adventist Media Center in Germany.

Second quarter 2007 will feature the Trans-European Division, with special projects in

GraceLink Connection: Service.

A boy makes a friend and brings him to Jesus.



Steve

A New Friend for Jesus

Steve Biko

Steve Biko [BEE-koh] is 12 years old. He lives with his parents and sister in Kendu Bay, a town on Lake Victoria in western Kenya. Steve and his family enjoy taking walks together. One day as they walked along the riverbank, they saw a man sitting in front of a little thatched hut. He looked young, but his shoulders drooped like an old man. They could tell he had been drinking.

Steve walked over to the man and said, "Hi. My name is Steve. May I be your friend?"

The man was surprised by the boy's question, but the smile on Steve's face relaxed him. "Sure, Steve," he said. "But why do you want to be my friend?"

"You look lonely and in need of a friend," Steve said honestly. "I just want to be your friend."

Steve learned that the man's name was Kibogo [kee-BOH-goh] and that he worked as a security guard when he could find work. But most of the time he sat in front of his hut and drank the local beer. Steve's parents called to him, and Steve had to go. But he

promised Kibogo that he would return again. He waved and ran to catch up with his parents.

Steve's Mission Project

Steve did come back to visit Kibogo whenever he went for a walk along the river. When Kibogo was sober, the two talked easily. But at other times, when Kibogo had been drinking, his actions frightened Steve, who learned to be careful around him.

One day during family worship, Father read Matthew 19:21, where Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (NIV).

"Dad," Steve said, "we are supposed to help the poor. Kibogo has nothing but rags to wear. Can we give him some clothes?"

Mother and Father looked at each other in surprise. They did not have much money, but they did have clothes to wear. "Yes," Father said. "I think we can find something for Kibogo."

Later that week Mother took

Steve to the marketplace to buy a shirt, trousers, shoes, and socks for Kibogo. That evening Father and Steve walked down to the river and found Kibogo sitting outside his thatched hut. "We brought you something," Steve said, giving Kibogo the bag. "I hope they fit." Kibogo opened the bag and pulled out the new clothes.

"Thank you," Kibogo said quietly. "But why did you do this?"

"Your clothes were torn," Steve said. "I wanted you to have something new." Steve waited a minute as Kibogo tried on his new shirt. It fit.

"You know, Kibogo," Steve said, "if you stopped drinking and smoking, you could save your money to buy food and clothes for yourself."

"I know," Kibogo said sadly. "I've tried to stop, but I can't. It's too hard."

Steve and his father chatted for a few minutes, then said goodbye to Kibogo and turned toward home. "How can we help him quit drinking?" Steve asked.

"I don't know," Father said.

“We can encourage him and pray for him. But he has to want to try before God will help him stop.”

“Help Me”

Sometimes Mother made some extra food, which Steve and Dad took to Kibogo. They often found Kibogo listening to his portable radio outside his hut. One day when Steve and his father arrived, Kibogo was upset. He had heard a news report saying that several people who drank the locally brewed beer had died. “That’s what I drink!” Kibogo said. “I don’t want to die! What can I do? Can you help me stop drinking this stuff?” he begged, holding out the bottle.

Steve and his father gladly agreed to help their friend. They visited Kibogo almost every day to encourage him and to pray with him. “Ask God to help you stop drinking,” Father urged. “Only God can free you from these addictions.”

Steve invited Kibogo to church, and Kibogo agreed to go. When he arrived, the members welcomed him warmly. During testimony time Kibogo stood and said, “I have been drinking

for many years, but I want God to forgive me and take away the desire to drink.” The church members praised God and hugged Kibogo, welcoming him to their family. Steve sat next to Kibogo in church to let him know that he was glad Kibogo was there.

Kibogo started attending church every week. Steve was excited to see how God was changing Kibogo’s life. One Sabbath at church Kibogo stood again and said, “I am done with drinking. I want to follow Jesus and be baptized.” People in the church said, “Praise God! Hallelujah! Amen!” Steve was so happy he could not speak; so he just smiled.

On the day that Kibogo was baptized, the pastor invited Steve and his family to the front to stand near their friend. He thanked them for being Kibogo’s friend and helping him find Jesus.

A New Man

Kibogo still lives in his small house. But now that he no longer drinks, he has found regular work as a security guard and is saving his money for a new house.

“Kibogo is my friend,” Steve

said. “We are brothers. We both belong to Jesus. Sometimes we go fishing together on Sundays.”

Today Kibogo is a church elder. He tells others about Jesus, just as Steve told him about Jesus.

We can learn from Steve, this 12-year-old boy who took literally God’s commandment to “go and tell the world, and make disciples.” We’re never too young—or too old—to share God’s love with others. And there are hundreds of ways we can do this. One easy way is to give a generous mission offering each week—not the change in our pocket, but our best gift. Lives will be changed, just as Kibogo’s was. 🌍



Steve’s friendship with Kibogo is called “friendship evangelism,” making friends for Jesus, meeting their needs, then inviting them to hear God’s word. Make a list of ways your class can help people in need. Underline the personal ways to reach people, then discuss how to safely and effectively approach someone in need and offer to help. Identify individuals or groups of people in your neighborhood who need a friend and prayerfully let God lead to ways you can influence those persons for Christ this week.



Pray that each member of your class will find someone to love for Jesus this week.

let’s talk

- ? Who besides Steve and his family influenced Kibogo to want to be a different person? *[The news broadcast that Kibogo heard told him the dangers of drinking the local beer, which had killed a number of people. This frightened Kibogo and prompted him to ask for the help he needed to stop drinking. Another important influence was the warm welcome he received from the people in Steve’s church. If they had avoided Kibogo, he might never have returned or made his decision to give his life to God.]*
- ? If you see a stranger in church, perhaps someone who is not well dressed or who smells of alcohol or tobacco, what can you do to let them know that God loves them? *[Greet them, tell them you are glad they are there. Do not shun them or make fun when you think they are not looking.]*

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

Daisy lost her arm in an accident, but she found a meaningful life in Jesus.



Daisy

Wonderfully Made

Daisy Osoga

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

I was a very active 12-year-old. I live in western Kenya, and in our home everyone worked hard to keep our home running. But we had chances to play, too, and I loved to run and climb trees.

Deadly Decision

One afternoon my friends and I went out to collect firewood for our mothers. We usually picked up the dead wood on the ground, but this day I saw a dead branch hanging high in a tree. I decided to climb the tree, knock the branch loose, and take my prize home to Mama. Climbing the tree was easy, but the branch I wanted was hung up, and freeing it was not as easy as I thought. The branch was bigger than I had calculated from the ground. My friends told me to come down from the tree, but once I was up there, I was determined to free that branch and take it home to Mama.

I leaned out from the tree trunk and pushed my weight against the dead branch to make it fall. Suddenly the branch broke with a

loud crack and fell to the ground. I lost my balance and fell to the ground too.

I was knocked unconscious, and when I opened my eyes, I was lying on the ground looking into the faces of my friends. They were crying. I tried to get up, but a sharp pain pierced my right arm and shoulder. I screamed and fell back to the ground.

A man working nearby heard the crying and came to see what had happened. He got some people to help him carry me to a nearby bush doctor.

Someone Help Me!

We did not have a medical clinic in our village, so we relied on bush doctors. These are people who set broken bones and treat sicknesses with herbs. The bush doctor looked at my arm, saw that I was losing lots of blood, and said he could not help me. The adults carried me to another bush doctor. Every bump made me want to scream in pain.

Someone told my parents what had happened, and they met

us at the second bush doctor's home. I must have looked terrible, because when my mother saw me she began crying hysterically. The second bush doctor said she could not treat me either and told my parents to take me to the district hospital.

It was a long way to the district hospital, but my parents and some adults carried me there. A nurse at the hospital saw that I had a broken arm and told my parents, "We don't treat broken bones here. Take her to a bush doctor. He can pull her arm into alignment and splint it."

"But two bush doctors sent us here," my father said. "They can't help her."

Instead of calling a medical doctor, the nurse told my parents to take me to a bush doctor who lived nearby. The people helping to carry me picked up the makeshift stretcher and set off for the third bush doctor's home.

This bush doctor examined my arm and agreed to set the broken bone. I screamed as he pulled my broken arm to align the bones.

Then he placed some sticks around the arm to hold the bone in place, wired the sticks, then wrapped my arm with cloths. Then he told my parents to bring me back in two days.

At home I tried to sleep, but the pain was unbearable. I could only lie on my mat and cry. Two days later we returned to the bush doctor. Mother told the doctor that my pain was worse and stretched from my neck all the way down my arm. The doctor examined my arm and saw that it was swollen and infected. "Broken bones take time to heal," he said. "Come back in two weeks."

We trudged back home, but the pain never let up. I could not sleep at night and could not go to school or help my mother during the day. All I could think about was wishing the pain would go away.

When the two weeks were finally up, we returned to the bush doctor. But when he examined my arm, it was clear to everyone that it was dangerously

infected. Gangrene had set in, and my mother realized that if I did not get proper medical care quickly, I might die.

The Adventist Hospital

My parents decided to get me to the hospital right away. A family friend suggested that my parents take me to Kendu Adventist Hospital instead of the district hospital, for the Adventist hospital had an internationally trained doctor on staff. We thanked her and set out on the long journey to Kendu Bay.

