

Mission Teen

**West-Central Africa Division
Third Quarter 2007**



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Mission Teen

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Building for Eternity

making missions meaningful

Leader's Planner

West-Central Africa Division

The Challenge

The church is growing at an astronomical rate in Africa—faster than resources can keep up. “Build it and they will fill it” is not a hollow promise in Africa. Build a church, and it will be filled; build a school, and students will come. But building anything is a challenge for most Africans, whose earnings provide little more than the bare necessities. Congregations struggle for years to build a simple church, and often the schools and hospitals they need so desperately are totally out of their financial reach.

The Opportunities

Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help congregations throughout West-Central Africa provide the following:

- Churches for existing congregations in Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.
- A secondary school in Nigeria, and a primary school in Cameroon.
- Complete construction on phase one of the Adventist hospital in Buea, Cameroon.
- Establish evangelistic training centers in Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

GraceLink Connections

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

Community	19, 23, 25, 27
Service	9, 11, 15, 21
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The West-Central Africa Division includes the countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Benin

Benin is the birthplace of voodoo (or vodun), a religion whose rituals and influence permeate virtually every aspect of the people's lives. When a person accepts Jesus as their Savior and joins the Adventist Church, they must turn away from voodoo. Sometimes this means leaving family and friends as well. When trouble strikes, faith is severely tested, and many leave their new faith rather than fight the spirits. Most Adventist churches in Benin are temporary structures made of traditional materials. Providing a permanent building in which to worship is a huge step in showing people that Jesus is with them to stay. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide at least one church in Benin.

Cameroon

Cameroon is a relatively stable country with a strong, developing economy. Two projects will receive part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. A primary school in Bertoua will provide Christian education for students who face Sabbath problems in government schools.

A significant portion of the offering will help complete the first phase of construction on an Adventist hospital in Buea in northwestern Cameroon. A clinic on the site has served the community for years, but the area urgently needs a hospital.

Gambia

Gambia, a tiny strip of land straddling the Gambia River and surrounded on three sides by Senegal, has just three churches for its more than 800 members. Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a church for Gambia.

Liberia and Sierra Leone

Liberia and Sierra Leone have only recently emerged from devastating civil wars. The economies as well as the people of these two countries are still struggling to provide basic

necessities such as electricity and clean drinking water. But people are searching for hope, and the Adventist Church is actively reaching out to draw people to Jesus. As people respond to the gospel, the church is stretched beyond its limits to provide churches and nurturing programs for believers.

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help two existing congregations in the capital cities of Monrovia and Freetown build church homes. In addition, the church in both countries has land on which to build evangelistic training

centers where believers can receive training in soul winning and community outreach. Once established, these centers will be self-supporting.

Nigeria

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation. The nation has a strong and growing Adventist community that numbers 233,700 members in a population of 131.5 million people.

Rich in mineral reserves, especially oil, Nigeria struggles to overcome setbacks caused by corrupt political rulers. And disturbances between the mostly

Muslim northern region of the country and the predominantly Christian southern region continue to disturb the country. But in spite of these disturbances, work of the Adventist Church continues to grow. Recently the church in Nigeria divided into two conferences to serve the large membership more effectively.

The newly formed East Nigeria Conference will receive help to establish a secondary school in its territory. Babcock University, the church's 3,500-student university near Lagos, will receive money to build a chapel on its campus.

Resources

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

National Geographic magazines often include articles and photos on the countries featured this quarter. Check out the March 2001 issue, which deals with Africa in general, and look in the most recent editions of *National Geographic* for articles that may have been printed after this quarterly went to press.

Check the Web: To look up countries featured this quarter on the Internet, type in the country's name. Most countries have at least an embassy page, but many have far more links to interesting material on their homeland.

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

Video: The **Adventist Mission DVD**, produced by the General Conference Office of Adventist Mission, features a number of three-, five-, and 10-minute segments that highlight the projects and mission stories in the West-Central Africa Division as well as mission outreach activities around the world. Segments are suitable for Sabbath School, church, or the period between these services. Check with your Sabbath School superintendent for your church's copy of the DVD, or contact Adventist Mission at www.AdventistMission.org/DVD.

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

Draw a simple church on poster board or cardboard. Divide the church into 100 segments, each representing 1 percent of the

quarter's mission offering goal. Each week, color in the segments representing the proportion of the offering goal received that week in Sabbath School. (Ask the church treasurer to advise you of any offerings received in tithe envelopes so this figure can be added to the total.)

Remind members that the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is a special opportunity to support world missions in general and the West-Central Africa Division in particular.

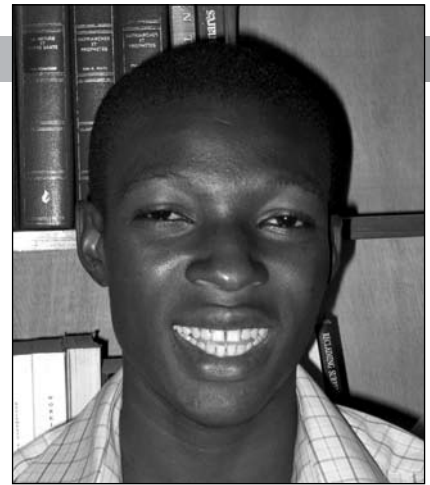
Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Fourth quarter will feature the Southern Asia Division. Projects include a secondary school in Ongole, a boys' dormitory at Raymond Memorial Higher Secondary School in Falakata, West Bengal, 20 churches for Orissa State, and 20 churches for the rest of Southern Asia.

First quarter 2008 will feature the Euro-Asia Division.

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

After dancing well one night, he began having pains in his legs. His father said someone had cursed him and he might die.



Daniel

The Ghost Dancer

Daniel

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

I am Daniel—at least that is the name I have taken. I live in the country of Benin, the birthplace of voodoo.

Spirits of Voodoo

My grandmother was a voodoo priestess. When she died, my mother took her place. My father was also a voodoo worshipper, so I was deeply into voodoo. I watched my parents perform many voodoo ceremonies.

My mother and grandmother said that they belonged to the spirit from the sea. They believe that a spirit in the sea takes possession of a person who must become a priestess. The person, nearly always a woman, performs ceremonies to make women fertile, to help them get jobs or money, to make a man fall in love with them, or to give them power. People bring a goat, chicken, drinks, or money to have a service performed. Once a person comes to this priestess for service, that person becomes a servant of the priestess and of the spirit of the sea. You can tell who these

priestesses are because on Friday they all wear white.

Women who came to the priestess would be told to whisper their problem to a cowry shell. The shell is put near the idol, which is supposed to whisper the person's problem to the priestess. Then the priestess tosses the shell on the ground and chants. The position of the cowry shell tells the priestess what the problem is. Then the priestess tells the person what they must do and bring to receive what they wish. Sometimes they must bring an animal sacrifice before they receive the herbs or oil that will "cure" their illness.

My father worshipped the spirits of dead people. He called on them to come back and bring peace to people who were troubled.

The Dancing Devils

I was supposed to follow my parents into voodoo. My father initiated me into the secrets of how he does his work. He explained that the "ghosts" that dance during voodoo ceremonies are really just

men or boys. He invited me to join him in the dancing and be one of the "ghosts." He told me that if I danced well, people would give me money. "But be careful," he warned, "for others will become jealous of you and will try to kill you."

One time some people hired our group of dancing devils to perform in a ceremony. We all danced together, but I danced very well and got quite a bit of money. I did not notice that anyone seemed jealous of me, but when I returned home I did not feel well.

A few days later my legs started swelling and became painful. I showed my father, and he told me someone had put a curse on me. He said it was urgent that I get treatment immediately, or I could die. I did not know who had cursed me, but I was afraid.

I went to an old voodoo priest, who treated me, and within a few days I was feeling better. But I decided this devil dancing was too dangerous and I needed to get out of it—fast.

Turnaround

I had heard of Jesus before, but I laughed at Christians, for I did not think their God was any different from voodoo gods. But after my brush with death, I was not going to make fun of anyone's God. So when I heard an evangelist speaking one day, I did not make fun of him. Instead I went inside the tent and sat down to listen. It seemed that the speaker knew me, for he spoke right to me. I was touched by what he said, and I continued to attend the meetings. When the pastor invited people to abandon traditional gods and give our lives to God, I stood. I wanted to become God's servant.

I kept my decision to become a Christian a secret from my parents, for I knew that they would be angry. But I studied the Bible with the evangelist. And when I was ready, I went to a distant city to be baptized.

Shortly after my baptism, my father called me to dance in a big ghost festival in our home village. I told my father, "No,

I don't dance anymore." He insisted, so I took a deep breath and said, "I have found a power that is stronger than witchcraft." I knew that my words were a challenge to my father and the ghost dancers who go into the bush to practice and do their juju [witchcraft], usually by putting crushed herbs on their skin.

Kidnapped

When I did not show up for the practice session in the bush, some people came to remind me. I told them I was not going to dance. They argued and tried to convince me, but I refused. Then these dancers grabbed me and forced me to go with them.

When we arrived at the place where the ghost dancers were preparing for the dance, someone forced me to drink something, and I lost consciousness. They tried to wake me, but I did not wake up until the next day. They tried to get me to dance, but I could not even stand. Finally my father told them to leave me alone. I slept through the entire

ghost ceremony.

After the ceremonies ended and I regained consciousness, my father took me aside and reminded me of vows I had taken to not tell anyone what we did in our dancing. Then a friend told me to leave the village or face death. I left my village and have not returned.

I was 18 years old, had no job and no money, and had just three or four years of education. But God has not abandoned me. I am learning a trade now so that I can support myself. It is not safe for me to go to my father's village, for I know that the other people in the ghost group will try to kill me. I am not afraid of them, for I believe that Jesus is stronger than voodoo gods.

Your mission offering provides missionaries to tell the people of Benin and the world that Jesus is the only true God. Please give generously to missions. 🌍

Daniel lives in southern Benin.

Voodoo (or vodun) is an animist religion that originated in Benin and spread through tribal groups in western Africa. It traveled with slaves to Brazil, Haiti, and parts of North America, where it is still practiced. Rituals include drumming, dancing, ancestor worship, and animal sacrifice. Dancers become possessed by a demon or spirit and

speaking with the voice of that demon or of a recently dead family member.

