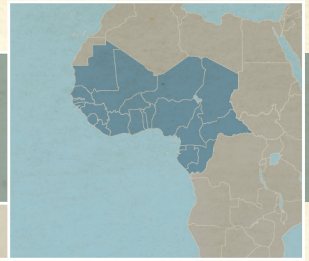




YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2023 • **QUARTER 4** • WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION



AdventistMission.org

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fi = stories of special interest to teens

Dear Sabbath School Leader,

Andrew McChesney
Editor



Want to get more out of this quarter's *Mission* quarterly? Read it together with the *Adult Bible Study Guide*.

The *Adult Bible Study Guide* has a special focus on mission in fourth quarter 2023. The Bible lessons were written by the directors of the Global Mission study centers (globalmissioncenters.org), which are part of Adventist Mission, the same General Conference entity that produces the *Mission* quarterly.

A key element of each week's Bible study is explored in the Story Tips sidebar that accompanies each week's mission story.

Closer Look at the Projects

This quarter, we feature the West-Central Africa Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in 22 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The region is home to 472 million people, including 889,196 Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 531 people.

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go toward mission projects in Cameroon and Ghana.

Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will support two projects in the West-Central Africa Division:

- Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Asamang, Abrepo Tikese, Ghana
- Bilingual English/French elementary school, Bandjoun, Cameroon

In Cameroon, the funds will help open a bilingual English/French elementary school in Bandjoun.

Church leaders told me that quality education is in high demand in Cameroon, especially international schools with classes in English and French, and the new school promises to fill an important niche.

"Adventist education is valued here," Isaac Yenge, executive secretary of the Cameroon Union Mission, said during a tour of two Adventist schools, each with about 3,700 students, in the capital, Yaoundé.

This quarter's other mission project is in Ghana, where the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College will receive funds to expand with new classrooms and dormitories.

The college opened with only 22 students in 2015 and has 770 students today. Demand is high, and the school lacks the capacity to admit additional students. This is a real mission school, where only 30 percent of the students are Adventists. A number of students join the church every year. Read about three nursing students whom I met at the college, including a woman nicknamed "Madam Anatomy," on pages 16, 22, and 24.

Special Features

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer photos and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story.

In addition, you can download a PDF of facts and activities from the West-Central Africa Division at bit.ly/wad-2023. Follow us at facebook.com/missionquarterlies. You also can download the PDF version of the *Mission* quarterly at bit.ly/adultmission, and Mission Spotlight videos at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!



Seeing God

Jacques

More than anything, Jacques wanted to pass university entrance exams in the West African country of Cameroon. But the second half of the exams fell on the Sabbath.

“I’m a Seventh-day Adventist,” Jacques told the teachers who administered the exams on Friday and Saturday at a testing center just outside Cameroon’s capital, Yaoundé. “I can’t take my exams on the Sabbath.”

“Just come and take the exams,” said one teacher.

“You have to take them,” said another.

“No,” Jacques said. “I want you to know that if you don’t see me tomorrow, it’s because I am in church.”

Some teachers saw it as a challenge. Mockingly, they called him a priest. “You will fail if you don’t come, priest,” a teacher said.

Jacques returned home. He had given his heart to Jesus in baptism a year earlier, and he was determined to honor the Lord of the Sabbath. He decided to fast and pray during the Sabbath hours. On Sabbath, he went to church instead of the testing center. After sundown, he returned to the center. No one was there. The exams had been given, and the teachers had left. Jacques returned home.

Early Sunday, he went back to the testing

center. No one was there. He waited all day for someone to come. Early Monday, he went to the testing center again. No one was there. He sat down and waited.

After a while, teachers arrived and began to hand out exam results. At midday, the director of the testing center asked the teachers how things were going.

“Everything is fine except for the priest here,” a teacher said, pointing to Jacques.

The teacher explained that Jacques had refused to take his exams on Sabbath.

“Let him take the exams now,” the director said. “It’s OK.”

Two teachers needed to administer the last two exams. The first, who taught English, brought out a textbook that Jacques had never seen before and told him to read from it. As Jacques stumbled over the words, the teacher mocked him, saying, “That’s wrong! You know nothing. How will you pass?”

“Ask me something else,” Jacques said. “Please ask me anything else.”

“There will be no more questions,” the teacher said. “You will not pass.”

As Jacques kept pleading, he walked to the door to leave the room. Then he stopped at the door. It was like someone was blocking him or holding him back. He couldn’t go out. Without looking at Jacques, the teacher suddenly blurted out, “Don’t worry.” Then he was able to move, and he left.