When we arrived at the Adventist hospital, the doctor rushed me to the operating room. He could not save my arm, but he could save my life. For the first time in almost three weeks I could sleep.

When I was well enough, I received physical therapy. My parents worried about how they would pay the hospital bill. But the doctor arranged with ADRA International to pay my bill.

When I was discharged from the hospital, ADRA sent me to

a rehabilitation center, where I learned to write with my left hand and do other tasks young African girls must do, such as cutting vegetables and carrying water. I learned to play and to operate a sewing machine.

After I had completed my rehabilitation, the center told my parents, "She cannot be a farmer with one arm. She needs an occupation." They paid my school fees so I could stay in school. I'm so glad!

Blessings Amid Pain

God brought good out of a bad accident. Loving doctors and nurses at Kendu Adventist Hospital saved my life and showed me God's love. Now we can help this hospital that helps so many. Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this December will help build a surgical ward to better serve the people of western Kenya. Plan to give a generous offering this Thirteenth Sabbath. 🌍

Daisy Osoga lives in Kendu Bay, Kenya, where she teaches first grade.

let's talk

? Daisy, the girl in today's story, went through a terrible experience that could have left her bitter and angry. But she chose to focus

- on the good that came from her accident. How did her spirit of thankfulness help her adjust to her disability? *[When we are angry about something bad that has happened, we cannot move forward. By focusing on the blessings she received, Daisy has been able to see life as a blessing, not a handicap.]*

? Have you ever had something really bad happen to you? How did you feel about it? How can you move beyond the bad and focus

- on happiness again? *[Ask Jesus to change your attitude, to help you see the good side of the situation. Prayer works wonders in changing our attitudes.]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray for those who are hurting from physical or emotional pain. Ask God to help them see that Jesus has never left them and that He will always be there for them.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

He ran away from God, then he ran away from home. When he returned home, he acted more like the elder brother than the repentant prodigal.



Samuel

The Stubborn Prodigal

Samuel Juma

I was a prodigal son, but in many ways I was even worse.

I grew up in a strong Christian home and joined the church when I was about 12 years old. But when I went on to study in a government boarding school during high school, things started going downhill. I started by choosing the wrong friends. They laughed at my church attendance, so I stopped going.

Some of my friends abused drugs and offered drugs to me. At first I said no, but they teased me about my pure life, and I gave in. I tried their drugs. The first drugs were free, but after that I had to pay for them. I didn't have pocket money, so I used the money my father had given me to pay my school fees to buy drugs. When that wasn't enough, I started selling drugs in order to afford my own. When we could not earn enough from selling drugs, we stole things from other students, from teachers, and from people in the community.

Running From Reality

I managed to complete my high school studies and took the graduation exams. I returned home to wait for the results, which would not be out for several weeks. But I knew the results already. Because I had used the school fee money to buy drugs, the bill was not paid, and I would not receive my exam results until the bill was paid.

When the exam results were posted, my parents told me to go get my results. My day of reckoning had come. I knew my parents would be hurt and angry when they learned the truth. So instead of telling them the truth, I ran away. I did not say goodbye or even leave them a note. I just left. No one knew where I had gone.

I fled to neighboring Tanzania and found a job. It did not pay much, but it kept me alive. When the job ended, I had nothing to do and no money. Life was hard. I thought about home, about my mom's good food and my family's good times. But I was sure that

they hated me for what I had done.

I realized that I needed to change my life. Drugs had been the source of many of my problems, so I stopped using them. But I knew that God was my only real hope to make things right.

I wrote a letter home, telling my family where I was. I admitted that I had let them down, but I did not apologize. A few weeks later I answered a knock on my door and found my father standing there. I felt deeply ashamed, but I invited him in.

"Why did you leave, Samuel?" he asked. I told him that I ran away because I feared their anger, but I denied stealing the money for school fees. I told him it was an accounting error. I think he knew the truth, but I refused to admit that I had stolen it.

Reluctant Prodigal

My father knew that I was not repentant yet. He asked me to go home with him, and I agreed. I learned that people had thought I was dead and had wept for me.

“Why did you do it?” they asked. I really had no answer.

My mother cried when she saw me, which made me feel even worse. “Why did you leave us?” she begged. Again I said that I feared they would be angry because I scored poorly on my exams. But she knew it was a lie.

I went to work on my father’s farm, hoping that this would help make up for some of the sadness I had caused.

Another Chance

When school started again, my father told me, “Go register for school.” I was glad to have another chance to complete high school. I studied hard to prove that I could succeed. But I still resisted my parents’ invitations to go to church.

I passed secondary school and went to Kendu Adventist Hospital to study nursing. Life at school was difficult. We were expected

to attend church every day, but I rebelled. I started having problems with people again, but I knew it was my fault. Still, I was not willing to admit I was wrong.

I tried one more act of rebellion—a terrible act that could have hurt a lot of people. I set fire to a cloth and tossed it into the fuel shed at the school. I slipped back to my dormitory and fell asleep while waiting for the explosion I knew would come. I thought I would die in that fire. But I awoke and realized that there was no explosion. I looked out my window, and I saw no sign of a fire, nothing out of the ordinary on campus. *God must have put out the fire*, I realized. Finally I gave up.

I visited the chaplain and confessed what I had done. I told him about the string of disappointments and wrong turns in my life, and I finished with a plea to help me turn my life over

to God. The chaplain counseled me and helped me pray a prayer of confession. Then he invited me to join his baptismal class. I never missed church or worship after that, and a few months later I was baptized.

Repentant at Last

God has changed me, and I don’t want to go back. Finally I talked to my parents about the things I had done in my life. I confessed that I had been on drugs during high school, that I had stolen the tuition money, and that I had rebelled against them and against God. Then I told them that God had changed me. He has taken away the hatred, the desire to hurt myself and others. I am one prodigal who never wants to go back to the way I was before I met Christ. 🌍

Samuel Juma has completed his nursing studies and is awaiting the results of his exams. He lives in Kenya.

Let's talk

? Have you ever been tempted to run away from something—a problem at school, a friend who betrayed your trust, or fear of being found out? Most of us try to hide from ourselves sometime in our lives. Why does it not work? *[Running from problems never solves them; it only makes them bigger. Facing our problems and resolving them may be embarrassing, but the results are much more desirable.]*

? In what ways is Samuel, the boy in today’s story, like the prodigal son, who left home and spent his inheritance unwisely (see Luke 15:11-25)? *[Let class discuss similarities.]* In what ways is Samuel different? *[Let class discuss differences.]* How were Samuel’s parents similar to or different from the prodigal son’s father? What can we learn from Samuel’s testimony that can save us much grief in life?

? It took Samuel a long time to reconcile with his family, friends, and neighbors. What prolonged his return to God and his family? *[Samuel refused to admit he was wrong. This same problem keeps us from forgiveness when we need it.]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Samuel’s repentance is sincere and that he will share his story in order to help other young people avoid the mistakes he made.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

Just days before final exams the Adventist students were suspended from school for disobeying school rules. Would they renounce their faith in order to take their exams?



Lena

Standing Up for God

Lena Obara

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

I am Lena. I live in western Kenya. When I started high school, I enrolled in a government boarding school. Several other Adventist students had enrolled too. We had been promised freedom to worship on Sabbath, but we soon realized that worshipping God on Sabbath would not be so easy.

The school assigned us a classroom to worship in for two hours. We explained to the principal that the entire Sabbath day is God's, not just two hours. If we did not end worship by noon, security guards made us leave the room. We also were denied our lunch, even though we had paid for it. When those steps did not discourage us from worshipping on Sabbath, we were forced to cut the grass with long, curved knives. The dean hoped that we would become discouraged and stop worshipping beyond our two hours. But we cut the grass joyfully, for we were doing it for Jesus.

Every Sabbath became a stand-off between the Adventist students and the staff.

Suspended From School

The school year was ending, and everyone was preparing for the final exams that would allow us to be promoted to the next grade. Then a week before final exams, the principal called all the Adventist students into his office. There we were told that we were being suspended from school for two weeks for disobeying the school rules. "You must leave campus immediately," he said. "Do not return to your rooms to get your books or other items. In two weeks, report back to the school with your parents. If you agree to limit your worship time to two hours, we will consider allowing you to be enrolled next year. Now leave the campus."

We were stunned. Exams would be over in two weeks! If we did not take them, we could not pass to the next grade. Some students had tears in their eyes, but we encouraged one another that we had been punished for worshipping God. We had done our best to honor God, and this was *His* problem to work out,

not ours. We prayed together and sensed a great peace settle over us.

Some of us lived near the school, but many lived quite some distance away. We invited those who had a long way to go to stay with us and return to their homes the next day.

I was especially concerned about one girl who had become an Adventist during the school year. Her parents did not even know she had been baptized. What would they say? We all agreed to pray especially for her.

Showdown of Faith

Two weeks later my mother and I reported back to school. The other students who had been suspended returned with their parents too. The school board spoke to each student and their parent at a different time, so we did not know what the others said. When Mother and I were called to go in, Mother was prepared. She is a principal in another school, so she knew the law regarding religious freedom. She had brought a copy of the

Education Act, which outlines a student's rights, including the freedom of religion. She asked the principal to read the freedom of worship portion to the committee. He refused to read it aloud, but said he was familiar with it. Then he told my mom that I had been suspended because I had defied the school's rules. "You must convince your daughter to learn to obey rules," the principal said.