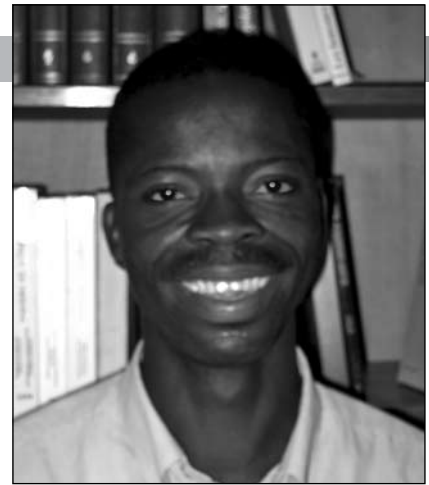
Hundreds of spirits are believed to control nature—the wind, the sea, the sky—and bring—or withhold—health, wealth, and happiness. Followers go to a voodoo priest or priestess for advice or to place or be released from a curse.

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray for Daniel and other young people who have turned their backs on voodoo and are living for Jesus. Pray that they will fearlessly stand firm in their faith and share God's love with others.

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

He tried to teach a family about God, but a girl living with the family often interrupted with comments about his church.



Laurent

Almost a Priest

Laurent Zinse

I come from a Christian family in southwestern Benin [*locate Benin on the map*]. From the time I was young I wanted to serve God as a priest, so when I reached high school, I decided to enter a seminary. I was zealous in my faith, and I often went to neighboring homes to teach people about God.

The Troublemaker

One day while I was teaching a family about God, a girl who was staying in the home made comments about how my faith was not backed up by the Bible. I tried to ignore her, but it seemed that whenever I went to this house the girl would disrupt the meetings.

One day while I was there she came into the room and said, “Oh, you are here to teach these people false ideas?” She then quoted part of Isaiah 66:3, where it says, “Whoever burns . . . incense [is] like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways” (NIV). This verse stuck in my head and worried me because I knew that

my church burned incense when we worshipped.

Later I talked to a priest about what this girl said. “Please, tell me what I can say to this girl who is always accusing me of following falsehoods,” I pleaded. But instead of answering me, he said, “Oh, never mind. They are ignorant and don’t know anything.” But I did not agree. The girl knew more about the Bible than I did.

I began thinking about what my church taught and what the Bible teaches. I found other things that my church practiced that were not upheld by the Bible. I became disheartened by my church, and before long I dropped out of the seminary. Eventually I stopped going to church altogether.

The Quest

I thought, *Surely somewhere there is a church that teaches what the Bible says and does not follow tradition.* One of my friends in the seminary told me about a radio program he had heard called *The Voice of Hope*. He said he was

studying a Bible correspondence course sponsored by this program and had found some things that did not support what the priests had told us. I decided to enroll in *The Voice of Hope* Bible course with my friend.

I received the first three lessons and sent them in, but no more lessons came. I wondered whether they had gotten lost in the mail. Then two weeks later another friend told me that he knew of a pastor who could help me understand the Bible truths. He introduced me to this pastor, who gave me the same three lessons I had already filled out. I asked him, “Are you the person who does these lessons? I’ve filled out these three lessons and never gotten the rest.” The man apologized and said he would be sure I received my lessons—in person.

I completed the rest of the lessons in the series and returned them to the pastor. Then he invited me to visit the Adventist church, but I was not ready to go to another church yet. The pastor told me about a Revelation Seminar that

he was holding. This sounded interesting, so I decided to go. Again the pastor invited me to go to his church, and again I hesitated.

Finally I decided to go to a Wednesday night service, but that night a fight almost broke out outside the church! I was shocked! *I don't need to go here anymore*, I thought. *They might beat me too.*

The pastor apologized for what happened and invited me to his house. There he told me that the church is not a shrine for saints but a hospital for sinners. I understood, and I continued going to the church. Thankfully no more fights broke out.

Test of Faith

A few weeks later I had to take an exam for school. A friend was taking the same exam and he suggested that we go visit a man who could help us pass. I suspected this was a juju man (a witch doctor). I was surprised when he gave us a kola nut and told us to whisper our wish to the

kola nut. I whispered my desire to do well on the exam to the nut, then gave it to the man.

"You are supposed to succeed with your exam," he said, "but your aunt will cause you to fail. She has done witchcraft to make you fail."

I was astounded by this revelation because I have only one aunt, and I love her dearly because she took care of me when I was young. The man told me I needed to make a sacrifice to negate the juju that my aunt supposedly put on me, but I refused. I decided to pray instead.

"God," I prayed later that day, "I want to know that You are God—my God. Please let me pass this exam and show me that this is Your true church."

I took the exam, and so did my older brother. We scored the same on every part of this exam, but somehow I passed and he failed. I told him that I should have failed, but I had prayed and God had allowed me to pass. By that I knew that I should become a Seventh-day Adventist. My

older brother acknowledged that my God is strong, but he refused to become an Adventist.

I continued going to church and found that it met my spiritual needs wonderfully. The worshippers were happy, and I appreciated the reverence and order I found in the worship services. One day in church I opened the hymnal and read the words of a song that really impressed me. They said, "Come to the Savior who loves you. Come without delay. He broke the chains and set you free. Come. He wants to welcome you." What a lovely thought! I continued attending church and studying for six months before I was baptized.

Today I thank God for that girl who pestered me week after week as I tried to share my former faith with the family with whom she lived. Her pricks drove me to find the truth, and there I found God as well. 🌍

Laurent Zinse shares his faith while he studies at a university in Cotonou, Benin.

let's talk

? In light of Laurent's story, why is it important that we read and memorize Scripture? *[We need to have God's word locked in our minds so we can share it with others, and so we can discern the truth if someone tries to lead us astray.]*

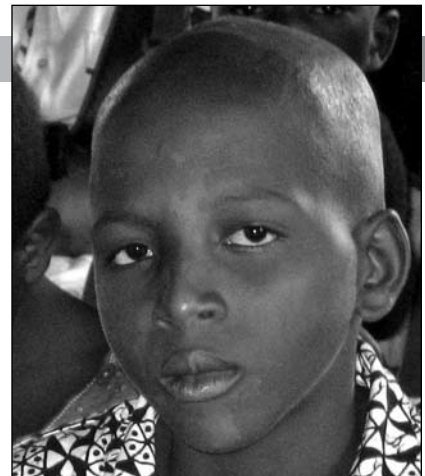
? The first time Laurent attended the church a fight almost broke out. What did the pastor say to help him understand the purpose of a church? *[He said that the church is a hospital for sinners, not a shrine for saints. We need to remember this when we are tempted to pass judgment on someone who visits—or regularly attends—our own church. We must welcome them and seek to be good examples to them.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that Laurent will remain strong in his faith so that he can help bring others to Christ.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

"Papa, please come and listen to the music down the road! It is so beautiful!"



Basile

Basile's Discovery

Djossou Simon

Papa was glad to be back in his home village in Benin, West Africa [*locate on a map*]. His family was large. It included his two wives and lots of children, including Basile [bah-SEEL]. Then there were Papa's brother and sister and all of Basile's cousins, too. They finally arrived in the village where Papa had been born.

Papa and his older sons built a compound house (several hut-like rooms surrounded by a courtyard wall). He started working as a baker, and soon the family members settled into a comfortable routine.

Benin is well known for a form of witchcraft called "voodoo." Papa was convinced that his own father had died as a result of a curse someone had put on him. Therefore, Papa wanted to be sure his family was protected from the spirits. He filled his house with voodoo gods—the gods of water, thunder, snakes, trees, rocks, dead ancestors, and more. Everywhere there were fetishes—objects that the voodoo priest had blessed—that Papa believed would protect

his home and family. At Papa's bakery, he and the other workers often argued over which fetish provided the best protection.

Beautiful Music

One day as Basile was walking along the street toward home, he heard a choir singing outside a church. Curious, he stopped to listen. It was such beautiful music! He hurried home and called out, "Papa, Papa! Come hear the beautiful music down the road." Papa smiled at his son. Although it was a busy day, he stopped his work and followed Basile out into the street.

Papa and Basile heard the music before they could see the choir. They stood a short distance away and listened as the choir sang songs Basile had never heard before. When they stopped singing, Basile and his father watched as two men stepped into a large concrete tub of water. The older man raised his hand and spoke some words, then he pushed the younger man under the water! The older man then raised the

young man quickly out of the water and hugged him! Basile and his father had never seen a ceremony quite like this before, and Papa wondered what kind of voodoo it was. He was going to tap Basile on the shoulder to tell him they should leave when the choir sang another song. When it ended, Papa and Basile turned to walk home. But a man stepped up to them and invited them to come and enjoy the music again the next week. "We meet every Saturday morning, and we would be happy to have you come," the man said.

Papa thanked the man, then father and son walked toward home. "Papa, the music was so beautiful. May I come back next week and listen to the music again?" Basile asked.

Papa smiled at Basile. "Yes, Son, you may return," Papa said. "But don't let anyone put you into that tank of water." Even though Papa trusted in the power of the spirits, he did not mind if his son wanted to hear the Christians sing.

Learning About God

The next Saturday morning Basile walked to the Christian meeting place and sat down. He enjoyed the happy music and listened to the stories about Jesus. Week after week he attended the meetings, returning home to tell his parents what he had heard.

One day Basile came home from the meeting with a serious look on his face. "Why are you so sad, my son?" Papa asked.

"Papa," Basile answered, "the pastor said that the voodoo fetishes have no power of their own. He said their power lies with the devil, and the devil is not as strong as Jesus, the Son of the living God. If that is true, we should not worship the fetishes but should worship Jesus."

Basile told his family what he was learning at the church and invited them to come to the church with him. Basile's mother and sisters began going to church with Basile, and in time they accepted Jesus as their Savior.

But Basile's oldest brother did not like this change in his family. He wanted his family to see that this new religion was not good.

He devised a plan to shame the church pastor by asking questions he was sure the pastor could not answer. On Sabbath Basile's brother went to church with the family in order to confront the pastor. But as he asked his questions, the pastor lovingly gave him answers from the Bible. In time Basile's brother also accepted Jesus as his Savior and joined the Adventist Church.

Papa reluctantly got rid of his fetishes. In time he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. But he could not be baptized, because he had two wives.

Tragedy and Test

Soon after Basile and his family joined the Adventist Church, tragedy struck. One of his younger brothers died. Members of the larger, extended family were not at all pleased when they learned that Papa had forsaken the family's traditional gods. At the boy's funeral family members mocked the new Christians. However, God had His own way of working things out.