The next teacher was supposed to quiz Jacques on government, history, and geography. Instead, he said, “My gentleman of the Sabbath, what is the Sabbath?”

Jacques took the question as an exam question, and he resolved that he would answer it well.

“The Sabbath is in the Ten Commandments,” he said, reaching for a Bible in his bag.

The teacher stopped him. “Leave the Bible alone,” he said.

He said Jacques had been brainwashed and government, history, and geography were much more important than religion. Jacques replied that he had studied the three subjects for a whole year and had learned nothing that was as important as religion.

“Religion is a matter of conscience and can influence my whole life,” he said.

At that moment, another teacher entered the room. The first teacher told Jacques to leave. The exam was over.

Later that day, as Jacques walked back to the testing center for the exam results, a car stopped in front of him. The teacher who had given the English exam poked his head out the car window.

“Rejoice!” he said.

Jacques wondered if the teacher was mocking him again.

At the testing center, Jacques waited with the other students as a teacher called out the names of those who had passed the exams. Then he heard his name. He had passed! He was shocked. He raised his arms in the air and exclaimed, “God, thank You!”

Jacques sought out the English teacher to thank him. “You didn’t believe me when I told you to rejoice,” the teacher said. “We wanted to fail you.”

“Why didn’t you fail me,” Jacques asked.

The teacher turned to another teacher nearby.

“I wanted to fail him, but I couldn’t,” he said. “I can’t understand why I couldn’t fail him.”

Jacques was amazed. He couldn’t understand what had happened. All he knew was that God had heard his prayers. God had honored him for honoring the Sabbath.

Jacques is now 56 years old, but he has never forgotten that day. “I have no doubt that I saw God,” he says. 🌍

Story Tips

- A question in this week’s lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* asks, “In what ways have you experienced God’s presence in your life?” (see Monday, October 2). Discuss with the Sabbath School class how and why Jacques saw God’s presence. Ask how God can reveal Himself in a similar way in your life.
- Download other photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives,” and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- The first Seventh-day Adventists to come to Cameroon, William Harrison Anderson and T. M. French, both Americans, arrived from South Africa in November 1926. They chose Nanga Eboko as the site of the first mission station, and Chief Bessala Etong gave them 136 acres (55 hectares) of land on which to establish the mission.

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Seventh-day Adventist education in Cameroon with the opening of a bilingual school where children will be able to learn about Jesus in French and English. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Possessed to Peaceful

CAMEROON | October 14

Salomé



Salomé's name means peace. But her life was anything but peaceful in the West African country of Cameroon. She struggled with demonic possession.

It all started when Salomé went to her teacher at a Seventh-day Adventist high school in Cameroon's capital, Yaoundé. She was taking evening classes in hope of graduating and going to a university. She was a top student in her class, but she kept failing the university entrance exam. She had failed it four times. So, she asked the Adventist teacher for help.

"I can pray for you," the teacher said.

Salomé liked the idea. But the teacher wasn't finished. "There is one condition," he said. "You must bring your life into harmony with God's will."

Salomé agreed. She wasn't an Adventist, but she didn't think that she needed to change anything in her life. She felt like she was living in harmony with God's will.

A short time later, she met with the teacher to pray in his office. Just as he began to pray, she screamed. Bizarre words flew

out of her mouth as she screamed. The teacher kept on praying. Then Salomé hurled insults at the teacher and God. The teacher kept on praying. When Salomé became calm, she was shocked to hear the teacher describe her behavior. She couldn't remember anything that had happened. She had been possessed by an evil spirit.

"You need to have a life of prayer," the teacher said. "Don't grow discouraged. Everything will work out according to God's will."

After that day, the evil spirit manifested himself every time the teacher prayed. Salomé screamed and scorned God. She clutched her throat as if she wanted to strangle herself. Sometimes, a foul odor, like a decomposing corpse, filled the room. Always, the teacher kept on praying until Salomé returned to her normal self.

When she was calm, the teacher also talked about God. Salomé began to see that her life was not in harmony with the Bible. She learned about the seventh-day Sabbath. She learned about honesty. She realized that it was immoral to live with her boyfriend. She began to make changes. She left her boyfriend and went to church on Sabbath.

Then a demonic attack occurred at home. Salomé had a bad headache, and she called an Adventist friend for help. When the friend called back later to check up on her, Salomé didn't answer the phone. The friend came to Salomé's house to see what was wrong. As she stepped into the house, she smelled the odor of a rotting corpse. She immediately began to pray. She knew that Salomé didn't need medicine or the hospital. She needed Jesus. She found Salomé unable to move

or speak. She was paralyzed. The friend prayed for nearly three hours before Salomé returned to her normal self.