Mother told the board that religious faith is a personal matter between an individual and God, and how I worship is my decision, not hers. The principal looked at me. I told him that the Bible says that Sabbath is from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday, that God has set the entire day aside for worship, not just two hours. The board members laughed, saying that was absurd. We were told to wait outside while they interviewed the others.

After everyone had been interviewed, we waited for the board to make their decision. It seemed to take forever. Finally at 7:00 that evening the board called the parents into the room and said our suspension would extend until the next Wednesday

in order to give the board time to make a more formal decision. But the parents refused. "Why don't you just expel the students?" the parents asked. "You are going to do that anyway, so do it now. That way they can be free to apply to a school that will be happy to have such honest, conscientious students."

Finally the board agreed that we could stay in school until the board had made its decision.

The Miraculous Broken Computers

When the meeting ended, we students were allowed to return to our dormitory rooms. We were eager to know how the exams had gone. Only then did we learn that God had stepped in to save us. "You won't believe it," my friend said. "The computers failed, and the school could not print the exams—not one! No one has taken their exams. We all have to stay at school until we can take the exams."

This news disturbed our friends, but we rejoiced as we realized that we would be able to take our exams! Eagerly we started preparing for the exams we

thought had already been taken.

A few days later the board announced its decision. They would allow the Adventist students to return to the school on condition that we would limit our worship to two hours on Sabbath. None of the Adventists returned to that school.

Some of the students at the school had watched our drama and were impressed that we had stood for our faith. My best friend, Joan, who is not an Adventist, asked me, "What makes you so firm in your beliefs? You are so strong!"

I told her that if I honor God, He will honor me. But if I deny God, He will deny me. In times of trouble each person has to decide where to turn for help. I turn to God.

I thank God that He gave us the faith to stand up for Him. And I praise Him for working out a miracle so we could all take our exams. I pray that each person hearing this story will remain faithful when times get difficult for them. 🌍

Lena Obara is a high school senior from Kisii, Kenya.

Let's talk

• Would you be willing to stand up for what you believe, even if it means being punished or expelled from school? *[Like most tests of faith, the "big test" was not the only one. Lena and her friends stood for their faith at every step—when they wanted the entire Sabbath day, not just two hours, to worship, when they went without food in order to worship. Similarly, temptations usually do not begin with "the big one," but start small and build in seriousness. We must be faithful in the small tests in order to stand firm in the greater tests.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Praise God that Lena and her friends stood firm for their faith. Pray that each member of your class will stand for what they believe when they are put to the test.

Kenya

GraceLink Connection:
Worship.

*Two girls had one desire,
and at an Adventist school
they found the answer to
their desires.*



Josephine



Mary

Educating for Eternity

Mary Juma and Josephine Oketch

[Ask two girls and perhaps a third narrator to present these first-person testimonies.]

Narrator: Mary and Josephine live in western Kenya. They will share their testimonies of how God touched their hearts and has answered their deepest desires.

Mary

I am Mary. I attended a government primary school, and I noticed that some children did not attend school on Saturdays. Our teacher sometimes said that these children were lazy because they did not come to class. But I liked these children; they were nice to everyone and seldom became angry or did unkind things to the other students. They were Adventists.

I heard these Adventist children talking about Sabbath School with such enthusiasm that I wished I could go and see for myself what it was like. But my mother warned me not to go.

Near the end of primary school, some of the children were talking about where they would study in

high school. My Adventist friends wanted to go to the Adventist high school. They said it was a good school with high standards. So when a friend offered to pay half of my tuition if I studied at the Adventist school, I was excited. My mother could not afford to pay my full tuition, so she agreed to send me to the Adventist school.

Lots of things were different at the Adventist school. We all had to take Bible class, but no one seemed to mind. And they loved to pray! They prayed in their rooms before breakfast, in worship, before classes started, in every class, and I even saw students praying in the halls between classes! And when they prayed, they talked to God as though He was their close friend. This was so different from the memorized prayers I had been taught as a child.

In Bible class we used the Bible as our textbook, not another book about religious beliefs. I saw

students reading their Bibles at lunchtime, between classes, and before they went to bed.

When I did not know the answer to a Bible question in class, they did not laugh at me, but offered to help me learn. And if they did not know the answer to a question, the pastor was always willing to help me find the answer—in the Bible of course. I had never known that a pastor could be so helpful and friendly.

After spending a year at the Adventist school, I enrolled in the baptismal class. I wanted to become an Adventist, but I was worried how my mother would react to my decision. But when I told her, she said it was OK. I was so happy!

When I invited her to study the Bible with an Adventist friend, she said, “I will wait until I see how this religion changes your life.” I knew what she meant. I used to lie and run away when Mother had chores for me to do. I

asked God to help me be a good example of an obedient child so Mother would want to study the Bible too.

When I am home, Mother lets me take my younger brothers and sisters to church. They like Sabbath School, with its activities for their ages.

I thank God for helping me study at the Adventist school, for there I met Jesus, who now is my friend forever.

Please pray for my mother, who has not made a decision to follow Jesus. Pray that someone will help her pay my brothers' and sisters' school fees so they can attend the Adventist school and learn that Jesus is their forever friend.

Josephine

My father died when I was young, and Mother could not afford to send me to high school. So I stayed home to help Mother, who is often sick. I helped plant her garden, pull weeds, and harvest vegetables to eat and sell. And I caught fish in the lake, which we ate or sold.

I began attending the Adventist church, which angered my relatives. They refused to help me study because I was a heretic. Then one day at church the pastor

asked if there was a girl who had passed eighth-grade exams but lacked funds to attend high school. If so, they should see him. *That's me!* I thought.

I told the pastor that my father had died and my mother was sick and could not afford to pay my school fees. I brought him my primary certificate, and he promised to send it to the Adventist school and see whether they could help me go to school.

I felt so happy! A few weeks later I received a letter inviting me to enroll at the Adventist school. The school would pay half my fees, and I would work to pay the rest. Mother was glad, for she knew how much I wanted to study. Then I realized that I did not have a blanket and other personal things I needed at school. I told the pastor, and he asked church members to help me. They bought a mattress, a blanket, and the little things I needed, such as toothpaste and a comb.

When I arrived at the school, I had no money for a uniform, so someone gave me a used one. I washed it at night, but often it was still wet the next morning. But I was not discouraged.

I worked hard at school to pay my school fees. And when I went

home, I worked for my neighbors to earn money to buy what I needed. I bought a blouse, but I had to borrow a sweater when it was cold. I have no casual clothes or Sabbath clothes, so I wear my uniform every day.

My mother feels sad that she cannot help me, but I tell her it is OK. I just thank God for the chance to study.

I talk to Mother about God, and I pray with her. She has not gone to church yet, but I know that God is speaking to her heart.

Soon I will finish school. I thank God for blessing me with an education. I want to serve Him, and I would like to become a doctor if God provides the money for my schooling.

Narrator: Adventist education has changed Mary's and Josephine's lives. Our mission offerings help support schools around the world that teach young people the joys of serving Jesus. Think of Mary and Josephine when you give your mission offering today. 🌍

Mary Juma and Josephine Oketch are studying at Nyabola Adventist Girls' School in western Kenya.

Let's talk

? Mary and Josephine have worked hard to study in a Christian school. What difference will a Christian education make now or in the future? [Mary accepted Jesus as her Savior while in the Adventist school; Josephine sacrificed a lot to study and strengthen her faith.]

? Would you be willing to work hard to attend an Adventist school? Why? [Allow students to respond yes or no, then ask them to give a reason for their answer.] What benefits do you think you can get from working to receive a Christian education?

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray for Mary, Josephine, and thousands of young people around the world who must sacrifice to study in a Christian school. Pray that God will strengthen them and bless them for their devotion.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

As a young man discovered new Bible truths, a fire kindled in his heart. Then discouragement and apathy almost doused the flames.



Innocent

Fire of Faith

Innocent Byaruhanga

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

When I was growing up in Uganda, my family did not attend church much, but we were proud of our church, its beauty, and the beautiful traditions that were practiced there.

Deceived

I attended the church's primary school, where I learned that God created the world in six days—from Monday through Saturday—and rested on Sunday. But then my cousin told me that God started creation on the first day—Sunday—and rested on the seventh day—Sabbath, not Sunday. Then he opened his Bible and showed me the Ten Commandments. Right in the middle was the Sabbath commandment. *How could this be? I wondered. Why would my church lie to me? And if they lied about the creation and Sabbath, what other things have they lied about?* This Bible passage made such an impression on me that I memorized it right then so I would never forget it.

My cousin could not read too

well because he had studied only through the fifth grade. But he sure knew his Bible! He could answer nearly every question I had. He even explained the mark of the beast and the number 666, subjects that I had wondered about for a long time. He made the Bible interesting, and I started looking up other Bible topics on my own. My cousin told me about a book called *The Great Controversy*, and I borrowed it from his pastor and read it through.

When I discovered who the beast with the number 666 was, I thought my dad would want to know, so I told him. Boy, was he angry—so angry that he beat me. He may have not gone to church, but he forbade me to speak against the church—ever. But I was so on fire about the things I was learning that it was hard not to talk about them.