Basile's aunt became ill. The

family hired voodoo priests to conduct ceremonies to get rid of the evil spirits that were making her sick, but his aunt remained seriously ill. Even the modern medicine could not cure her. Desperate, she turned to Papa for help. With earnest prayer, Papa called on God to heal his sister. God answered this prayer, and his sister was healed, much to the surprise of everyone. Following her healing, Basile's aunt began attending church, and eventually she was baptized, along with two of her children. After much prayer and many hours of sharing God's love with him, the aunt's husband also was converted.

One day Papa's second wife agreed to leave the family and return to her home village. Once Papa had only one wife, he was baptized into church membership. Now the family is united in Christ, all because young Basile believed and shared what he learned about the love of God. 🌍

Djossou Simon is Basile's older brother. He told this story on his way to study for the ministry.

Let's talk

? Basile's family believed in the power of voodoo, a form of witchcraft. What does voodoo, or witchcraft, mean? What is a fetish? *[Voodoo is a form of witchcraft, a belief that humans can manipulate the spirits of animals, demons, and ancestors to work their own will. A fetish is some tangible object that a witch doctor or voodoo priest has blessed or cursed for a specific purpose.]*

? What obstacles or difficulties would you imagine a person must overcome when converting from voodoo worship to Christianity? *[Suggested answers: Many new Christians find it extremely difficult to give up their former reliance on fetishes and witchcraft when crises come into their lives. They must learn to trust in a power they cannot see. Family members often disown those who convert to Christianity.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray this quarter that people who still believe in witchcraft will see God's love in action and will trust Him with their lives. Pray that new Christians who have come out of a background of witchcraft will remain strong in Jesus when difficulties strike.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

He told God he would not believe until he saw, and God showed him.



Olanrewaju



One-Ojo

The Canceled Funeral

Olanrewaju Ogungbile

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

One day after school, I overheard my sister talking to a friend in the next room. "But it happened," a girl said. "The man was dead, and now he is alive." *How can a dead person come back to life?* I wondered. Then I said aloud, "That could never happen."

"It's the truth, Larie," my sister said. "The man was dead, and now he's alive."

I knew that God had raised people from the dead in Bible times. But miracles such as that didn't happen anymore. Or did they? I knelt and prayed the prayer of Thomas. "Lord, if this is true, let me see it with my own eyes. Then I will believe."*

I soon forgot about the dead man who had been raised to life.

Global Mission Miracle

When I finished high school I applied to serve as a Global Mission pioneer before starting college. I was assigned to a remote region of central Nigeria where few outsiders ever went and where we had no Adventist believers.

I settled in a village and began making friends. Most of the villagers worshipped idols, but some allowed me to share the gospel with them. One teenage girl named One-Ojo [OH-nay OH-joh] seemed especially interested in learning about God. I began studying the Bible with her.

"She's Dead"

One afternoon a boy ran to my room shouting that One-Ojo was dead. "She died last night," the boy said. "The family wants you to come before they bury her."

Dazed, I slipped on my shoes and ran toward One-Ojo's home. When I arrived, I found her body lying on a straw mat, bound hand and foot and ready for burial. I stared at her as I thought about our Bible study just the evening before. *How can she be dead?* I wondered. I touched her arm; it was stiff and cold.

I asked for permission to pray before the family buried her. About 20 people in the room watched as I knelt beside her burial mat and prayed. I asked

God to give this girl her life back to teach these people that God is all-powerful.

We had been praying for about an hour when I noticed beads of sweat on One-Ojo's body. I laid my hand on her arm and felt warmth. Encouraged, I continued praying. Then One-Ojo sneezed.

Everyone in the room heard it too, and they ran outside terrified. I continued praying, and One-Ojo opened her eyes. She struggled to free herself from the ropes that bound her. I called her brother to come and untie the burial ropes.

When her brother saw One-Ojo struggling, he began shaking with fear. But I urged him to untie his sister. When she was freed, we helped her to a chair. The mourners who had fled now crowded around the doorway and windows to see the dead girl who was now alive.

One-Ojo asked for food, and someone brought it to her. Soon her strength returned, and we praised God together. Then I told the family that God had healed their daughter in answer

to prayer, but that God was not willing to share His glory with witchcraft. I warned them not to put herbs on One-Ojo according to their custom, for this is a form of witchcraft, and it would not please God. The girl's mother and brother nodded in agreement.

It was dark when I returned to my room. My legs were shaking, and I felt weak and exhausted. I knelt down and prayed, "God, today my Thomas prayer has been answered. I believe. Use me as You will. I am Yours." Then I fell into bed and slept soundly.

She's Dead—Again!

About 1:00 in the morning a loud knock at my door woke me. "Pastor Larie, come!" a woman's voice begged. I opened the door and found One-Ojo's mother standing there. "Come!" she begged. "One-Ojo is dead again."

"How can that be?" I asked. "God's power never fails." I hurried with her to where One-Ojo lay on her bed. I checked her pulse and her breathing. She was dead—again. As I knelt down beside her, I smelled the witch doctor's herbs that someone had spread on her body.

"Who put those herbs on her body?" I asked. One-Ojo's mother said that her husband must have

done it, for he was the only other person in the house.

"God raised her from the dead," I said, "and He deserves the glory for her resurrection. But someone has dishonored God and applied these herbs to her, and now she is dead again!"

I turned and prayed as the family waited silently. A few minutes later One-Ojo opened her eyes and sat up. I stayed with her a few minutes. Then before I returned home, I warned the family again not to allow anyone to touch her body with the witch doctor's herbs. Her mother and brother nodded vigorously. Then I went home and fell into bed, exhausted.

I was still sleeping when a knock awakened me at dawn. "Pastor Larie, come. She's dead again!" One-Ojo's mother cried. In disbelief I opened the door and asked what had happened.

"While we slept, her father came home. Maybe he put the herbs on her," she said. Someone wanted One-Ojo to die. Was it the father? Perhaps it was her mother, too. Should I go back and pray again? Would God be honored? One-Ojo's mother knelt before me and begged me to come and pray for her daughter. I went.

Once more I prayed for the girl, and she awoke again.

This time I told her mother to take One-Ojo away from the village. Her mother agreed and had One-Ojo's brother take her to relatives in another village. One-Ojo returned home several months later, strong and healthy. She continued her Bible studies and was baptized along with nine other new believers. On her baptismal day One-Ojo took the name Blessing to signify her new life. Her presence in the village is a testimony to God's power to save, even from death. Today 70 believers worship in a simple shelter near One-Ojo's home in central Nigeria.

Word Spreads

The story of One-Ojo spread throughout central Nigeria and opened doors to share God's love with people in neighboring villages. Many people have come to know Jesus as their friend and Savior because of God's power in the life of One-Ojo.

Your mission offerings support the work of Global Mission pioneers around the world. The more you give to missions, the more people we can tell that Jesus loves them. Thank you for giving to world missions. 🌐

* John 20:25, NIV.

Olanrewaju Ogungbile (*Larie*) is from Oyo, Nigeria, and is studying theology at Babcock University in Nigeria.

Let's talk

? In what situations might God perform a miracle of healing or even resurrection today? Why do you think he heals some and not others? *[Guide the discussion to help students understand that God performs miracles in answer to prayer when human resources fail, and to jump-start faith in people who witness them.]*

? One-Ojo now has a powerful testimony to share. What is your testimony regarding Christ? What has He done in your life?

PRAY pray

Pray that One-Ojo will continue to tell others what God did for her. Pray for her relatives who still have not given their hearts to God.

GraceLink Connection: Worship.

A young girl discovers Jesus and remains faithful to Him in spite of her parents' efforts to force her to give up her faith...



Monsurat

My Faith Is Firm

Monsurat [mohn-soo-RAHT] is a teenage girl from Nigeria. She was curious about her neighbor. He did not go to the mosque on Friday, and he seemed so happy. She wondered what made him so different. She greeted him when she saw him on the street and watched him as he worked around his home. Finally she found the courage to ask him the question that had burned in her heart. "What religion do you follow?"

"I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian," he replied. Monsurat had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists, though she knew a bit about Christians. He offered her a book, *Steps to Christ*, to read, and she accepted it. Monsurat tucked the book under her shawl and hurried home. When she was alone, she took out the book and began reading it. Although her parents could not read, Monsurat knew that they would be angry if they knew she had a Christian book, so she kept it hidden.

Monsurat studied in a boarding school some distance from her home. She liked the school and the girls who lived in the dormitory with her. Busy with her studies, she soon forgot about the neighbor with the strange religion.

Sneaking Off to Church

When Monsurat returned home for vacation, she remembered her friendly neighbor and greeted him as she passed. One day he invited her to visit his church on Saturday.

"I can't go," Monsurat said, genuinely sorry. "I have special classes on Saturday to prepare for my high school leaving exams." She saw the disappointment in her neighbor's eyes. Then she had an idea. "Wait," she said. "I want to see what your church is like. Where is it?" The man told her where the church was located. That Saturday Monsurat prepared for her class, but went to the neighbor's church instead. She was curious to see if the other people in the church were as kind

as her neighbor.

The church members welcomed her warmly. And she enjoyed the service, even though it was very different from the religious services she was used to. When the pastor invited her back, Monsurat smiled and nodded.

Every week Monsurat dressed for class but went to church instead. Because church ended about the same time as her class, her parents never knew. Monsurat received a Bible and began reading it. She learned to pray as Christians prayed and asked God to help her live a good life. She had been a mischievous girl, but she was determined that her teachers and dean would see a different girl when she returned to school.

A Changed Life

Back at school, Monsurat discovered an Adventist church an hour from her school by bus. She got up early on Saturday morning to catch the bus to church. She spent most of the day with the church members and

returned home in the evening. Before the school year ended, Monsurat gave her life to Christ and asked to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Monsurat did not tell her friends where she went on Saturdays, but they noticed changes in her. She had become more responsible and obedient, and she was not the first one to suggest mischief. When vacation came, Monsurat attended her neighbor's church. Her parents noticed she was going out on Saturdays and asked where she went.

When the family went to the mosque to pray, Monsurat went as well, but instead of reciting the prayers she had learned long ago, she prayed in her heart to Jesus. Her mother noticed that she was not reciting the prayers and asked why. Monsurat decided that she should no longer hide her faith from her parents. She would be honest and tell them she had become a Christian.

Her parents were angry. They forbade her to speak to her Christian neighbor or attend church. They urged her friends and teachers to do what they could to force her to renounce her Christian faith. But as much as Monsurat wanted to obey her

parents, she refused to give up her Jesus. She stood firm in the face of her parents' anger.

You're Not Our Daughter

Finally Monsurat's father told her that she was no longer his daughter. She had to leave the house. And he would not pay for the two remaining years of her high school education.