Another attack happened at the Adventist church. As bread was being passed out during the communion service, Salomé fell to the floor with her hand clutching her throat. A tumult erupted as some people fled in horror, others prayed, and still others sang hymns. With her free hand, Salomé took a communion cup that had contained grape juice and smashed it against the floor. She tried to break it so she could cut herself. Deacons carried Salomé out of the sanctuary.

With each attack, Salomé grew more determined to bring her life into harmony with God's will. She finished Bible studies and decided to give her heart to Jesus in baptism.

The evil spirit made a final attack. As Salomé approached the baptism pool at church, she fell onto the ground. An unseen force seemed to prevent her from entering the pool. The pastor, waiting in the water, saw the struggle and reached out his hands to help her. But Salomé, now under the control of the evil spirit, refused to take his hands. The pastor paid no attention and pulled her into the water. She furiously fought back as he pushed her under the water. He knew that it was the evil spirit, not Salomé, who was opposed to the baptism.

When Salomé came up from the water, the evil spirit left. She smiled with joy.

After the baptism, the evil spirit never possessed her again. But she heard him taunting her as she prepared to take the university entrance exam for the fifth time. He said she would never succeed and her life was a failure. Salomé passed the exam.

Today, Salomé is 31 and lives in peace. A church deaconess, she also teaches at the Adventist high school where she once studied. She praises God that she failed the university entrance exam four times.

“God used the exam failures to bring me to the teacher for prayer — and then to realize the presence of the evil spirit in my life and to get rid of him,” she says. 🌍

Story Tips

- This week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* emphasizes that the primary focus of Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20 is disciple-making. Ask the Sabbath School class how Salomé's teacher practiced disciple-making. Possible answers: praying with Salomé, encouraging her to live according to God's will, and teaching her biblical truths. Discuss the question from the lesson, “How is this mandate of the Master affecting how you live and minister to others?” (see Monday, October 9).
- Download photos on Facebook bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- The first six indigenous people to convert to the Seventh-day Adventist faith in Cameroon were baptized in April 1929. They were Ndi Daniel, Medjo Endangte Josué, and Antoine Mfoumi, along with their three wives.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Seventh-day Adventist education in Cameroon with the opening of a bilingual school where children will be able to learn about Jesus in French and English.

By Andrew McChesney

Hope for People Who Are Blind

CAMEROON | October 21

Cosmas



Ray evangelist Cosmas had an unexpected encounter with a man who was blind as he prepared to hold evangelistic meetings in Douala, the largest city in the West African country of Cameroon.

The man said to Cosmas, “If you have a project in life, it should be with people who are blind.”

The words lingered in Cosmas’ mind.

That night, he had a dream in which he was talking with a man who was blind.

The next morning, he wondered whether the dream was connected to the man whom he had met the previous day.

That day, as he continued preparations for the evangelistic meetings, he met 10 more people who were blind. That night, he dreamed that he was in a soccer stadium filled with people who were blind. When he woke up, he sensed that God might be calling him to work with people who are blind.

That was in 2014. Today, Cosmas oversees a group of 350 people who are blind. He preaches to them. He teaches the Bible

to them. He helps meet their social and educational needs. Several have been baptized. Here are two of their stories.

Apollinaire

Apollinaire is a mechanic who worked nearly 20 years for a French carmaker. In 1990, he began to suffer eye problems.

Gradually, his sight began to fade and, finally, he lost both his sight and his job in 2004.

Sitting at home, he spent a lot of time listening to the radio. On a Saturday evening, he heard the Seventh-day Adventist broadcast *It Is Written*. Cosmas spoke on a one-hour program for people who are blind. Cosmas invited listeners to attend church on Sabbath mornings.

On Monday, Apollinaire went to the radio station to find Cosmas. A technician told him that Cosmas worked at a hospital during the week. So, Apollinaire went to the hospital. There, he found Cosmas, and the two agreed to meet at church on Sabbath. After that, Apollinaire attended church every Sabbath.

After some time, he was baptized and became a member of the Adventist Church.

Today he is 58, and he says he is glad to worship with people who love God and people who are blind. “I was amazed to find people concerned about those who are blind,” he said. “Society all but rejects us.”



Flora

When Flora was 32, she started having headaches. She had never had eye problems, but in three months, she lost her sight completely.



Flora felt rejected by society. Isolated at home, she began listening to the radio and especially to *It Is Written*. She was attracted to the program led by Cosmas.

Flora had always viewed Jesus like a human priest, Someone whom she could ask for help when she had problems. But as she listened to *It Is Written*, she learned about the Jesus who could change lives. She heard the Adventist Church values people who are blind, and she went to church on Sabbath.