I continued studying the Bible and talking about what I was learning with my cousin. He told me about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and what it

teaches. I realized that this church was the true church. I wanted to find an Adventist church and attend worship so I could learn more about the Bible, but I was afraid of what my dad would do to me if he found out. I even thought of leaving home so I would not have to worry about what my father said, but I had nowhere else to go.

The Flame Smolders

When I started high school, I got involved in many activities. With no one at home to encourage my faith, the flame of my faith started to smolder. I stopped reading the Bible and told myself that I would take a stand for the Bible when I was older and no one could send me away from home.

I struggled in school, and my grades dropped. Finally I left school without graduating. I wanted to become a rapper and a disc jockey in a local night club. I found places to work, and though I was not famous by any means, I enjoyed the popularity

of the job. My brother and I spent most weekends in bars listening to music.

Then one day as I was walking along the street, I passed a man selling books. One book caught my eye: *The National Sunday Law*. It was as if God had pointed that book out to me, but I turned from the table and walked away. When I returned a little later, I saw the bookseller again. This time I bought the book and started to read it. The more I read, the more excited I became. The years of apathy fell away as God rekindled the ashes of my faith. I started reading the Bible again.

I faced a tug-of-war in my heart. I knew that what I was reading was the truth, but a voice kept telling me to enjoy life now and go to church later. I knew I had to make a decision. I turned to the back page of the book and wrote, "Thanks be to God, for I

now see the light. Please, Jesus, keep me in the light and use me to show others this light."

I found an Adventist church, but I worried about whether they would accept me. I knew that whatever was inside this church, it was God's true church, and I would follow the teachings. I should not have worried though, because that first Sabbath the people welcomed me warmly.

A New Path

I stopped attending clubs and bars, stopped writing rap music, and destroyed the music I had written. I lost my desire to work on the worldly graphic arts projects I had enjoyed doing. I found work more suited to a Christian.

Then my brother advised me to return to school and get my high school diploma. That made sense, for I could be of more use in God's work with a diploma.

I am now attending the Adventist secondary school near the campus of Bugema University in Uganda. I have never been happier. We worship God all day on Sabbath and have morning and evening devotions during the week. I see some students taking these beautiful truths for granted; but for my hungry, thirsty soul, it is like a drink of cold water, like a fan blowing new life into the flame of my faith that almost burned out when I was a teen.

I love sharing my faith with others, and God has blessed me with seven people who have found the truth in Jesus.

I thank God for an Adventist school where I can study. Your mission offerings make such schools possible, and I thank you for giving unselfishly to help others receive a great Bible-based education. 🌍

Innocent Byaruhanga recently completed high school and is now studying theology at Bugema University in Uganda.

Let's talk

? What caused Innocent, the teen in this story, to lose his enthusiasm over Bible study and worship when he was in high school? *[He had no encouragement from home, and school activities crowded out Bible study and prayer.]* Why is it so important to act on our faith when we are young and not wait until we are older? *[The devil wants us to put off for another day our salvation, hoping that we will never accept God's great gift. He knows, too, that if he can delay this decision, the best years of our lives will fly by without fruit for God's kingdom. Read Ecclesiastes 12:1 and discuss its importance to youth.]*

? Once Innocent decided to give his life wholly to God, it was not difficult to give up his old ways. But some young people find it quite difficult to give up habits they have acquired that do not honor God. What are some of the habits that may keep people from giving their lives totally to God? *[List the suggestions on the board. Be sure the list includes addictions such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs, unchristian music, and sex.]* We have God's promise that if we trust Him, He will see us through every trial we face in our walk with Him.

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Innocent's faith will remain strong and that he will be a light to his family and the world.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

One disappointment after another, one tragedy following another, but God was faithful, and a dream long deferred became a reality.



Ephraim

Dreams Deferred

Ephraim Mutoya, Jr.

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

Congratulations!" my friends said, slapping me on the back. "Congratulations!" my teachers said, shaking my hand. "Congratulations!" my family said, smiling broadly. I tried to smile back, but tears threatened to well up in my eyes. I had just passed the difficult exams at the end of the ninth grade. I could enter secondary school.

But an even bigger hurdle lay ahead—finding the money to pay my secondary school fees. I had no money, and neither did my family. In spite of my high scores, I knew I would have to drop out of school.

Family Trouble

My father had just died, leaving my mother to care for six children. As is the custom here, when a man dies, his relatives take everything he leaves behind, even if his wife and children go hungry or homeless.

My mother had no job, and we struggled along as best we could. My eldest brother still lived at home and worked to support

the family. I was at boarding school, where I worked as much as I could to pay my school fees. But with Father dead, I knew my schooling was over. I packed up my things and left school with a heavy heart.

My mother knew how much I wanted to continue my studies. "Don't give up hope," she told me. "God will provide."

Mother's faith meant a lot to me. When I saw how she could still trust in God despite difficult circumstances, I determined that my own faith would stay strong.

Then a few months later my older sister—the only one of us who was married—fell ill and died. She left two small children. Mother took them in and cared for them.

God Makes a Way

Despite this additional hardship, our faith in God stayed strong. And God was faithful. The secretary at the school I attended should have deleted my name from the list of students when I could not pay my school fees.

But instead, she felt impressed to help me. She paid my fees for one term! I was so happy. I knew that God was answering my prayers. School had already started, so I hurried back to school.

The secretary who paid my school fees let me live in her own home that semester to save money. She hoped that someone would sponsor me after the first term, or that I would be able to earn my own school fees. I studied really hard to do well that semester. After all that my sponsor and God were doing for me, I did not want to waste any of my time. I had no proper school uniform, and the boys made fun of the patches on my trousers and my flip-flop sandals, but I was happy just to be in school.

I found a job working every afternoon and every Sunday to pay my school fees the second term. During vacations I worked at home to help my mother. I was worried about her. She was sick and too weak to work. So I worked extra hard to earn my school fees and leave money for

Mother too. When I finished the tenth grade, God had helped me pay all my school fees.

Enduring Loss

Then my sister, who had been caring for our mother and looking after the younger children, suddenly disappeared. This was a terrible blow, especially to my mother, who imagined the awful things that could happen to her. But despite this added blow, my mother's faith remained strong. She prayed more than ever and encouraged me to keep studying.

So I did. I finished high school and looked forward to graduation. Mother would be so proud of me. But before graduation my mother died. This blow was almost more than I could bear. Mother had been my rock; her faith had remained strong even as her body weakened. When we buried her, I felt as if my heart were buried too.

I felt lost and alone with no one to pray for me or

encourage me. I had planned to study theology at an Adventist university and become a pastor. But suddenly I did not have the strength to do it. It had been my mother's dream for me to continue my education. Now she was dead, and my dreams seemed to die with her. I had no strength to work or study or even think.

Then one day our pastor came to visit. He read Bible texts to show me that God had not forgotten me. He urged me to get up and make something of my life.

The Turnaround

The pastor was right. I started selling books as a literature evangelist and sharing God's love with others. I worked for three years to earn enough to pay my university fees. Then as I was preparing to begin my studies, my older brother, who was supporting the family, died. I could not go to school and leave my younger brother and my niece

and nephew to starve.

I continued working until my brother finished his teacher's diploma and could support our niece and nephew. Then I traveled to Bugema University in Uganda to study theology. I work to pay my school fees and support my family. Graduation is a long way off, but I eagerly work toward the dream that has too long been deferred.

Bugema University is a great Adventist university, serving 1,500 students from most countries in Africa. Your mission offerings help support this school, and this year your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a much-needed larger health center on our campus. This health center will serve not only the students of the university and the other schools near the campus but also the villages and towns around the university, which have no medical facilities. The next closest medical care is in Kampala, the capital city, which is more than an hour away by car. We need this medical center to serve the Adventist community and the larger community. Please be generous this Thirteenth Sabbath so that our ministry to those who are sick can continue. 🌍

Ephraim Mutoya, Jr., is a student at Bugema University in Uganda.

Let's talk

? Ephraim, the young man in today's story, has had to weather many disappointments. What are some of the obstacles he has

- faced? *[First his father died, then a sister, then his mother died, and another sister disappeared.]* What kept him strong through his trials? *[His mother's deep faith encouraged him to keep going, but when she died, he felt lost. The pastor assured him God had not forgotten him and reminded him that God was still providing for him.]*

? What trials have you or someone you know well experienced in life? Have you lost a loved one? Has someone you trusted

- disappointed you or betrayed you? *[Let students identify trials they have experienced that tested their faith.]* Have you ever felt as though God has forgotten you or that you don't matter to Him? What Bible texts can you recall that will remind you or someone else who needs encouragement that God has not forgotten you? *[Heb. 13:5; Joshua 1:9; Ps. 139:2-12; Isa. 59:1; and many others.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Although days will come when it seems there is no hope, that the desired outcome cannot happen, pray that God will constantly remind you that He is with you and will never leave you or forsake you.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

He was so sure that his religious faith could not be moved, but he never counted on the Holy Spirit's persuasive power.



Stephen

Stephen Shares His Faith

Stephen Bomani

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

I come from Tanzania. My parents decided to send me to live with my uncle in Uganda to study, for they felt that schools in Uganda were better. My uncle promised to help look for a good school.

The night I arrived in Uganda I saw a television advertisement for Bugema Secondary School. I was really impressed. My uncle told me that Bugema was a good school. I decided I wanted to study there, so the next day my uncle took me to enroll there.