Monsurat was terrified of being on her own. But she prayed, and God's peace flooded over her. She claimed Psalm 27:10 as her hope: "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me" (NIV). Church members helped Monsurat pay her school fees, and a friend who lived near her school let her live with her. Thus she was able to continue studying.

Monsurat often tried to talk to her parents, but they refused to listen to her. She felt very lonely. Church members visited Monsurat's family, pleading with her parents to let their daughter return home. Finally her parents allowed Monsurat to return home.

But when Monsurat got her exam results, she discovered that she had to retake her English exam. "Use this special lotion," her mother said. "It will help you

do well on the exam."

"I can't use that," Monsurat said. "I will depend on God." Monsurat's parents became upset. "If you don't do what we tell you, you must leave this house again," her father yelled.

Growing Up

Monsurat realized she could not continue living at home. She asked a church elder what to do, and he suggested that she apply to study at the Adventist university in Nigeria. There she could live and study in peace. The church would sponsor her and pay her fees. Monsurat enrolled at Babcock University to study nursing. Her parents are proud of what she has achieved, and they occasionally visit her. Monsurat prays that one day her family will accept Jesus.

Monsurat adds, "I hope my story will help other young people to stand firm in their faith. Then I will be happy."

Our mission offerings support many forms of evangelism as well as Adventist education around the world. Thank you for your generous gifts to help tell the world of God's love. 🌍

Monsurat Ateef is studying nursing at Babcock University in Nigeria.

Let's talk

? Was it right for Monsurat to hide her new faith from her parents?

- Why or why not? *[When she first received the book from her neighbor, she had no understanding of God's laws. Later, as she matured, she realized that she needed to be truthful about her faith. However, when she told her parents of her faith, she faced serious problems at home.]*

? How do we hide or reveal our faith in our daily lives? What are some ways we might be living a lie that we need to confess?

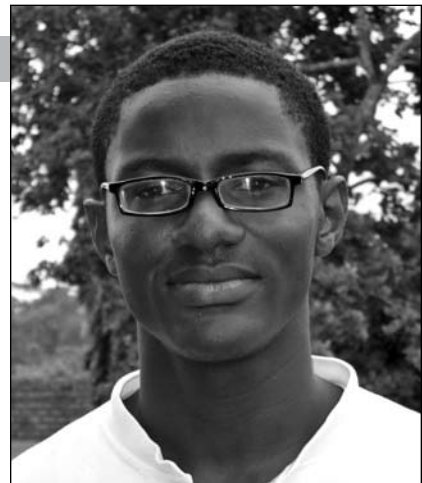
- *[Allowing our friends to gossip or tell off-color stories without objecting, or doing things that Christians should not do, is as much a denial of our faith as Peter's words, "I don't know him" (Luke 22:57, NIV).]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray for Monsurat as she continues to share her faith with her parents. Pray that her parents will respond to God's call and accept Jesus as their Savior.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

Why did this new channel appear on our cable network, and why was it on for just one week?



Melvin

Hope for a Week

Melvin Abu

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

I grew up in a family of Sabbath-keeping charismatic Christians in Nigeria. I did not understand why we worshipped on Saturday, especially since most of the Christians I knew worshipped on Sunday. Then two years ago I lost my mother. I was traumatized. I wondered why God would do this to my family. I spent a lot of time thinking and finally decided to try attending another church. In fact, the rest of the family also began visiting other churches. But none of them seemed to meet my spiritual needs.

Chance Encounter

Our family has cable television, and one day when I was home, I flopped down in a chair and began flipping through channels. I looked for our regular Christian cable TV network, but it was not on the air for some reason. Instead I found another Christian television station called the Hope Channel. It looked interesting, so I stayed to watch some of it. Wow, it was powerful! I found myself

thirsting after what this television station was offering, and I watched it as much as I could. I saw some evangelistic meetings and other solid programs. During the evangelistic meetings the speaker talked about the Sabbath, which I thought I knew about. But he helped me understand why we keep Saturday instead of Sunday.

The speaker talked about other Bible truths that I was not so familiar with, such as the mark of the beast. I began to realize that all these truths mesh together into one grand plan that God has for this world. I had seen only bits and pieces of it before, but this speaker was helping me understand it from God's point of view. It was not just about whether we worship on Saturday or on Sunday; it was about obeying God and understanding what He wants for us and why.

I learned that Jonathan, one of my school friends, had seen the same programs. We talked about what we had seen and discussed whether these things were true

and what we should do about what we were learning. If we followed this Adventist religion, we would have to go against our parents' religion. How could we change everything in our lives?

Jonathan and I talked about the command to "come out of Babylon," and we felt that we had little choice but to obey if we were serious about our faith. My friend was a Sundaykeeper, and I had been attending church on Sunday also. Before we ended our discussion we had decided to search for the Adventist church in our area.

We found an Adventist church and attended worship that Sabbath. We liked the church and the people who worshipped there, even though the church was small and simple. I think there were only about 20 or so people there. I wondered how this could be the true church when so few people were worshipping there. But they welcomed us and gave us some literature to read. We listened in the Sabbath School Bible study

and could see that we had been deceived. I had wanted to serve God faithfully since childhood, but I realized that all the time we had been breaking God's law.

Sharing the News

I was so excited about the new things I was learning that I wanted my family and friends to know about them also. I have younger brothers and sisters, and although my father is not sure about my new faith, I talk with them about what I now believe. I'm the oldest, and they listen to me. I tell them to read the tracts and magazines I leave in the house. I try to explain to them why the Ten Commandments are so important and how they apply to our lives. I want my family to understand the basis of my faith. Then I know they will have a strong foundation to build on.

Jonathan and I shared our faith with friends at school and explained to them our decision to become Seventh-day Adventists. They still don't understand, but we will continue to pray for them and explain things as they ask.

My father listened to what I was saying about this new church and watched a few of the programs on the Hope Channel. He warned me to "just be careful." I have heeded his warning and studied every point of faith from the Bible as well as listening to the pastor and Bible teachers. I feel confident that this is the path God wants me to walk in. I believe that my father will eventually come to understand the truth as I do. I decided that I would be baptized.

About this time I was finishing high school. I knew I had passed the school leaving exams with scores high enough to be admitted to college. But for some reason my name never appeared on the list of students who had scored high enough for admission to university in Nigeria. I wondered why God had let this happen, and I did not understand how this could be part of God's will for me. But in time I realized that God knew all along what was best for me. I learned about Babcock University, the Adventist Church's 3,500-student university

near the capital city. I was accepted to study there, where I can take classes that will nurture my new faith while I prepare for the future. I thank God for leading me to this school.

This quarter part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Babcock University build another church on campus. Currently there are 12 separate congregations meeting in a church building, lecture halls, and dormitory meeting halls. But we need another church building to accommodate the students. Please give generously this Thirteenth Sabbath, so Babcock will be able to build the church it needs and lead many of the non-Adventist young people to the feet of Jesus even as it nurtures new believers such as I. 🌍

Melvin Abu is 17 years old and lives in Nigeria. He is a freshman studying microbiology at Babcock University. He hopes to become a medical missionary and help wipe out diseases such as typhoid and malaria in Africa.

let's talk

- ? Do you think that it would be difficult to practice a religion that your family did not share with you? What difficulties do you see for someone who decides to follow Christ and thus leaves his family religion?
- ? When Melvin, the boy in today's story, flipped through the television channels, he found a new satellite television station, the Hope Channel, sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was on the air for just one week, just at the time when Melvin was searching for truth. Would you call this a miracle? Why or why not? Have you ever witnessed seemingly everyday occurrences that could have been miracles? Talk about them with the class.

PRAY pray

Pray that Melvin will continue to share his faith with his father and brothers and sisters. Pray that God will use him to lead classmates to Jesus, even at the Adventist university.

GraceLink Connection: Worship.
She returned home for her mother's funeral and found two young men living in her father's compound.



Rebecca

Dangerous Friendship

Rebecca*

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

I grew up in a religious family in western Nigeria. When I was 16, my aunt asked my parents to allow me to live with her. She promised to pay my school fees and see that I continued my education. This is not uncommon in my culture; often a relative who has no children of his or her own will adopt a niece or nephew to live with them.

I enrolled in school and settled into my new life. I lived with my aunt for two years. Then one day word came that my mother had died. Sadly, I returned home to my father's village for her funeral and burial.

Strangers Within the Gates

My family lives in a compound house, a cluster of separate hut-like rooms built inside a wall. Each person over a certain age has their own room within the wall. When I arrived home, I discovered that my father had rented out one of our compound rooms to two young men. I greeted them when I met them and learned that they were

Christians. I was curious why my father would rent rooms to Christians, since we were not Christians. But as I chatted with the young men, I found them most pleasant and courteous.

I learned that they were deeply religious—and that they held some of the same religious ideas my family held. They invited me to pray and worship with them. I was interested to know more about Christianity, so I went to one of their meetings. I had no intention of becoming a Christian, but I was curious about what they taught. So I decided to just listen a little bit.

I learned that the two men were planning some meetings, and they invited me to attend. I knew that my father would object if he knew I was going, so I went to the meetings without asking for his permission. I did not attend every meeting, but I went when I could. I was at the meetings the evening that the men introduced the Sabbath. This was an entirely new idea to me, for I thought that every

Christian went to church on Sunday. The lay evangelists explained to me that even before Creation God had set aside Saturday, the seventh day, as holy time.

The more I listened to their teachings, the more interested I became and the more I wanted to learn. I began taking Bible studies with the local pastor, but I was careful not to let anyone know what I was doing.

We studied the Sabbath until I understood it, then the pastor introduced the teaching of Jesus' second coming. I had always thought that Jesus was just a prophet, nothing more. But suddenly I realized that He is God, and He is coming back to take His followers to heaven! I was so touched by what I was learning that I decided I wanted to become a Christian and follow Jesus forever.

That's when problems started. I no longer wanted to go to our house of worship and pray. Sometimes I prayed at home with my father, but even then I

prayed secretly to Jesus. My father noticed these changes and asked me what was happening.

"Why are you not praying anymore?" he asked. "Have you joined these men's religion?" I told him I wanted to become a Christian.

"If you stop praying and stop going to the house of prayer, then you should stop going to school, too. I will not pay your school fees." I knew that my father meant what he was saying, and I became frightened. I had two more years of high school to finish, and there was no way I could finish without my father's help. But I also knew that I did not want to wait until I finished school to become a Christian.