As the months passed, she began to smile and feel happy again. A desire grew in her to share her joy with others. She also was baptized and joined the Adventist Church.

Then Flora met a church member who wanted to marry her. His family opposed the marriage, but he asked them, “If I were blind, wouldn’t you want me to be able to get married?” When they confirmed that they would, he said, “Then let me marry Flora.” The couple got married in 2022.

Today, Flora is 40 and teaches computers to people who are blind. Her greatest joy, however, is telling people that Jesus loves them and rejects no one.

“I’m a person who is blind, but I live a joyful life,” she said. “I have a place in the world, and I lack nothing.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will build on the work of the Swiss missionary who founded the *It Is Written* broadcast in Cameroon in 1963. The missionary, Aimé Cosendai, pioneered the church’s work in Cameroon and, during his more than 50 years of service, also opened hundreds of church schools. This quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open

Story Tips

- Cosmas identified a need in his community when he started a support group for people who are blind. This week’s lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* encourages readers also to identify people with special needs in their communities and to pray for an opportunity to reach them (see Thursday, October 19). Discuss with the Sabbath School class what lessons and inspiration they can take from Cosmas’ example.
- Read more about pioneering Swiss missionary Aimé Cosendai in the online *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: bit.ly/Cosendai-Bio.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples”; Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities [and] ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

another church school, a bilingual school, where children will be able to learn about Jesus in French and English. Thank you for planning a generous offering to keep the mission spirit alive in West Africa.

By Andrew McChesney

Old Man's Long Wait

CAMEROON | October 28

Cosmas



This is a story about an old man in the West African country of Cameroon.

Mbassi worked for a tobacco company in the capital, Yaoundé. He made cigarettes.

In the big city, he met a Swiss missionary who offered him Bible studies in 1953. He was keenly interested in what he read, and he started to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. A desire grew in his heart to yield his life to Jesus and to be baptized. He asked for baptism.

But the request was rejected. The reason was that he worked for a tobacco company. Also, he sometimes worked on Sabbath.

Mbassi was greatly disappointed, but he kept going to church on Sabbath when he could. Still, every time he went to church, he had problems at work. Finally, he was fired because of the Sabbath.

Without any work, Mbassi returned to his hometown. He wasn't baptized, but he continued to keep the Sabbath. For 52 years he kept the Sabbath.

Mbassi grew old. His hair turned white. His eyes grew dim. But his love for Jesus strengthened with each passing day. He longed to be baptized.

One day, a Seventh-day Adventist preacher came to the town to organize evangelistic meetings. When townspeople heard that he kept the seventh-day Sabbath, they told him that an old man was already keeping the Sabbath in their town.

"The old man has a nephew who is a pastor," one person said. "But he doesn't attend the Sunday services at his nephew's church, even though the church is located right across the street from his house."

"There is another church just down the street from his house," another person said. "But he also doesn't go there to worship on Sundays."

The Adventist preacher learned that townspeople had mocked the old man for years, saying he was an Adventist in name only because he had never been baptized.

The preacher dropped everything and



Mbassi being baptized.

rushed over to the old man's house.

Mbassi was in ill health and in bed. He said he had been praying for the last two days, "Lord, how can I die without being baptized? I have kept the Sabbath since 1953, but I'm still not baptized. If indeed I am Your child, help me to be baptized before I die."

The preacher and the old man prayed together.

Then the preacher studied the Bible with the old man for the next two weeks. The preacher, whose name is Cosmas, worked at an Adventist hospital located 45 miles (70 kilometers) away in Yaoundé. He had to make a difficult trip on rough roads every day for Bible studies.

Finally, Mbassi was baptized. He was 84. He was frail and had to be carried to the river. But he was all smiles. He went under the water with a smile, and he came up with an even bigger smile. God heard his prayers, and he was baptized. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will build on the work of the Swiss missionary who gave Bible studies to Mbassi in the 1950s. The missionary, Aimé Cosendai, helped pioneer church work in Cameroon and opened hundreds of schools. The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will open a new school where children will be able to learn about Jesus in French and English. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- This week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* challenges readers living in large cities to find practical ways to undertake mission (see Friday, October 27). Ask the Sabbath School class how Cosmas (and the missionary Aimé Cosendai before him) found practical ways to undertake mission in Cameroon's bustling capital, Yaoundé, where they both lived. Possible answers: prayer, willingness to travel long distances, home visitations, and Bible studies.
- Pronounce Mbassi as: MM-bass-ee.
- Read more about pioneering Swiss missionary Aimé Cosendai in the online *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: bit.ly/Cosendai-Bio.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities [and] ... among unreached and under-reached people groups," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- Cameroon became an independent country on January 1, 1960, and became a member of the United Nations on September 20, 1960.
- The Central African franc is the official currency of Cameroon.