New School, Surprising Lessons

My parents were glad that I had found a good school so quickly. They were not concerned when I told them that the school was operated by Seventh-day Adventists, for they knew I was devoted to my religion. I often talked about wanting to become a priest when I finished school.

I enjoyed studying at Bugema, but because of the long distance, I did not return home until the

school year ended. During that year I enjoyed the Bible classes that were part of our daily courses. Some things we studied were new to me, things I had not thought about and some that I did not even know were in the Bible. Gradually I let my guard down about protecting my religious beliefs, and before long I became convinced that the Adventists planted their spiritual feet entirely in the Bible, not in traditions or in rituals. Despite my plans to become a priest, I was drawn to these Bible teachings. I began studying the Bible more seriously with the campus pastor, and after much prayer I made my decision to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church by baptism.

Trouble on the Home Front

When I went home at the end of my first year, I told my parents that I had changed my mind about becoming a priest. In fact, I had been convinced that many things my family's church taught simply were not in the

Bible. I thought they would be glad to learn the truth, but when I tried to show them what I had discovered, they were shocked and angry. They could not believe that I would leave our family's church to join a church I had only recently learned about. They told me that I had made a big mistake and tried to talk me out of my new beliefs.

I listened respectfully to my parents, but nothing they said changed my mind. I remained firm. I told them that I had seen the truth in the Bible. But my parents did not want to hear what I had to say. We often talked during dinner, but if the conversation turned to religion my father would get up and leave. My mother was not as stubborn as my father. Although she was not interested in what I tried to share with her, she realized that I was old enough to make up my own mind and could believe whatever I wanted to as long as I did not try to convert her.

I often talked to my younger

sisters about what I had learned while at school. In the beginning they argued, just as my parents had. But when they realized that I was not going to change my views just because they did not share my beliefs, they started listening to me.

I taught them some of my favorite hymns, and they liked them. I talked to my sister Joanitha [joh-ah-NEE-thah] about going to Bugema School with me. She was not sure at first, but she eventually decided that she would like to study there. However, she told me not to try to convert her to my new faith, for she had no intention of leaving the church our parents worshipped in. My parents agreed to let Joanitha study at Bugema, mostly because she was determined that she would never become an Adventist

Joanitha's Journey of Faith

Joanitha arrived on campus sure that she was not going to be swayed by the Bible truths she would hear, but she did not understand the power of the Holy Spirit to convince hearts of God's truths. After a few months

at Bugema, Joanitha asked to join the baptismal class, and before she returned home for vacation, she followed Jesus in baptism. We returned to Tanzania together, and we shared our faith with our family and many of our friends. Again our parents were upset that Joanitha had left the family's church, but they finally realized that we each must follow our conscience. They allowed us to practice our faith as we believed we should.

Spreading the Joy

Joanitha also helped our younger sister, Yvonne, understand what we believe, and now she is attending the Adventist church in our town with our younger brothers. She plans to come to Bugema next year, and she will be baptized after taking Bible studies here. Joanitha also shared her faith with several of her girlfriends. She invited two of them to study at Bugema, and they went. One of them was converted and brought her younger sisters before the year was out.

I've tried many times to talk to my father about our beliefs

and about my concern over his drinking. I would like him to see the harm he's bringing on himself and the bad influence he has on the younger children. But he tells me, "I'm paying your school fees. Leave me alone." So I pray for him. We've invited our mother to church, and she has come. She liked the worship service and felt better about the church her children were joining. She asks questions, and I think one day she will join us. We encourage her and pray for her, and she knows that we support her.

I never dreamed when I saw the advertisement for Bugema Secondary School that it would change not only my life, but the lives of almost my entire family. Bugema is a lighthouse in Uganda and in eastern Africa. This lighthouse keeps shining because you give your mission offerings faithfully. Please continue to give generous offerings so that more people will be saved from moral shipwreck in Africa. 🌍

Stephen Bomani is a senior at Bugema Secondary School. His home is in Tanzania.

Let's talk

? Stephen, the boy in today's story, could have remained silent about his baptism when he returned home from school. Instead, he chose to share his faith with his parents and siblings. What happened as a result? *[While his father was angry, his mother allowed him to make up his own mind, and later several other sisters and a number of friends chose to follow Christ. His mother now is open to worshipping God in the Adventist Church.]*

? Do you think Stephen disobeyed his parents when he became an Adventist Christian against their wishes? *[He disobeyed their wishes, but he obeyed God, which is far more important.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that Stephen and his siblings will continue to share their faith with their parents and their friends. Pray that many searching students at Bugema Secondary School will find Christ.

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

All she wanted was a chance to study, but it took a broken family and deep sorrow for her dream to become a reality.



Jemila

A Dream Come True

Charlotte Ishkanian

Ten-year-old Jemila [jeh-MEE-lah] stood up to stretch her tired back and leaned against the handmade hoe she used to weed her father's corn. School children wearing their blue-and-white uniforms hurried along the red dirt road leading from the village school. Jemila wished she could go to school to learn to read and write. But as a farmer, her father saw no need for his children to study.

Jemila was one of 12 children of her father's two wives. She knew that soon her father would marry her to a man far older than she, in exchange for a few head of cattle. Then she would bear children and work hard until she died. Girls were worth only what their work could produce and what their marriage could bring their fathers.

The Announcement

A few weeks later Jemila's father called her into the house. "Well, this is her," he said, nodding to Jemila. Her face burned as she felt the eyes of a strange man on her.

"Yes," the man said. "She will do."

"Ah, then it is a deal," her father sighed, relief rippling in his voice. You can take her when you return with the dowry." Then, hearing a sob, he turned to Jemila. "You will not marry him now," her father explained. "Just visit him for a week, then you can come home until you are ready to marry him."

As soon as her father and the man left the room, Jemila turned away and saw her mother standing behind her. She tried to hide the tears in her eyes. "Don't cry, my child," her mother said. "I will not let this happen to you." Jemila sensed a fierceness in her mother's words that she had seldom heard before.

The Quarrel

That afternoon while Jemila was working in the garden, Father and Mother talked. Her mother's voice was strong and steady. Her father's voice rose in a quarrel. Jemila heard her name and saw her father's arms wave angrily in the air.

"I won't let her go," Mother said firmly. "She's too young. It's cruel to marry her to a stranger so soon."

"But I have given my word!" Father said. "She will go next week!"

"No, she will not go," Mother said again. Finally Father marched off to his other wife's house, muttering angrily.

The next day Father returned. He tried once more to convince Mother that it was in her interest to send Jemila to her future husband's home. But her mother stood firm.

"I've given you every chance to be reasonable," Father said. "And you refuse. I divorce you. You are no longer my wife. I will live with my other wife, but the children still belong to me!" He stomped out of the house, leaving Mother standing alone, her mouth pinched tightly closed. To be divorced was a great shame in their culture.

Father drew a line around Mother's house and garden. That was her land. But he took the family's cattle and the oxen used to plow the fields.

Go Away

A few days later Mother called Jemila. "You must leave here," Mother said. "It is not safe for you to stay here. I have a friend who lives at a school a few hours away. I will take you there. Perhaps they will let you live with them in exchange for work. Perhaps you can even go to school."

Jemila was not sure whether she was excited over going to school or fearful of leaving the only place she knew. The next day Mother and Jemila set out for her mother's friend's home.

As they made their way toward her mother's friend's home, Mother shared her desire for her daughter. "If you marry now, you will suffer as I have suffered. But if you learn to read and write, perhaps you will have hope for a better life."

Soon they arrived on the

campus where Mother's friend lived. The sign said, "Ethiopian Adventist College and Secondary School." Mother introduced Jemila to her friend, who arranged for her to live with a staff family near the school. "You will clean house and help prepare meals to pay for your room and board," the woman said. "If you want to attend the primary school, you can work two hours after classes to pay your school fees." Jemila nodded. She was not afraid of hard work, and the thought of finally going to school thrilled her.

A Dream Realized

Jemila worked hard, and studied hard in school. She missed her mother and her village friends and wished she could go home. But she did not dare return to the village when her father was around.

In school Jemila learned about Jesus. The more she learned, the more she loved Him, for He was kind and gentle to children. When Jemila visited her mother, she shared the stories she had learned about Jesus. She told her mother that God loves her. She was careful not to tell her friends where she was living, for her father might still force her to marry.

Recently Jemila was baptized. She continues to live with the family who befriended her, and she continues to study. She is now 14 and in the fifth grade. She is determined to complete her education and serve God. She is grateful for the Adventist Christians who protected her and provided a home for her so she could learn.

Jemila wants others to know about God's love, and she wants to be a good example of God's love to others.

Let's talk

- ?
- Sometimes the things we want most are things we cannot have. What did Jemila want most as a child? *[A chance to study.]* How will an education change her life?

What do you want most? *[List some things class members really want.]*

From this list of these things we want, what will you still want five years from now? How will your life change if you get what you wish for? *[Invite class members to answer for any of the wishes they have listed.]* Seeing this list and thinking about Jemila's desire, would you change what you wished for? *[If someone changes their wish, add it to the list or erase their original wish and replace it with their new desire.]*

Looking at the list once more, what things on the list would draw you closer to God?