My father told my school principal that I had become a Christian, and the principal watched me closely. Normally we students pray two-by-two before leaving school each day. I did not pray in the traditional way we had been taught, but the principal threatened me and beat me to make me obey. Still I refused.

Finally I had to stay home from school. I stayed at home praying and reading my Bible. Father refused to give me food, so I ate with the lay evangelists. I prayed that God would open a way for

me to return to school.

New Beginnings

The pastor with whom I had been studying was planning a baptism, and I wanted to be part of it. I did not tell my father of the plans, but somehow he learned about the baptism and forbid me to leave the house that day. I was really sad that I had missed my own baptism. Then I learned that the pastor was going to hold another baptism the next day. I decided to go before my father could stop me. It was a weekday, a day no one would expect a baptism. So I slipped out of the house and hurried to the river. I reached the water before anyone else arrived and begged the pastor to baptize me quickly. Then I changed my clothes so my father would not know what I had done.

One of the lay evangelists told the pastor that my father had refused to pay for my education. The pastor asked the lay evangelist to get my father to write a letter giving permission for someone else to pay my school fees. The missionary suggested that we fast and pray before he asked my father about the letter. For three days we fasted and

prayed, then the lay evangelist approached my father. He explained that Adventists have a good boarding school where I could finish my education if he would agree to send me there. Miraculously my father agreed to let me go.

I was so happy! But I was still worried about my school fees. I knew that I could never afford to pay for my schooling myself, and surely my father would not pay. Then I received word that the local conference would pay my school fees so I can finish high school.

My younger brother sometimes communicates with me, and I tell him about God every chance I get. My prayer is that my father and brother will listen to God's voice and answer when He calls. Your mission offerings help support lay evangelists such as the two young men who led me to Jesus. The offerings support the school I am attending and make it possible for me to complete my education. Thank you for sharing with those you have never met. 🌐

* Not her real name.

Rebecca has completed high school and plans to attend Babcock University and major in education.

let's talk

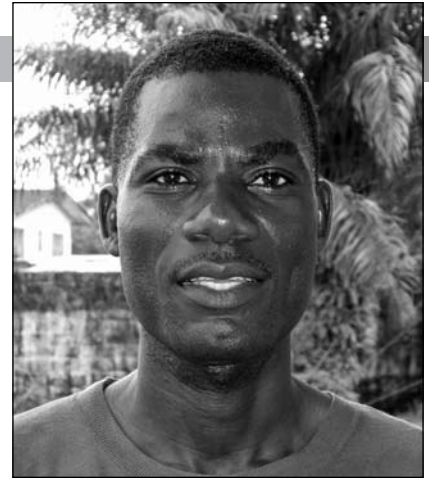
- ? How do you think you would react if you were beaten in school for your faith in God, or if your family refused to feed you
 - because you chose to believe in God? Do you think that you would stay strong as Rebecca has?
- ? Did Rebecca's faith waver when she found herself in difficult situations? [No.] Why do you think that she was able to stand strong? What can you learn from Rebecca's faith that you can apply to your own life?

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that Rebecca's family will soon join her in worshipping God and will be willing to have contact with her again.

GraceLink Connection: Community.

The other zoes waited for him to die, but nothing happened.



Orantho

The Zoe Who Followed Christ

Orantho Flomo

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

I grew up in a small village in the interior of Liberia. We lived in fear of the spirits and knew nothing of Jesus. The men of our village belonged to a secret society called Poro [POH-roh], which teaches boys to become men and passes on secret powers of witchcraft.

My father was the chief of our village's Poro society, and the most powerful *zoe*, or devil leader, in the area. Everyone knew that one day I would succeed him.

Learning Poro Ways

When I was 12 years old, my father sent me to be initiated into Poro. For two years I lived in the bush with other boys my age, learning skills to survive on our own and learning the secrets of Poro. The village elders taught us how to use secret rituals to call on the spirits and how to convince people that we were devils.

Finally we returned to the village, ready to practice what we

had learned. But on the way back to the village, I met some boys who were returning from school in the city. I wanted to go to school too, to learn reading and writing, to be somebody more than just a village boy. But my father opposed formal education and would never allow me to study.

Secret Schooling

Every day my father sent me to our farm to work. But one day I decided, *I'll do it!* I picked up the farm tools and started down the road. But instead of going to the farm, I went to the school in the next village and enrolled myself. I did not tell my father.

I did well in school—so well that I finished the first three grades at the top of my class. The teacher told me to invite my parents to an awards ceremony. But how could I invite my father? He did not even know that I was going to school. Finally I told my father that I was studying a trade, and my instructors wanted to

meet him. So my father dressed in his chiefly robes and walked to the school.

My teacher told my father how proud he should be of me. He presented my father and me with new robes as a sign of respect, and he urged my father to let me continue my studies in a larger school. My father, flush with pride, agreed. But he had no money to pay for my education.

Kumah's Picture Roll

I set out for the city where I hoped to study, but still I had no way to pay my school fees. Then one day as I sat by my fire thinking, a man approached me and sat down. He looked harmless enough, carrying nothing but some rolled paper tucked under his arm. I relaxed and began talking with him.

He introduced himself as Kumah [KOO-mah]. I was curious about the roll of paper and asked him what it was. He said that it was pictures to explain how the

world was created. I was surprised that this man, who said he could not read or write, could know about such things. So I challenged him to show me his pictures. As he explained Creation, I marveled at how he could explain such deep mysteries. He said he was a Seventh-day Adventist lay minister.

I told him that I wanted to attend school, but I had no money. He invited me to live with him and work at the nearby mission school to pay my school fees. Overjoyed, I took Kumah to meet my parents and ask their permission to study in the mission school.

Kumah showed his picture roll to my parents. My father was amazed at what Kumah said and asked him, "Are you saying that there is a better way to worship than the gods we have always followed?" Kumah wisely told my father that I would learn more about this at the mission school, and my parents agreed to let me study there.

I learned a lot about God at school that year; I wanted my family to hear these things too. So

Kumah invited my parents to visit us. He told my father that once he had been a member of the Poro society, but he had discovered God's love and wanted to share it with my parents. Kumah told them that having Jesus in his life was better than any honor a person could give.

Confronting Poro With Jesus

My parents studied with Kumah and accepted Jesus as their Savior. That meant that my father had to turn his back on the Poro society, and this made other Poro members angry. One day the local zoe ordered Father to go into the bush with him. Father agreed, for we knew that God was more powerful than the zoe's magic. The entire family fasted and prayed for Father's safety.

In the bush the zoe said, "What do you have to say for yourself?" Father replied, "I have decided to serve the living God, Jesus Christ. My God can hear prayers."

Father was told to sit in a certain chair. He knew that the chair had been cursed, and that anyone who sat there should die.

But he was no longer afraid. He sat in the chair. The zoes were surprised when Father did not die. They waited longer, and nothing happened. Finally the chief zoe asked my father what he wanted to say. Father answered, "I don't want to be a part of Poro, for I now serve the living God, who is more powerful than Poro gods."

"Then go serve your God," the zoe said, sure that the curse of the chair would kill Father once he reached the village. But God protected him, and nothing happened.

My family was persecuted by the Poro members, but they remained strong in their faith. Today Father is the elder of his village church, and my entire family follows Jesus. I thank God for sending Kumah to teach me about Jesus. Your mission offerings help people such as Kumah reach sin-darkened lives such as ours. Thank you. 🌍

Oranthe Flomo lives in Monrovia, Liberia.

Let's talk

? Witchcraft and the spirit world occupy the minds and influence the activities of millions of people living in villages across Africa and other parts of the world. Why do you think it is difficult to convince these people to follow Jesus? *[The devil is real, and he holds people in fear of the evil spirits. They believe they must keep the evil spirits happy to prevent harm from coming to them. They know nothing of a loving God and find it difficult to believe that any deity acts out of love for them.]*

? How did God reach the hearts of Oranthe, the boy in today's story, and his parents? *[He used a lay evangelist who had once been a member of Poro and understood what the family believed. Then he presented God's love in a way they could understand and accept.]*

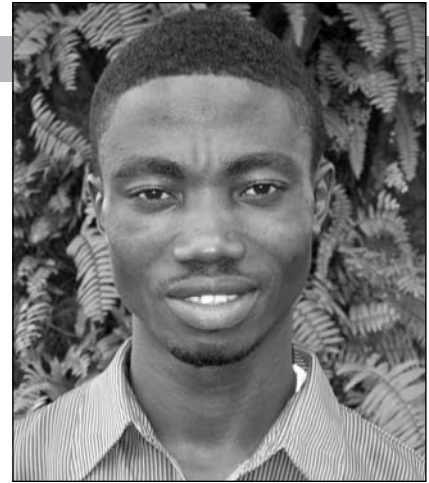
PRAY pray PRAY

Pray for Oranthe as he shares his faith with others who still live in fear of the spirits. Ask God to bless his ministry in the capital city of Liberia.

Pray for Oranthe's family, who still live in the village. They too are now in a position to share God's love and power with people who still believe in the spirits.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

He searched for a quiet place to worship God. When he found it, he tried to introduce it to his family. But it wasn't that easy.



Timothy

Search for a Quiet Place

Timothy Kanasuah

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

My journey to find truth began when I was just a young boy.

Seeking God's Voice

My family and I lived in a village in the interior of Liberia, where my father was a district chief and also a Protestant pastor. Even though we attended church every week, I felt that I did not really know God. I am a quiet person, and the beating drums and loud singing in our church disturbed me. I wanted to find a quiet place to worship God, where I could hear God speak to me.

When I was 13 years old, I left my village to attend school in another area. I visited many churches in search of a church that worships God reverently. I discovered that some churches were even noisier than my family's church. I did not find my quiet place.

Then one of my friends invited me to visit his church, the Seventh-day Adventist church. I was afraid to go with him, for I

had heard rumors that this church worshipped devils. I told my friend that I was afraid I would make God angry if I attended his church. But he kept inviting me. Finally I agreed to go and see for myself whether these people were really as bad as I had heard. I was surprised to find that the church's worship service was orderly, with no beating drums or loud cries. I was impressed, but wasn't ready to join this church.

Forced to Flee

Rebel soldiers were creating trouble in our country. When they entered our area, my family had to flee. My younger brother and I became separated from our parents. We didn't know whether they were dead or alive. Then I remembered our family's plan that if we became separated, we were to meet in our home village. My brother and I started toward the village. Along the way we had to hide from rebel soldiers. Finally we found an uncle who took us to our village. When some villagers

told us that my father had been killed, I was very upset. Later we learned that both our parents were still alive.