Choked by Unseen Hand

GUINEA | November 4

Theophane



Something frightening happened as Theophane was preparing to go to high school in the West African country of Guinea on a Saturday morning. Someone grabbed his throat.

But Theophane couldn't see who had grabbed him. All he knew was that he was being choked and he couldn't breathe. Terrified, he fled his home and ran to school. After some time, he was able to breathe normally again.

But that was only the beginning. When Theophane least expected it, he would feel the invisible hand closing around his throat and cutting off his air supply. Gasping for air, he would run away and try to find a place where he could breathe.

Theophane's father took him to the hospital, but the physician couldn't find anything wrong.

"You're normal," he said.

Theophane's father took him to another hospital. But again, the physician couldn't find anything wrong.

"Everything is fine with you," he said.

But Theophane knew that something was wrong. Everything wasn't fine. He couldn't breathe!

Father took him to a psychiatric hospital, and the physician prescribed pills. Theophane felt better after taking the medicine, but the pills didn't stop the attacks. After a while, the pills didn't help at all. He didn't know what to do.

It was at that low point that a voice spoke to him.

"Go to church," the voice said.

Theophane didn't understand. He had gone to church every Sunday since he was a small boy. A year ago, he had stopped going, and he didn't see any reason to return. He ignored the voice.

But the attacks kept occurring, and the voice was insistent.

"Go to church," it said.

Theophane wondered whether God was communicating with him. He began to read the Bible. He found that he slept

better at night after reading the Bible. He decided to resume going to church with his family on Sundays.

It was then that Theophane's uncle came to visit. Theophane told his uncle about the attacks that left him struggling to breathe. He spoke about the adamant voice telling him to go to church.

Theophane's uncle was a Seventh-day Adventist, and he worked as a Global Mission pioneer in Guinea. A Global Mission pioneer is a missionary who shares Jesus with unreached people groups in his or her own country. Theophane's uncle usually worked with people who were not Christians, but now he saw that his own nephew needed help.

"You should come to the Adventist church for prayer," the uncle said. "That would be the best solution for you."

The next Saturday, Theophane went to church with his uncle, and he spent the whole day there. He returned home after sunset, filled with an inner peace that he had never experienced before. That night, he slept more soundly than he had in many months.

After that, Theophane went to the Adventist church every Sabbath and also for prayer meetings on Sundays and Thursdays. At every meeting, people prayed for him. They asked Jesus to intervene to stop the demonic attacks.

As time passed, the attacks grew less and less frequent until they stopped. Theophane realized that church was important. He had been beyond the help of physicians. Only Jesus had been able to save him. He gave his heart to Jesus and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. 🌍

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped a Seventh-day Adventist school expand with new classrooms in Conakry, Guinea. Hear the rest of Theophane's story next week.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Theophane's uncle worked as a Global Mission pioneer, sharing Jesus' love with non-Christians, in Guinea. But his role shifted when his nephew, a Christian, needed help. This week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* asks readers how they view their role in mission and how their perceptions might change if their roles were described simply as "ambassador" (see Monday, October 30). Ask the Sabbath School class if the title of ambassador matches both of the uncle's roles in the mission story. Pray with the Sabbath School class, asking God to help them better understand Him and their role in His mission.
- Pronounce Theophane as: THEO-fan.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- Muslims make up the majority in all four major regions of Guinea. Christians are most numerous in the capital, Conakry, the other large cities, the south of the country, and the eastern Forest Region. Indigenous religious beliefs are most prevalent in the Forest Region.



Transformed!

Theophane

Father was upset when Theophane joined the Seventh-day Adventist church in the West African country of Guinea. Father was a leader in another Christian denomination, and he felt ashamed that his son, a high school student, had chosen a different faith.

“You have a week to change your mind,” he said. “If you don’t go to church on Sundays, it would be better for us to part ways.”

Theophane felt sad. He loved Father very much. But he also had experienced the power of Jesus after an uncle had invited him to go to the Adventist church. He had suffered demonic attacks that only ceased when Adventists had prayed for him. Then, in reading the Bible, he had learned that Christians should worship on the seventh-day Sabbath, not on Sunday, the first day of the week. Theophane didn’t want to go back to his old life. If he couldn’t stay at home, he would leave. He moved in with a friend who lived in the neighborhood.

Theophane’s grandfather decided to intervene. As the eldest person in the family, he was highly respected. Theophane had been named after him.