- ?
- Hundreds of young girls in Ethiopia wish they could learn to read and write. How can we help them realize their wish? *[Pray for them; give mission offerings, especially the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will help build up the Ethiopian Adventist Secondary School where these girls have a chance to study.]*

Appeal

Ethiopian Adventist Secondary School has 1,000 students, but it has no classrooms of its own. Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will provide classrooms for the secondary school, which educates hundreds of girls like Jemila, who are learning that God has plans for their lives that they could not dream of outside His love. 🌍

Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that God will help Jemila and other girls like her to get the education they need to make a difference in their country. Pray that our wishes will reflect eternal values and not just personal desires.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

When the woman tied the leather necklace around her neck, Sidisse's world turned dark.



Sidisse

Escape From Demons

Sidisse [see-DEE-seh] is a bright and friendly 17-year-old girl in Ethiopia. She grew up in a Christian family who are devoted to their faith. Her parents found it hard to pay her school fees, so when she was 10 years old her uncle took her to Addis Ababa [AH-dih AH-bah-bah], the capital city, to study. She moved into a dormitory and was cared for by the house mother.

Not long after she arrived, Sidisse began hearing eerie noises at night. Other students heard the noises too. Someone said that the noises came from the house mother, who worshipped the devil.

The Necklace

One day Sidisse saw the house mother sewing strange symbols onto a strip of leather. Curious, Sidisse asked what she was doing. "You'll see," the woman said. When the house mother finished, she held the necklace out to show Sidisse. Sidisse examined it, then the house mother gently placed it around Sidisse's neck, saying, "Never take this off, or

you could die." Sidisse sensed a strange feeling come over her, a feeling of darkness and gloom. But Sidisse was afraid to remove the necklace.

Sidisse felt as if her body no longer belonged to her. Sometimes her friends asked her what she had been talking about or what she had done. Sidisse did not remember saying anything, but her friends insisted that she had spoken strange words and had torn pages from her book. They told her that when they tried to stop her, she hit them. And sometimes Sidisse would find herself in a strange place and not remember how she got there.

"What is happening to me?" Sidisse cried.

Sidisse was possessed by a demon. She did not know what had caused it, but she was miserable. She wanted to go to church, to pray that God would take this terrible thing from her. But the house mother forbade her to enter a church. Sidisse felt powerless to find a way out of her dilemma.

Finding Help

The house mother's husband noticed Sidisse's strange behavior and recognized that she was possessed by a demon. He told his priest about Sidisse, and some members of his church came to pray for her. The church members sprinkled holy water on her as they prayed and touched her with the cross they had brought. But their prayers did not work; the demons remained.

"Don't believe what my wife tells you," the house mother's husband urged Sidisse. "Demons can harm you only if you believe in their power." His words brought Sidisse hope. She would try not to believe. She removed the necklace, but she was afraid to discard it, so she placed it in a bag that she kept with her.

One day Sidisse's aunt, who was an Adventist, came to stay in Addis Ababa. While there she visited Sidisse and learned about her struggle. While her aunt was talking to Sidisse, the girl fell into a trance. One of Sidisse's girlfriends told her aunt about

the necklace that Sidisse kept with her. Sidisse's aunt told the Adventist pastor, who arranged for some elders to pray for Sidisse and burn the necklace. Sidisse did not know that her aunt had taken the necklace or that it had been destroyed. But suddenly she felt the darkness lift. She was free and happy again.

Out of Harm's Way

Sidisse's aunt lives at Ethiopian Adventist College. She invited Sidisse to transfer to the Adventist school at the college. Sidisse agreed, for she no longer felt safe in the school she was attending. Sidisse transferred and began studying the Bible. She gave her heart to God and was baptized.

At the end of the school year Sidisse returned home to visit her parents. She told them that she had transferred to the Adventist school and liked it very much. This was news to her parents, who thought she was still studying in Addis Ababa. Sidisse told her parents how the house mother had cast a spell on her and how

miserable and frightened she had been in her former school. She told them how her aunt had asked a pastor to pray for her, and she was delivered from the demons.

"Don't let those Adventists baptize you!" her parents warned.

Caught off guard, Sidisse did not know what to say. But she was desperate to return to the Adventist school where she had found peace. "The demons have not bothered me since I arrived at the Adventist school," Sidisse pleaded. "Please let me go back. I feel safe there."

Her parents thought about what she had said and finally agreed. "Well, OK," her mother said. "But don't let them baptize you!" Sidisse wanted to tell them that she had already been baptized, but she knew that would only anger her parents.

Before she returned to the Adventist school, her parents warned her repeatedly not to let the Adventists influence her to leave her family's church. She has told them that she is reading the Bible and wants to serve God,

but the subject of baptism has not come up again.

Free and Happy

Sidisse is glad to be back at the Adventist school. Her parents cannot afford to pay her school fees, so she works for a family who lives near the school in order to pay her room and board and her tuition. She has four more years of secondary school, but she is not discouraged. "I am willing to work hard to get an education," she says. "When I graduate, I want to prepare to be a nurse so I can help others.

"I am happier now than I have ever been in my life," Sidisse says. "I know that my parents love me and want what is best for me. This is why they insist that I remain in their church. So for now, at least, I attend church with them when I am home. I will obey them in this one thing. But in my heart I know the truth."

Our mission offerings help support Adventist schools and colleges around the world. Many students who attend these schools find deliverance in Jesus, their Savior. Thank you for sharing your offering with them. 🌐

Sidisse (not her real name) is 17 years old. She attends the Ethiopian Adventist Secondary School in southern Ethiopia.

let's talk

? What did Sidisse do to fall victim to the demons that troubled her? *[She did not do anything. But her curiosity about the necklace that the dorm mother had made opened the way for the dorm mother to insist she wear it. And that, in turn, allowed the evil spirits to possess her.]* What does Sidisse's experience teach us? *[Be careful whom you trust; if someone in a position of authority does something that makes you uncomfortable, ask a trusted adult for help or advice.]*

? What activities can you think of that might open the door to demon possession where you live? *[Lead young people to understand the type of activities that leave them vulnerable to spirit possession, such as playing with Ouija boards, having their fortunes told, or visiting a psychic or a spirit medium. And increasingly, certain books and television programs portray spirits as a common and often harmless part of life. Beware.]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that the young people in your class will be on guard against the devil's trickery and will allow God to keep them spiritually safe.

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

He pulled an envelope from a bookshelf and found a lot of money inside.



Abebe

The Found Money

Abebe Alemu

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

I enjoy going to the youth programs at my church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. One day I asked my uncle to let me borrow his car so I could attend a youth meeting at church, a few miles from my home.

Car Trouble

After the program a woman in the church asked for a ride home, and I was happy to take her. We had gone only a few blocks when the car simply stopped running. I thought it was a fuel problem, so I went to a nearby gas station to buy some fuel. I poured the fuel into the fuel tank, then I tried to start the car again. But nothing happened.

Worried, I asked some men to help me push the car back to the church. My friend found another ride home, and I lifted the hood to find the problem. I saw several burned wires. I was worried, because I had borrowed the car, and now it was not working. Even worse, I had no money to repair it.

My friend Grema offered to

drive me home, and I gladly accepted. We stopped by the Voice of Prophecy office near the church to pick up some reading material. I was still thinking about how I was going to pay to fix my uncle's car as I entered the Voice of Prophecy building.

Surprising Find

As I scanned the shelf of books inside the office, I noticed a manila envelope wedged between two books. I thought it might contain magazines, so I opened it to look for something to read. An envelope fell out onto the desk. I picked it up and realized it was not sealed. I peeked inside—it was filled with money—a lot of money! I looked for a letter or an address, but I found neither. I checked the manila envelope for a letter or an address, but it was empty too. The dust on the exposed edges of the manila envelope told me it had been there for some time.

My first thought was that God had answered my prayer and sent

the money to fix my uncle's car. As I thought about this "providence," my heart started pounding hard inside my chest. Then another thought—a voice, really—said, *This money is not yours.* I argued with myself. Should I tell my friend about the money? Or should I be quiet and just take it? I decided to tell Grema. He would know what to do.

"Look!" I said to Grema. "There is money in this envelope." He did not even look up from the book he was reading.

"Grema, I'm serious! There is a lot of money in this envelope! Dollars!"

That got Grema's attention. He came over, and we counted the money together. There was \$1,000! We decided to take it to the pastor and let him know where we had found it. We put the money back in the envelope and returned to the church with our treasure.

The pastor was surprised when we gave him the envelope and told him where we had found

it. He looked at the smaller envelope, saw the money, and gave it to the treasurer. Then he thanked us for being so honest and returned to his duties.

Still in Need

I wasn't sure how to feel about the money. It surely would have solved my financial problems. After all, my uncle's car stood not far away, its silence still mocking me. I turned and went home.

I called my uncle and told him about the wires and promised to fix the car. He was relieved that nothing more serious was wrong, because he was planning to sell the car. The next day I found a mechanic who belonged to our church and told him what had happened. He offered to fix the car for the cost of the part. I hurried to town and found the part, then I returned to the mechanic. I was so relieved when he kept his word and soon had the car running again. With great relief I returned the car to my uncle.

Struggles Continue

Time passed, and I finished high school. I wanted to study at Ethiopian Adventist College, but my parents said they did not have the money to send me there.

So I took some teacher training and found a job teaching in an Adventist elementary school. Still I wished I could get a degree so I could work for God competently. I managed to save some money from my work, but it was not nearly enough to pay the school fees at the Adventist college. I wondered whether I would ever be able to earn a college degree.