At last our family was reunited, but it was not safe to stay in our home village area. My father told us we would have to flee to the Ivory Coast [Cote d'Ivoire]. It was a dangerous journey, but at last we crossed the border to safety.

We settled down, and my father enrolled me in the best school in the area—an Adventist school.

A Bible Challenge

One day during Bible class our teacher challenged us to find verses in the Bible that prove that Sunday is the Sabbath. He told us that he would give one month's salary to anyone who could show him the texts. I was determined to win the money.

When I told my father about the assignment, he told me to let him look at the verses. After spending some time studying them, he admitted to me that he didn't know the Bible well

enough to give me the answers I needed. I was disappointed, but I decided to ask the church pastor the following Sunday.

After church the next Sunday, I asked the pastor, "What day is the Sabbath?" I told him that I didn't want to do anything that displeased God.

The pastor took me aside and said, "My son, the Bible Sabbath is Saturday. There is nothing in the Bible that says we are to worship on Sunday. It is a man-made day of worship." My heart sank as I heard these words.

I decided that if God had never changed the Sabbath, then I would worship on the Sabbath. The Adventist church was a 30-minute walk from where we lived, but I was determined to worship on the day God had commanded. Besides, I thought, if these people were right about the Sabbath, what else might they be right about? My father didn't oppose my going, but he was not interested in what I was learning.

Telling My World

Eventually we were able to

return to Liberia, and I was baptized into the Adventist Church—the same church I had first attended with my friend. I told my parents of my baptism, but they were not interested to know why I had chosen to become an Adventist. I began to tell my friends. Many of them could not read, so I would read the Bible to them and explain the meaning of the passages.

During this time I kept praying for my family. One day my father said that I could speak to his church about what I believed. I had given him some literature, which he had read, and he wanted me to explain the material to his church members.

The members became very interested in what I was telling them, and that evening 15 of them were convinced that they should worship on Sabbath. But my parents were not among the group.

One Friday as I prepared to leave for an Adventist church 10 hours from my home by foot, my father stopped me. He gave me some money wrapped in paper. "What is this?" I asked. He said

that it was his tithe. "I know you worship the one true God, and I want to send my tithe with you." I praised God for this breakthrough with my father.

But soon after this my father died. His death brought trouble down on my head, for my own family disowned me and would not talk to me. It was a sad time. But I kept praying, and eventually some members of my family accepted the Adventist faith.

Blessing the Crops

Every year the farmers have a special ceremony to bless their farm crops. They sprinkle water on their land and pray to their gods for a good harvest. Many people encouraged me to participate in this ceremony, but I refused, wanting to honor God and my faith. At harvesttime my little farm produced the best harvest ever, while those around me found that their land had failed to produce much. My neighbors began to ask questions and were at last willing to hear Bible truths for themselves.

Today we have Branch Sabbath Schools in three neighboring villages. We are working hard to tell the world in our part of Liberia the good news of Jesus.

At last I have found the quiet place to worship God—that quiet place is in my heart when I spend time with Him every day. 🌍

Let's talk

? Timothy wanted to find a quiet place to worship God. He was weary of the noisy worship services in his father's church. What happens when we allow the "noise" of our busy lives keep us from worshipping God? What are some of the things that become "noise" and keep us from hearing God speak to us? [Write responses on a board.]

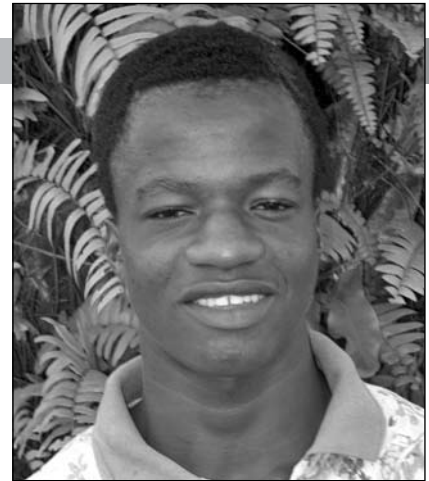
? Timothy wanted to find the Bible verses that proved the day of worship was Sunday. What Bible verses would you use to convince a friend that Saturday is the Sabbath?

? Why do you think that Timothy's father believed his son was worshipping the one true God? What were the things in Timothy's life that convinced his father? What do your friends see in your life that tells them you worship God?

Timothy Kanasuah comes from the interior of Liberia. Currently he is studying accounting in Monrovia, Liberia.

GraceLink Connection: Community.

He felt as if he were nobody until a woman showed him that he is important in God's eyes.



Romeo

Nobody's Boy

Romeo Laytan

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

Life has been tough for me. My mother left when I was a baby, and my father died when I was 9 years old. After that I was shifted from one uncle to another, but I felt like an outsider and could not go to school. Finally I begged my uncle to let me go to Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia, and attend school.

Homeless and Alone

I was just 12 years old when I arrived in Monrovia, homeless and broke. I lived on the street until a boy named Sumo invited me to come to his house. His mother offered me a place to stay and sent me to school until some of her relatives pushed her to send me away.

Once more I was homeless and belonged to nobody. I had to quit school to look for work and a place to live. I stayed with a friend and found work packaging water for people to sell on the streets. But the job did not pay well, and often I had no food to eat.

One morning I awoke early and went to the place where I worked. Work wouldn't begin for a while, so I swept the yard free of litter and leaves. A woman called to me and asked, "Where do you live?" I told her I slept on the porch of a friend's house.

"When was the last time you ate a decent meal?" she asked, eyeing my bony frame. I told her my job did not pay enough to eat well.

"What happened that you must live this way?" she asked. I told her my father was dead, and I did not know where my mother was.

Mother Roberts

This woman invited me into her home and fed me. As I ate, she asked about my goals in life. I told her I wanted to finish high school, but my job paid less than \$1 a day, not enough to buy food, let alone pay school fees. "It's no wonder you're so thin," she said. "You can live here and eat with my children, and you can use the money you earn tying water bags

to pay your school fees." That night I slept in her living room, and the next morning she told me to bring my clothes to her house. Once more I had a home and someone who cared for me—Mother Roberts.

I was grateful to Mother Roberts for her help, but I knew I could never earn enough tying water bags to pay my school fees. Mother Roberts told me that she would pay the difference. At last I could return to school!

I liked Mother Roberts's family and did all I could to help her around the house—wash clothes, sweep the yard—anything to help.

On Saturday Mother Roberts told me she was going to church. "But it's not Sunday," I said. She explained that she was a Seventh-day Adventist and worshipped on the Bible Sabbath. She asked me if I would go with her and visit her church, and I agreed.

She gave me some of her son's clothes to wear, and we

all walked to church together. In my father's church, we danced to drums and tried to "catch the spirit." I expected that Mother Roberts's church would be the same. But when we walked in, I saw no drums. And the people were singing hymns. I did not know the songs the people sang, so I stood silently and listened.

God's Somebody

The pastor and several members made me feel welcome in their worship. It felt so good! As I listened to the sermon, I learned so much. I was impressed by the orderly, reverent worship service.

On our way home I told Mother Roberts that I really liked the worship and that I wanted to join her church. She started teaching me. We read the Bible together and talked about what

Adventists believe. I studied with her every day for a month, then I joined the baptismal classes at church. I was learning so much so fast. Things I had never heard before became clear. Then last year, following evangelistic meetings, I was baptized.

As she promised, Mother Roberts is helping to pay my school fees so I can go to school. She has been the mother I never knew. She took me in and loved me and brought me to the feet of Jesus. Without her God-sent love, I would be living on someone's porch and bagging water in order to eat. I would have had no hope for the future and might not have met Jesus.

Before I met Mother Roberts, I felt like a nobody. But she has taught me that in God's eyes I am somebody important—so

important that Jesus died for me. When I was without hope, Mother Roberts lifted me up and stood me on my feet, then she led me to Jesus. She treats me as she does her own children.

I want to finish high school and study in college so I can serve God with my life. I want to be somebody, to reach out and help the nobodies I find along my path, just as Mother Roberts has done for me. In this way I can tell the world that Jesus is their friend. 🌍

Romeo Laytan is a student in the Adventist secondary school in Monrovia, Liberia.



Join with others to feed the homeless, or visit a shelter in your area and distribute packets containing shampoo, combs, toothbrush and toothpaste, and some small pieces of literature that will help people living in lonely conditions to know that God loves them and wants to be their Savior.

let's talk

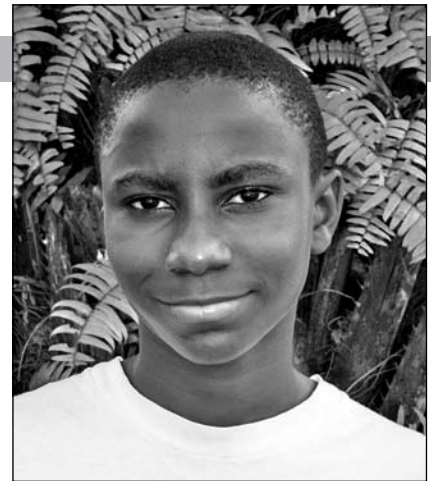
? Why did Romeo, the boy in today's story, feel that he was a nobody? *[His mother had deserted the family, his father had died, his uncles did not send him to school, and he was forced to live on his own from the age of 12. He had nobody he could rely on, no one who loved him unconditionally, until he met Mother Roberts.]*

? Do you know anyone who feels that they are a nobody? Someone who feels they are worthless or unappreciated? What can you do to help them understand that they are somebody in God's eyes? *[Suggested responses: Befriend them; treat them with kindness and respect. If they have physical needs, such as a place to live or regular meals, talk to an adult about how to help them. Most of all, by your friendship and example, teach them that Jesus loves them and wants to be their friend forever.]*

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that God will use Romeo to reach many young people in Liberia who feel they are nobodies. Pray that God will open your eyes to the needs around you and show you how you can meet at least some of those needs through your friendship and Christian example.

GraceLink Connection: Community.
He dropped the money into the offering plate and whispered, "Pray that God provides a ride home today."



Borbor

My Brother's Faith

Borbor Gibson

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

My name is Borbor. I live in Monrovia, Liberia. Liberia has been at war since before I was born. Life has been difficult, and people had to flee to escape soldiers—some of them barely teenagers themselves—and their guns. Food was hard to find, and gasoline was too expensive to buy, so we walked wherever we had to go. It was during this time that my elder brother Yowah [YOH-wah] taught me a lesson about faith.