“You are confused,” Grandfather said. “I

will arrange a meeting with a priest. He will help you understand the truth.”

Grandfather and Father took Theophane to the home of a priest. He wasn’t just any priest. He was a leading theologian, and he taught religion at a university.

“What caused you to leave the church?” the priest asked Theophane.

Theophane opened his Bible to Exodus 20. “I would like us to study the Ten Commandments,” he said.

He read the first commandment, which says, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3, NKJV). Then he read the second commandment, which prohibits the worship of carved images.

Turning to the priest, he asked him to explain the first two commandments.

The priest defended carved images in the church. He said the Israelites were saved by looking at a bronze serpent raised by Moses in the wilderness and Christians today can be saved by looking at icons.

Theophane moved on to the fourth commandment, which says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). The priest countered that the law was changed. Theophane responded with the words of Jesus, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17).

Then the priest accused Theophane of not obeying the fifth commandment. “Do you love your father?” he said. “You aren’t doing what he tells you to do. God says, ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

Theophane replied, “But Jesus said, ‘He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me’” (Matthew 10:37).

The priest looked at Father. “It’s over for your son,” he said. “Don’t let him ever live at home because he will contaminate other people.”

Leaving the priest’s house, Father was furious. He threatened to burn Theophane’s birth certificate and sever all ties with him. He cursed the uncle who had invited Theophane to the Adventist Church.

Theophane defended his uncle. “He never taught me anything bad,” he said. “He just showed me the way.”

Father complained directly to the uncle, and the uncle reminded him about the demonic attacks. “Theophane was in deep trouble,” he said. “You took him to many physicians and gave him medicine. You did your best, but nothing helped. The boy didn’t follow me. He followed the Word of God.”

Eight months passed. Theophane’s life changed drastically. Not only did he remain free from demonic attacks, but he also grew into a kind, generous young man. Neighbors who had once sought to keep their children away from him and his bad influence now wanted their children to be like him. Father was amazed at the remarkable change, and he called the uncle to thank him.

“Thank you for what you have done for my son,” he said. “The boy who we knew before is not the same person today.”

Today, Theophane lives back at home, and he keeps the seventh-day Sabbath freely. He is praying that Father and Grandfather will know the Jesus who changed his life.

“My prayer now is for God to change their hearts so they can join me in my new faith and we can worship together,” he says. 🌍

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped a Seventh-day Adventist school expand with new classrooms in Conakry, Guinea.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- This week’s lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* discusses Christians’ motivation for mission. Discuss the motivation of the Christians featured in this week’s mission story, including, on the one side, Theophane’s father, grandfather, and the priest, and on the other, Theophane and his uncle. Ask the Sabbath School class what they can learn for themselves from these examples.
- This week’s *Adult Bible Study Guide* lesson also underscores the joy of believers when they have a personal encounter with Christ. Discuss how Theophane found joy. Why wasn’t his joy shared by his father, grandfather, and the priest? What happened that caused Father to change his mind? Possible answer: Father didn’t only hear about Jesus through his son’s words but also saw Jesus in his son’s changed life.
- Pronounce Theophane as: THEO-fan.
- Know that Theophane’s uncle works as a Global Mission pioneer in Guinea. A Global Mission pioneer is a missionary who shares Jesus with unreached people groups in his or her own country. The uncle usually works with people who are not Christians, but in this case he saw that his nephew needed help.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Finding the Right School

GHANA | November 18

Nusrat



Ten-year-old Nusrat couldn't understand why a woman with diabetes came regularly to the house to get a wound dressed.

"Do you like the woman and that is why you are always helping her and dressing her wound?" she asked Grandmother.

"This is my responsibility as a nurse," Grandmother replied. "This is what I do."

Nusrat liked Grandmother's work. She wanted to be like Grandmother and also help people. She began to dream of becoming a nurse in her homeland of Ghana.

Grandmother recommended several nursing schools after Nusrat graduated from high school. But Nusrat didn't have the money to enroll. Mother was already helping Nusrat's older sister study to become a teacher, and she couldn't also help Nusrat to become a nurse.

Three years passed. It seemed that Nusrat's dream was a distant reality.

One day, Nusrat told a visiting uncle about her desire to become a nurse. Uncle Nurideen already was a nurse.

Uncle Nurideen saw a solution. He had earned his nursing degree at Valley View University, which belongs to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and he said Adventist education was affordable.

Nusrat was intrigued, but she also was worried. She, her uncle, and the rest of their family belonged to another world religion. As a child, she had studied in a Christian school and had felt very uncomfortable.