I prayed continually that God would provide a way for me to finish my studies, but I had no idea how He would do that. Then one day a man from my church talked to me. "Why don't you try to enroll in our Adventist college?" he asked.

I told him simply, "I do not have the money to go full time." I explained that I was teaching during the school year and studying during the school break. I knew it would take me many years, but I intended to finish.

Surprising Blessing

Then this man surprised me by offering to help me finish my studies at Ethiopian Adventist College. "I can sponsor you for two years," he offered. Gladly I accepted, knowing that if I worked hard, my family could help me finish the remaining courses.

I thanked the man and started home, feeling as if my feet barely touched the ground. Then the picture of that manila envelope filled with money flashed in my mind. I stopped and thought a minute. *I found \$1,000 and wanted to keep it. But this man has offered me so much more than \$1,000! What if I had kept that money? Could God have blessed me now?* I prayed a silent prayer thanking God for helping me make the right decision about that money.

I enrolled full time in the Adventist college, and in just a few years I finished my degree in accounting. When I totaled up what it cost me to attend this school, I realized that God blessed me 32 times more than the money in the envelope would have blessed me.

I realize that I am a poor sinner, easily tempted. But praise God that He helped me return that envelope and the money. God has blessed me many times over since then. What a testimony to His faithfulness. 🌍

Abebe Alemu has completed his degree in accounting and works in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

let's talk

? It would have been easy for Abebe to take the money he found. Why did he return it? Would it have made any difference if it had been \$25 instead of \$1,000? Or \$5? Why?

? What might have happened if Abebe had kept the money? How would it have changed him? [Accept answers.]

? What would you do if you found a sum of unmarked money in a library book or on the floor at a store?

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that we will let Jesus speak to our hearts when we face temptation.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

By the age of 11 Ama had been forced into marriage and sentenced to prison for committing murder.



Lomi

The Teenage Murderer

Lomi Kayso

Ama* grew up in a farming village in Ethiopia. Life was difficult, and everyone worked to feed the family. Ama wanted to attend school in her village, but her father refused. "Girls do not have to know how to read and write," he said. In Ama's culture, girls usually married soon after they became teenagers. Their fathers chose their husband, and the girls had to obey.

Unwelcome Husband

One day when Ama was 10 years old, she overheard her father arranging her marriage. A visitor said, "I know a man who has a teenage daughter. He wants a second wife and is willing to give his daughter to you in marriage if you will give your daughter to him."

Ama gasped and hurried to the garden. *So, I am to be married to an old man!* Ama thought. She raised the hoe and struck the dirt with a powerful thud.

A few weeks later Ama's father told her she would go visit her husband-to-be. "You will visit

for just a week or two," he said. "Then when you are full grown, we will have a wedding, and you will be his wife."

Ama wanted to run and hide, but she knew she dared not. The next day she laid a small bundle of belongings in the donkey cart and climbed in. Her mind felt numb as they bumped along the dirt road toward her future husband's home.

When they arrived, a ruffled man came out to meet them. Ama climbed down from the donkey cart and tried not to look shocked as her father introduced her to Gebre, her husband-to-be. Ama was sent into the house while Gebre sent his daughter home with her father. Ama wondered whether this other girl was as frightened as she was.

The Runaway

Gebre sent Ama into his room and closed the door. Then he went to the nearby tavern to bolster his courage with some drink. When he returned, he staggered into the house and fumbled with the

door, behind which Ama waited, trembling. When he finally managed to get in, he stumbled toward her and tried to grab her. But she fought him off and escaped. She ran down the road to her uncle's home.

"Please, Uncle," she pleaded. "Let me stay with you." Ama's uncle allowed her to come in, for they were not happy that her father had promised such a young girl to an old man. Ama fell asleep, exhausted, while her relatives talked about what to do. The next morning they took Ama back to her father.

But Ama's father was angry to see her. "Why did you run away!" he shouted. "Get in the donkey cart!" he ordered. And he took her back to Gebre.

"Now, stay here!" he ordered.

Gebre locked Ama inside the house, but when he came in that night, Ama again fought him off and escaped. And once more she was brought back. This time Gebre beat her before locking her into the room for the night.

Ama was allowed to go out to

work in the garden the next day. When she was sure nobody was watching, she ran away again. This time she ran through the fields. She ran for hours until she reached her aunt's house. There she found refuge and safety.

But eventually Ama's father learned where she was and went to get her. "You are causing too much trouble!" he shouted at her. "Because of you, my new wife has gone home to her father! Tomorrow you go back to your husband!"

Ama's Deadly Plan

Ama wondered what to do. How could she live with this old man who drank and beat her? Death would be better than slavery to a man she could not stand. As they rode along, Ama made a plan. She would sneak out after her parents were asleep and hang herself. Then she would be

free from her father, from Gebre.

That night Ama waited until everyone was asleep. She grabbed the rope she would use to end her life and tiptoed toward the door. Her hand touched the ax handle resting against the wall. *If I hit my father on the head, she reasoned, he can't follow me.* She grabbed the ax and stepped into her father's room. Raising it above her head, she brought it down with a heavy thud.

She turned and ran out the door as her mother screamed. She raced into the nearby forest and searched for a tree branch strong enough to hold her weight. But before she could tie the rope to the branch, her mother found her. *I can't even kill myself!* she thought angrily.

When Ama reached home, she learned that her father was dead. *I killed my own father?* The horror overwhelmed her.

11-Year-Old Criminal

When the police came, Ama confessed that she had killed her father. She was sentenced to three years in prison. There she was able to attend school. It took her father's death for her lifelong dream of studying to come true.

When Ama was released from prison, the government sent her to an Adventist boarding school where she would be supervised. The school became her haven from the harsh world.

Ama learned quickly. Her favorite class was religion, where she learned that God loves her and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in her place, for her sins. She accepted God's love and yearned to tell her mother about Jesus. At last she was given permission to visit her mother.

Ama found her mother sick and unable to work. Ama shared God's love with her and invited her to return to the school to study the Bible with a teacher. Her mother could not stay long enough to be baptized, but she gave Ama permission to take this step of faith.

Ama still faces daily challenges to stay in school and remain true to God. Pray for her, and pray that her mother will find peace in Jesus. Pray, too, that the people of Ethiopia will turn to the Savior. 🌍

Lomi Kayso is a student at an Adventist school in Ethiopia.

*Not her real name.

Let's talk

? Ama disobeyed her father and her husband-to-be in refusing to submit to the marriage her father had arranged for her. Were her actions right or wrong in God's eyes? Why? How does God's commandment to honor your father and mother apply to Ama's situation?

? Why did Ama decide to commit suicide? [She saw no other way out of a desperate situation.] Why did she kill her father? [She did not intend to kill him; she just wanted to keep him from following her and stopping her from ending her life.] How do you think God looked at her actions against her father? [Murder—or even assault—is displeasing to God, for it takes a life. However, when Ama realized the sinfulness of her acts and asked God's forgiveness, He forgave her, just as He will forgive us when we sincerely repent.]

? After Ama's three years in prison, the government sent her to an Adventist boarding school to study. How do you see God's hand in this decision? [The choice of a Christian school gave Ama an opportunity to learn who God is and to surrender her life to Him. She had done so, and her life will be changed forever.]

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that Ama will continue to grow in faith and share God's love with those she meets.

Program

Modern-day Mission Frontiers

Welcome

Program Gathering God's Jewels

Prayer

Offering Ask the children to sing "Jesus Loves Me" in the languages of East-Central Africa Division as the offering is taken.

Closing Song "Give of Your Best to the Master,"
The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
No. 572

* * *

Participants:

[Note: An abbreviated version of this program appears in Children's Mission. Select the version that fits your needs.]

Ask the children's divisions or the church's children's choir to prepare the song "When He Cometh" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, No. 218). If desired, the girls can wear white blouses and wrap brightly colored pieces of cloth around their waists to look like African skirts.

Choose five children to wear a jeweled crown and hold a large star (see props below).

Select three children who can recite Bible texts

with confidence. *[Note, if children are nervous about reciting, give each one a crown cut from poster board to hold, on the back of which is printed the appropriate Bible text to help them remember.]*

Two narrators, adults or teens.

Props:

Five large stars cut from poster board (at least 18 inches [45 centimeters] across), on which are written the following: Kenya, Ethiopia, Congo, Uganda, and East-Central Africa. On the back of each star, list the project for that country. Because Congo has two projects, list the second on the back of the East-Central Africa star. Projects are:

- Kenya: Kendu Adventist Hospital
- Ethiopia: Adventist secondary school
- Congo: Songa Adventist Hospital
- Congo [on East-Central Africa star]: New mission office
- Uganda: Health Center, Bugema University
- Poster board crowns for participants; three crowns (optional) cut from yellow or gold poster board, on the back of which is written the Bible texts the children will recite.

[As the narrator calls out the name of each country, the child holding the large star with that country's name lines up in the front center of the stage.]

Narrator 1: Kenya, . . . Ethiopia, . . . Democratic Republic of the Congo, . . . Uganda, . . . and the other countries of the . . . East-Central Africa Division . . . are gathering jewels for God's crown. And today, on Thirteenth Sabbath, we can help them gather even more jewels through our generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

[Children holding stars rejoin choir or step to the side.]

Our little choir will sing about the time when

Jesus will come to get His jewels and take them to heaven with Him. As they sing, ask God how you can gather precious jewels as well.