Long Walk to Church

Our family had no fuel for the car, so my father gave Yowah 100 Liberian dollars [about US\$2] and told us to find a taxi to the nearby Adventist church. But Yowah wanted to go to our home church 12 miles [18 kilometers] away. We knew that our 100 Liberian dollars would never get us to the church, so we started walking. My cousins and I hurried to keep up with him.

We walked for an hour, and I was tired. My cousins and I tried

to convince Yowah to turn back and go to the church Father had told us to go to. But Yowah was determined. "By the time we get to the church," I reasoned, "we will be exhausted and the worship service will have ended." But my brother kept walking.

We saw a car stop near us, and the driver asked us to open the car door to let his passenger out. I hesitated, remembering my father's warnings about never talking to strangers or getting into their cars. But Yowah whispered hopefully, "Maybe God is sending someone to take us to church," and he reached over and opened the car door.

Then we walked on toward church. I noticed that Yowah was limping. He had sickle cell disease, which sometimes caused sudden pain in his legs. But Yowah did not slow down; he just kept walking.

A few minutes later that same car that had stopped by us passed us and stopped on the road ahead of us. As we neared the stopped

car, the driver opened his window and asked why Yowah was limping. Yowah told him he had sickle cell disease and was having an attack.

"Where are you going?" the driver asked. Yowah said we were going to church in town. "Get in, and I'll take you," the driver offered. Although I was a little nervous, something about the man's voice made me feel safe. And I knew that Yowah had been praying for a ride to church. We all got in, and the man drove us to church. I was relieved that we did not have to walk all that way, but I'm sure that Yowah was even more relieved.

A Lesson in Faith

When we arrived at church, we thanked the man and hurried up the steps to the church. We sat down just as the deacon was calling for the offering. I saw my brother take out the 100 Liberian dollars. "No!" I whispered. "We might need that to get home after church."

But when the deacon passed the offering bag, my brother looked at us and dropped the money into the bag. "Now," he whispered, "let's pray that God will provide a way for us to get home."

After church one of Father's friends invited us to his home for dinner. We happily agreed to go with him, for he had a car! We spent a pleasant Sabbath with this man's family. After sunset worship, the man took us home. When we arrived, Father was not home.

"Where's Papa?" I asked. Mother said he was worried about us and went searching for us. I felt bad, but we had no way to let our parents know where we were. Two hours later Papa came home limping. We learned that he had walked all the way to the Central church looking for us, only to learn that we had gone home with his friend. On his way home, he had hurt his foot.

We prayed together. Then I thanked Yowah for having faith that God would provide a ride home from church so we could give our transportation money as an offering.

Lessons of Life and Death

My eldest brother, George, really loved Jesus. He loved talking about God. When my parents were away, George told

us Bible stories and stories about his own mission experiences during his studies at the Adventist boarding school. When I disobeyed, George's godly example made me want to do better.

Last year George died of complications from an injury he had suffered in a fall. It was hard to realize that George was dead, for he had studied at the Adventist boarding school, and it seemed that he would come home any day.

Then four months after George died, Yowah had another sickle cell crisis. He had had crises before, so I was not too worried when Papa took him to the hospital. He needed blood transfusions to ease the crisis. But the blood transfusion did not work, and my brother got worse. I took care of him during the days, feeding him and helping him, as is the custom in Africa.

Near mealtime I told my brother I was going to fix some food for him, and I left the room. When I returned, He looked really sick, and I started to cry. "Why are you crying?" he asked. I told him that I was afraid he was going to die, as George had.

"Don't cry, little brother," he said. "Bring me my Bible." I gave him his Bible, and we read

together, then he prayed.

Then Yowah said, "Little brother, stay close to Jesus. Take care of Papa and Little Joe." I looked at Yowah and saw him breathing strangely. Suddenly he stopped breathing. I ran to get the nurse, but he was already dead.

My Brothers' Faith

My brothers' deaths make me realize that nothing in this world is certain. But when I am tempted to worry, I remember that my brothers taught me to trust God and to pray. So I pray.

I want to be the kind of godly brother that they were to me. I take care of Little Joe when Papa must travel, and I try to teach him to trust God and live each day for Him, just as George and Yowah taught me.

I want to live my life for Jesus, to be God's special son and honor Him in all that I do. You can honor God in your life in everything you say and do and how you do it. Live each day as if it were the only day you have, and use it to tell someone about God. 🌍

Borbor Gibson lives with his father and younger brother in Monrovia, Liberia.

let's talk

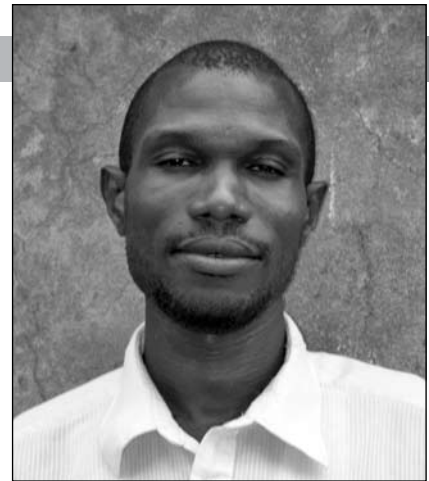
? Borbor, the boy in today's story, treasures the lessons of faith that his brothers taught him. He is trying to share those same lessons with his younger brother. Have you ever lost someone dear to you? What important lessons did that person teach you? How can you make these lessons a part of your life today?

? How can you be an example to your family and friends of how God wants us to live?

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that Borbor will continue to be a shining light to his younger brother and a help to his father. Pray that God will help you be a shining light to those around you as well.

GraceLink Connection: Community.
He reached into his pocket to pull out the money. It was gone! What would his mother say? What could he do?



Emmanuel

The Runaway

Emmanuel Bah

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

I am Emmanuel; I live in the country of Sierra Leone. *[Locate Sierra Leone on a map.]* I learned a lesson the hard way, a lesson that cost me years of my life.

The Errand

When I was 8 years old, my mother sent me to get some money from my uncle, who lived a short distance from us. My uncle gave me the money, and I put it into my pants pocket and started home. I felt important carrying all this money, so I did not stop along the way to play with my friends. But as I neared home, I reached into my pocket to pull out the money for Mother. But it was gone. I looked around on the ground, but the money was not in sight. I retraced my steps, searching for the small bundle of bills. But the money was gone.

Fear struck my heart. How could I face my mother's anger if she thought I had spent the money? Quickly I made a

decision: I would run away. I thought that if I could somehow earn some money, I could return home and repay my mother.

I ran away to the nearest town. There I met some homeless boys who lived on the street. Three of these boys befriended me. They were older than I was, and they taught me how to survive in an unforgiving world.

The boys stole food and money; they fought with other boys and got into trouble. For two years I stayed with these boys, learning the lessons they taught me. I felt I could not go home without the money to repay the lost funds, so I did not see my mother or let her know where I was. But I thought of her a lot, and I felt bad that I had disappointed her. I wondered whether she missed me.

Going Home

When I had saved enough money to repay my mother, I returned to my village. As I neared my mother's house I

called to her. She stood in the doorway for a moment staring at me. "I thought you were dead!" she cried as she hugged me tightly. That made me feel even worse. I explained to her that I had lost the money and was afraid she would be angry, so I had run away until I could earn enough money to pay her back.

My mother wanted me to come back home and go to school, and I agreed. But after school I hung out with my old friends. I knew no other life.

Unwilling Soldier

The war in Sierra Leone had spread to our town, and rebel soldiers came looking for me. They brought a uniform and told me to put it on. I was now a soldier. I learned that my so-called friends had told the soldiers where to find me! I did not want to be a soldier, but I had no choice.

An army truck stopped, and soldiers forced me into the truck. We were driven to the military

base. As we climbed down from the truck, someone asked, "Who is a soldier?" Those who responded that they were soldiers stepped to the right, and those who said they were not soldiers stepped to the left. I stepped to the left, for I did not feel that I was a soldier. The commander marched me into a room where they handcuffed me and whipped me with a soldier's belt. Then a captain I knew entered the room and recognized me. He asked, "Why are you here?" I told them I was picked up along the road. The captain let me go.

I ran home as fast as I could, but I barely escaped death when some soldiers thought I was a rebel soldier. When I arrived home, my aunt lectured me a long time about the importance of being obedient. I listened to her, but I refused when she told me to go to church with her on Saturday. But Auntie talked to me day after day about my life and

God's call to me. Eventually I started going to church with her.

Letting God Into My Life

My first church visit was to a choir festival. I listened to the sermon about Joseph and how humble he was in spite of the bad things that had been done to him. I thought about all the bad things I had done over the past few years, and how I was not humble. I realized that these people could teach me how to live a good life. In time I accepted Jesus as my Savior and was baptized into the Adventist Church. One day I was asked to become the caretaker of the Three Angels' Message church in Freetown. I accepted the offer and found this to be a ministry, even though it is humble.

I met with the boys who had led me into a life of crime, and I shared what God was doing in my life. At first they laughed at me. "Oh, Emmanuel has gotten religion!" they said. "He doesn't

know what he's doing." I began visiting them Sabbath after Sabbath and talking to them. In time they agreed to visit the church and decide whether they would become Christians, but they have not yet come.

Pray for my former friends. Pray also for my mother, who is not a Christian. I made a huge mistake when I was young, and my disobedience cost me years of my life. Now I want to redeem those years and lead my family to give their lives to Jesus.

Your mission offerings, given every week in Sabbath School, help bring the gospel of Jesus to villages and towns around the world. Thank you for your offerings. They helped bring me to Jesus. 🌍

Emmanuel Bah shares his faith in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Let's talk

? Emmanuel, the subject of our story, was just 8 years old when he lost the money and ran away, fearful of what his mother would say or do to him when he told her what had happened. What important lesson had Emmanuel not learned, a lesson that cost him years of his life and anguish to his mother? *[He had not learned that his mother would still love him in spite of his carelessness. Running away from a problem only leads to greater sorrows, as Emmanuel learned in the years that followed, as he survived on his own and learned habits that were difficult to erase in later years.]*

? Emmanuel thought that by running away and earning money, he could fix the problem. How often have you been tempted to run away from the consequences of an action, whether it was willful disobedience or truly an accident? What consequences did you face—or might you have faced—as a result of running from the problem? How much better is it to face the problem squarely, accept the consequences, and learn from the mistake?

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that the boys Emmanuel lived with on the street will give their lives to Christ.