"I always felt like a stranger because I couldn't sing the songs and I couldn't understand how they were praying," she said.

Uncle Nurideen replied that Adventist schools were not like other Christian schools.

"I felt completely free to worship as I wished at Valley View University," he said. "There was no discrimination."

He acknowledged that he had felt a little out of place the first time that he entered an Adventist church. "But they told me to remember that I was in the presence of God, not in a church," he said. "That helped a lot. They made me understand that the approach

to worship was different, but I was in the presence of God.”

Uncle Nurideen said he went to every church program at the university, but no one hindered him from praying according to his personal beliefs.

Nusrat was encouraged by her uncle’s account. “It would be nice to go to a school where you are allowed to worship as you wish and feel welcome,” she said. “That would be the best place to be.”

Valley View University was far away, and Nusrat looked for an Adventist school closer to her home. She found the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College.

Today, Nusrat is finishing her first year.

“We learn hymns together in Sabbath School, and we go to church together,” she says. “I have come to enjoy worshiping on the Sabbath.”

Not so long ago, she told Uncle Nurideen that his impression of Adventist education was correct.

“What you told me is true,” she said. “There is no discrimination.”

Uncle Nurideen was happy to hear the report.

“I knew that you would be comfortable there,” he said. 🌍

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College expand with the construction of new classrooms and dormitories. The college opened with 22 students in 2015 and now has 770 students. Demand is high, and the school lacks the capacity to admit additional students. This is a real mission school, where only 30 percent of the students are Adventists. A number of students join the church every year. Thank you for considering a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 30.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- This week’s lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* challenges readers to explain in practical terms what Jesus meant when He said to “love ... your neighbor as yourself” in Luke 10:27 (see Tuesday, November 14). Ask the Sabbath School class how Uncle Nurideen experienced that love at the Adventist university. How does Nusrat experience that love at the nursing college? How can the Sabbath School class show that love this week?
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... to non-Christian religions,” and Mission Objective No. 4, “To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- The origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana is linked to a woman named Hannah More (1808–1868). She was a missionary serving for another denomination in West Africa who accepted Seventh-day Adventism while on furlough in the United States.
- Francis Dolphijn (died c. 1914) was the first indigenous missionary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana. Having read a tract on the Sabbath, he decided to share his newfound faith throughout the Gold Coast of Ghana.

Following the Truth

GHANA | November 25

Obed



Grandfather suggested that Obed study at a Seventh-day Adventist high school in the West African country of Ghana. But Obed's stepfather strongly opposed the idea.

"I won't allow him to go to that high school because he will come back an Adventist," said Obed's stepfather, who was a pastor with another Christian denomination.

So, Obed ended up enrolling at a government boarding school. It was there that he learned about Adventists anyway.

While at the boarding school, Obed worshiped every Sunday with other students in one of the classrooms. He worshiped faithfully year after year.

At the end of his final year, students in the lower grades were sent home as he and the graduating class spent a month preparing for final exams. With so few students on campus, Sunday worship services were discontinued.

One Sunday passed. A second Sunday passed. A third Sunday passed. Obed missed the Sunday meetings.

On the last weekend before final exams,

Obed saw three classmates leaving the campus on a Saturday morning. They were dressed up, and they said that they were going to church.

"Can I go with you?" Obed asked.

Obed followed the two boys and girl to a Seventh-day Adventist church. He was amazed to hear them sing for special music during the worship service. He had never heard a song sung in harmony, and the words of the song touched his heart. They sang "Until Then" (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal*, No. 632).

The following Monday, he asked the Adventist girl, Sandra, to lend him her hymnal. He wanted to copy down the words of the song that he had heard on Sabbath. Sandra gave him the hymnal and taught him how to sing the song. Then Obed asked Sandra to teach him other songs from the book. The two sang many hymns together during their week of final exams.

The hymns sparked Obed's interest in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and he wanted to know more.

But what would his stepfather say? He remember that his stepfather hadn't wanted him to go to the Adventist school and had expressed fear that he might become an Adventist.

After graduating from high school, Obed returned home for the summer. He spent his vacation helping his mother to sell fried fish and *banku* corn gruel on the roadside. He didn't dare go to church on Sabbath, but he desperately wanted to worship in the Adventist church. He saw that the local Adventist church had prayer meetings from 7 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays. So, he came up

with a plan. He left his mother for an hour on Wednesday evening, telling her that he needed to use the restroom. The restroom at home was too far away to walk, but there was a public restroom not far from where they sold food. The public restroom happened to be close to the Adventist church.

For two months, Obed worshiped at the Adventist church on Wednesday evenings. He learned new hymns. He learned new truths about God in the Bible. He knew that he had found the truth.