Choir: *[Sing just the first two lines of "When He Cometh," then pause or hum the melody while a child recites the Bible text.]*

When He cometh, when He cometh to make up His jewels, all His jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own.

Child 1: "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, 'on the day that I make them My jewels.'"¹

Choir: [Second verse] He will gather, He will gather the gems for His kingdom, all the pure ones, all the bright ones, His loved and His own.

Child 2: “And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from . . . one end of the heavens to the other.”²

Choir: Little children, little children who love their Redeemer, are the jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own.

Child 3: “[Jesus] said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’ . . . And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”³

Choir: Like the stars of the morning, His bright crown adorning, they shall shine in their beauty, bright gems for His crown.

Narrator 2: Today our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will do two important things. Three quarters of the offering will go to support the worldwide mission outreach of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This portion will help finance missionaries and lay evangelists, build churches, and provide supplies such as visual aids to teach adults and children that God loves them and Jesus died for them.

The remaining one quarter of today’s offering will help make five special projects in the East-Central Africa Division possible. The children will remind us of those projects now.

[As each country is named, have children ready to step to the front of the platform and hold their star high so the audience can read the project.]

In **Kenya**, the Kendu Bay Adventist Hospital needs a new surgical suite and surgical wing in order to continue its nurses’ training program and offer quality care to the people of western Kenya.

In **Ethiopia**, our Adventist college shares its campus with a secondary school that has a thousand students but no classrooms or administration block. This secondary school educates many non-Adventist young people who one day may join the army of God’s people. Part of our offering will help provide this secondary school with classrooms.

Two projects in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** will get help this quarter.

Songa Adventist Hospital in southeastern Congo is the only medical facility for thousands of people living within a day’s journey. People who need help are open to the wonderful message of God’s love. Let’s help give them that message through the medical care offered at Songa Adventist Hospital.

In eastern Congo the church is growing rapidly, in spite of—and perhaps in part because of—a civil war that has raged for several years. The union mission has divided the work in order to meet the believers’ needs more readily. Part of our offering will help establish a new union mission office in eastern Congo.

In **Uganda**, Bugema University is well known for its quality Christian education. Located more than an hour from the capital, Kampala, the university has provided basic medical care for the school, its staff, and hundreds of people who live nearby. The school needs to enlarge and relocate the health center to better serve the students and community it ministers to. Part of today’s offering will help build a new, larger health center to serve the community.

Narrator 1: Imagine that you live in a village in southern Congo. A young woman is in labor, but something is wrong. The baby should have been born long ago, and the young mother is growing weak. The nearest medical help is two hours away. What do you do? Will a doctor help her if someone takes her? The answer is yes, for this is Songa Adventist Hospital, and a doctor is always on call.

You set off with others carrying the woman on a stretcher. When you arrive at the hospital, the doctor rushes the woman into surgery. A few minutes later you hear the weak cry of a newborn. Mother and baby will live because the people at Songa were there. You hurry back to your village with the good news. Tonight there will be a celebration instead of a funeral.

Meanwhile, the young mother listens to nurses walking the ward, praying with patients. When they come near, she smiles weakly and thanks them. They answer, “It was not we who saved you. It was God in heaven. Thank Him.”

Songa is one of three medical facilities that will receive part of today’s offering to help them be God’s healing hands to those in need of help, and God’s voice to those who have not heard of His love.

The fields of eastern Africa are ripe; it’s time to bring the harvest in. While the children’s choir sings “Jesus Loves Me” in [name the language(s) in which they will sing], give generously to God’s cause. Let’s finish gathering the jewels for Jesus on this earth and go home to be with God.

[Offering]

¹ Malachi 3:17, NKJV.

² Matthew 24:31, NIV.

³ Mark 10:14-16, NIV.

Report to Stockholders

Previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings that went to East-Central Africa Division helped build up the work in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania. The people of eastern Africa thank Sabbath School members for helping make these Thirteenth Sabbath projects a reality.

In Ethiopia the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped

purchase equipment for its publishing house, and build kindergarten and elementary school classrooms, churches, and parsonages.

For information on other Thirteenth Sabbath projects that have been completed, thanks to your generous offerings, go to www.AdventistMission.org.



Ethiopian Advent Press equipment



Bahirdar, Ethiopia, church

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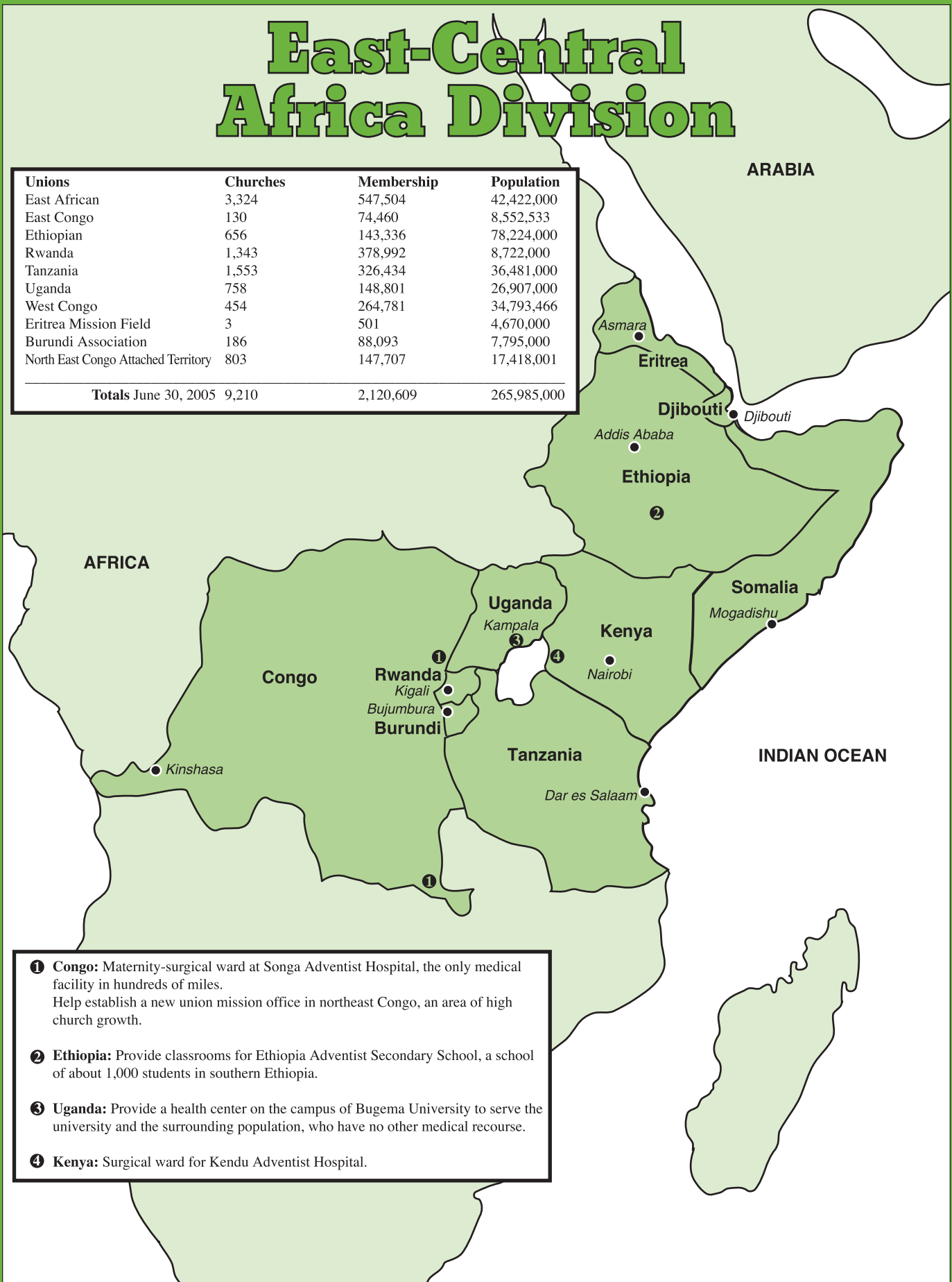
Vol. 52, No. 4

Fourth Quarter 2006
East-Central Africa Division

mission
Teen

East-Central Africa Division

Unions	Churches	Membership	Population
East African	3,324	547,504	42,422,000
East Congo	130	74,460	8,552,533
Ethiopian	656	143,336	78,224,000
Rwanda	1,343	378,992	8,722,000
Tanzania	1,553	326,434	36,481,000
Uganda	758	148,801	26,907,000
West Congo	454	264,781	34,793,466
Eritrea Mission Field	3	501	4,670,000
Burundi Association	186	88,093	7,795,000
North East Congo Attached Territory	803	147,707	17,418,001
Totals June 30, 2005	9,210	2,120,609	265,985,000



- 1 Congo:** Maternity-surgical ward at Songa Adventist Hospital, the only medical facility in hundreds of miles. Help establish a new union mission office in northeast Congo, an area of high church growth.
- 2 Ethiopia:** Provide classrooms for Ethiopia Adventist Secondary School, a school of about 1,000 students in southern Ethiopia.
- 3 Uganda:** Provide a health center on the campus of Bugema University to serve the university and the surrounding population, who have no other medical recourse.
- 4 Kenya:** Surgical ward for Kendu Adventist Hospital.