Program

Building for Eternity

Opening Song	"Working, O Christ, With Thee" <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 582	Program	"Building for Eternity"
Welcome	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher	Offering	Ask children to sing a song in French or Akan while the offering is being taken.
Scripture	See responsive reading	Closing Song	"Rise Up, O Church of God" <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 615
Prayer		Closing Prayer	

Participants: A narrator (news anchor person) and three reporters. Use people of varying ages to add interest. *[Note: narrator and reporters do not have to memorize their parts, but they should be familiar enough with the material that they do not have to read everything. Practice two or three times so that participants can feel comfortable adding inflection where called for.]*

Props: A table to serve as a news desk, with a microphone available for participants. A large map of Africa (or a map of Africa projected onto a screen) on which Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the West-Central Africa Division territory are highlighted.

* * *

Scripture

Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

You know the message God sent . . . , telling the

good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

—From Proverbs 25:25; Isaiah 52:7;
Acts 10:36, NIV

* * *

Narrator: Good Sabbath morning. This is _____ *[name of narrator]*, news commentator for Station GNTV, Good News TV, where the news is good. Our program this morning will feature four countries in West Africa that face both challenges and opportunities. The countries we will report on this morning are Benin, Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. *[Locate countries on a large map as they are named.]* Our first report comes from _____.

Reporter 1: Thank you, _____ *[name of narrator]*.

Benin is a tiny country located in the western Africa. Most of its 7.5 million population is concentrated in the southern region of Benin, along the coast, where the two largest cities are located. Almost half of the people in Benin still follow traditional religions, the most common of which is a form of witchcraft often called voodoo.

Less than a third of Benin's population claims to be Christian, and most of these incorporate a significant amount of witchcraft into their worship and their daily lives.

Becoming a Seventh-day Adventist Christian in such an environment means turning one's back on tribal—and often family—ties, for most special occasions, especially deaths, incorporate voodoo practices and consumption of alcohol. New believers face severe tests when asked to choose between loyalty to God, whom they cannot see, and loyalty to family and clan, where bonds are strong and last a lifetime. Many people cannot withstand such trials. The church in Benin is young and growing. Its 3,500 members mean that there is just one Adventist for every 2,400 people in the country.

In such a climate, it is urgent that new believers have a permanent house of worship, a building that says that God and His church will not leave them or forsake them. Chapels made of reeds or mud bricks do not generate that permanency in people's minds.

Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help build at least one church in a region where witchcraft and voodoo worship is particularly strong. The church members have purchased land on the edge of their village that borders a river. They have begun construction, but their 60 members are mostly fishers, who earn barely enough to feed their families. Let's help them take a stand against darkness with a church building that invites the people to come and find the Light of the world.

Narrator: Thank you, _____ [name of reporter], for that report. Let's travel east now to the country of Nigeria. [Locate

Nigeria on map.]

Reporter 2: Nigeria is one of Africa's largest and most populous countries.

The Adventist Church in Nigeria has almost 234,000 members among a population of 131 million, giving it an Adventist-to-population ratio of 1 Adventist to every 562 people. That's encouraging, but many areas of the country have barely been reached for Christ. The country's eastern region, especially, needs help to establish a secondary school in an area where we have no educational facilities. In addition, three church-evangelistic centers will be built to teach the people how to lead their neighbors and friends to Christ.

Babcock University, one of the church's oldest institutions in Africa, is home to 3,500 students, more than half of whom are not Seventh-day Adventists. But students are required to attend worship every weekend. Instead of one mega-church in the heart of the campus, the school has encouraged a number of smaller congregations to organize in order to better meet the spiritual needs of the students and faculty. Each church has its own membership roster, its own steering committee, and its own faculty sponsors. This decentralization provides greater opportunities for interactive worship and leadership training.

But the school has run out of large lecture halls and chapels in which to worship. One church group currently meets in the common area of the women's dormitory, which means that young men must come to set up for worship in an area the women must use to get to showers and bathrooms. It is far from ideal. In order to ease such situations and provide more opportunities to worship, part of today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will provide

a church building for Babcock University, in addition to two other churches and the secondary school in eastern Nigeria.

Narrator: Liberia and Sierra Leone have recently begun recovery efforts following years of brutal civil war. The nations still do not have consistent electrical power, safe drinking water, and any number of conveniences most of us take for granted. However, the work in these two countries is moving forward, and believers have stepped out in faith to make a difference in their nations. Let's hear what they are doing.

Reporter 3: New congregations are forming as the result of evangelistic meetings held by believers from other nations. However, without a proper chapel in which to worship, many of these new believers may disappear again into the crowds of people that mill about the capital cities. The Stadium congregation in Monrovia, Liberia, is made up almost entirely of new believers. They have no chapel in which to meet, so they worship in a classroom of the local high school. Land is too expensive for them to afford to buy, let alone build a church. Without outside intervention, the gains made during the recent evangelistic meetings will be lost again.

In a step of faith, the church in both these countries has set aside land on which to build evangelistic training sites, campsites where believers can come to study Scripture and learn how to reach their neighbors for Christ. The church envisions a self-supporting campground that can be rented out to other organizations when not in use by Adventists. Housing, lecture hall, chapel, and a school will easily fit on the land miraculously given to the church during wartime in Sierra Leone. And the same type

of facility at an existing youth camp in Liberia will offer similar facilities for believers there.

So two chapels and two evangelistic training centers, partially financed by today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, will increase the effective ministries of lay members and clergy alike in these recovering countries.

Narrator: We're out of time today, but West-Central Africa is not out of projects. In all, our offering today will help build:

- two evangelistic training

- centers,
- at least eight churches,
- an elementary school in Cameroon,
- a secondary school in Nigeria,
- phase one of a hospital in Cameroon.

That's a big job for our mission offering today, but it is doable if we all work together. Let's show our brothers and sisters in West-Central Africa that we care about their struggles and we rejoice in their successes. Let's share what God has given to us as we hold them up in prayer.

Report to Stockholders



Flying High: Thanks to donors around the world, this new airplane is flying pastors and medical personnel to isolated locations in Papua New Guinea to minister to the people's needs.

Report to Shareholders can be found online at www.AdventistMission.org/Offering_Report/

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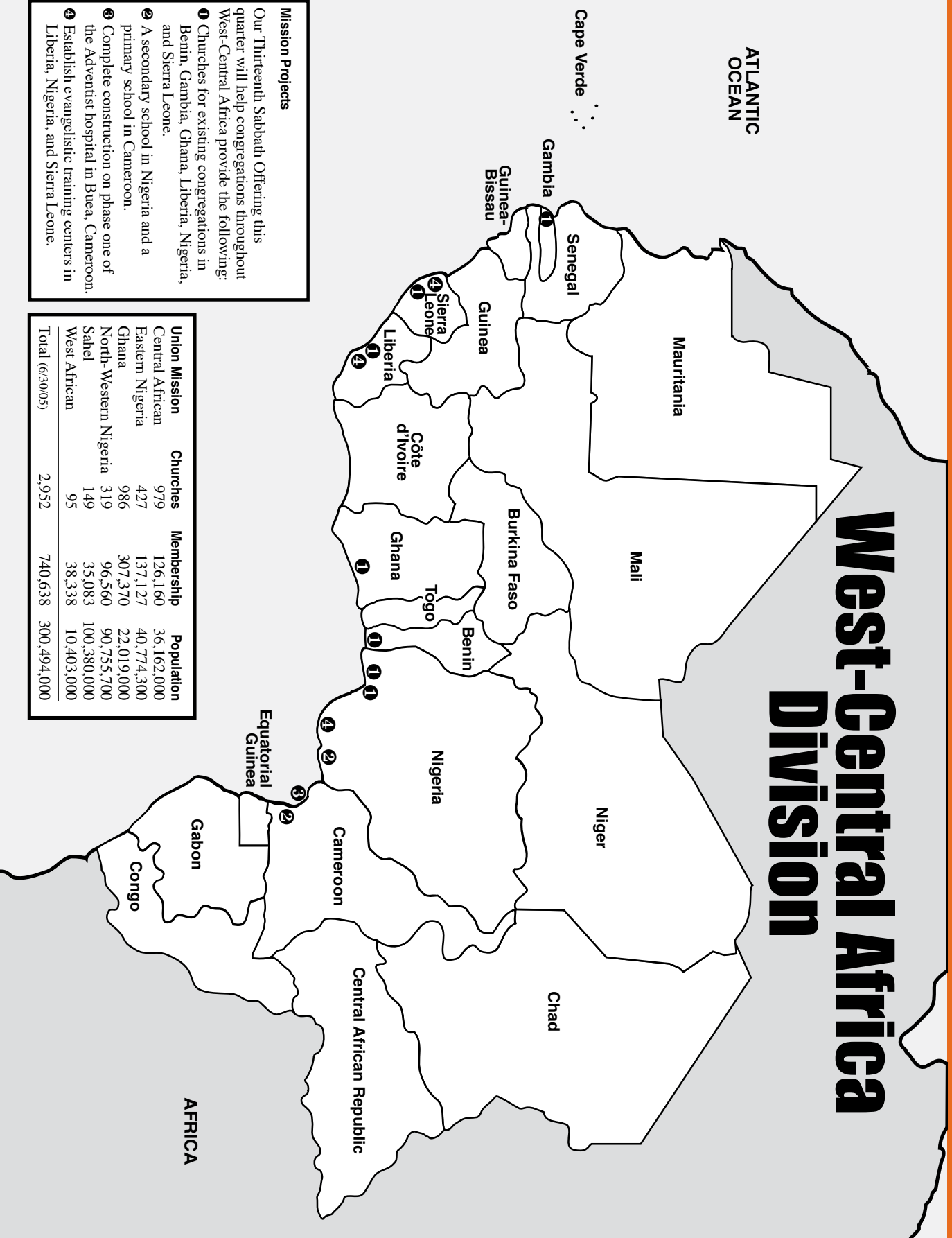
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Vol. 53, No. 3

Third Quarter 2007
West-Central Africa Division

mission
Teen

West-Central Africa Division



Mission Projects

Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help congregations throughout West-Central Africa provide the following:

- ① Churches for existing congregations in Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.
- ② A secondary school in Nigeria and a primary school in Cameroon.
- ③ Complete construction on phase one of the Adventist hospital in Buea, Cameroon.
- ④ Establish evangelistic training centers in Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

Union Mission	Churches	Membership	Population
Central African	979	126,160	36,162,000
Eastern Nigeria	427	137,127	40,774,300
Ghana	986	307,370	22,019,000
North-Western Nigeria	319	96,560	90,755,700
Sahel	149	35,083	100,380,000
West African	95	38,338	10,403,000
Total (6/30/05)	2,952	740,638	300,494,000