When he entered the university that fall, he immediately looked for Adventist students on campus. When he found them, he joined them in worshipping on Sabbaths. Before long, he was baptized.

Obed's grandfather was thrilled when he learned that his grandson had joined the Adventist Church. His stepfather, however, was upset. But he has come to accept the decision over time.

Today, Obed works as an administrative assistant at the headquarters of the Southern Ghana Union Conference in Accra, Ghana. He says it is important to follow the truth even if parents or others try to stop you.

“When you find the truth and know it is the truth, you shouldn't allow anything to take you away from the truth,” he said. “You should follow what you know to be the truth and, at God's appointed time, God will allow you to worship in church.” 🌐

Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help expand Seventh-day Adventist education in Ghana. The funds will go toward the construction of new classrooms and dormitories at the Nursing and Midwifery Training College, which opened with 22 students in 2015 and now has 770 students. This is a real mission school, where only 30 percent of the students are Adventists. Thank you for considering a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 30.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- This week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* describes how the faithfulness of a helpless paralytic's friends helped him in Luke 5:17–26 (see Sunday, November 19). How did the faithfulness of Obed's Adventist friends help him? Possible answer: By simply going to church on Sabbath, the friends led Obed to a deeper faith. Faith produces faith. The friends' faith became Obed's faith, and he was faithful to the truth that he learned. Ask the Sabbath School class to identify ways they can be a helper to their friends (see Monday, November 20).
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- Christian Abraham Ackah (1883–1912) was a founding member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana. In addition to his work in literature evangelism, he founded the first two churches and first two schools in the county, and was the first Ghanaian to be ordained a church elder and to serve on a union mission executive committee, all before his untimely death at the age of 29.

An Influential Church

GHANA | December 2

Peter N. K. Duodu
and Samuel Marfon



It may not be every day that a Thirteenth Sabbath project inspires another big project. But that is exactly what happened in Accra, the capital of the West African country of Ghana.

About 15 years ago, the Ghanaian military gave the Seventh-day Adventist Church a plot of land in one of its main barracks in Accra. The land came at no cost. The only request was that the Adventist Church construct a house of worship on the land. The military asked for the construction of an Adventist church where soldiers could worship.

Church members across Ghana donated to the project. They wanted soldiers to be able to worship in an Adventist church. Then the world church got involved. The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in third quarter 2007 provided the finishing touches for the sanctuary: beautiful stained-glass windows that were installed in the perimeter of the church's domed ceiling, and stained-glass panels depicting praying hands and the Adventist church logo behind the pulpit.

The military barracks church was dedicated to God on November 1, 2008. A plaque hanging outside the main entrance includes a list of delegates who attended the opening ceremony. Among them was the director of the General Conference's Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries department, which oversees the world church's pastoral care of people serving in the armed forces.

Across town, the national Ghanaian police force took notice of the new Adventist church in the military barracks. They also wanted an Adventist church on the compound of their national training academy. Police officials reached out to church leaders with a request. "If we give you a plot of land at the police academy, would you construct a church?" they asked.

It was an offer that church leaders could not refuse. Work began to collect funds to build an Adventist church at the police academy.

"Looking at what we have done in the military barracks, they are entrusting it to us to build," said local church leader Christopher Annan-Nunoo, who serves as executive secretary of the Southern Ghana Union Conference.

A Building That Preaches

The military barracks church has proven to be a light to the armed forces, said Lieutenant-Colonel Peter N. K. Duodu, a

military chaplain with the Adventist Church.

“Because of this edifice, people want to come and worship here,” he said. “They say, ‘Your building is wonderful.’ So even without us going out to preach, the building is doing the preaching for us.”

He said military personnel who worship in the church gain a better understanding of Adventists and, most importantly, learn about God and salvation.

“We thank God for this wonderful medium that he has provided for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to evangelize military personnel,” he said. “It means a lot.”

Samuel Marfon, a 17-year veteran police officer and the only Adventist chaplain in Ghana’s police force, is hopeful that the future police academy church will have a similar impact on police personnel. The church is expected to seat 1,500 to 2,000 people. “God will do it for us,” he said. “He will build the church”

Josiah Nwarungwa, Adventist Mission director for the West-Central Africa Division, whose territory includes Ghana, said he was thrilled about the impact that the 2007 Thirteenth Sabbath project in the military barracks is having on the police force.

“It’s inspiring,” he said. “The Adventist Church is present in the Ghanaian military forces. My prayer is that the Lord will make it a center of influence for eternity for those who come into contact with it.” 🌍

Thank you for your 2007 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that is having a big impact on military and police elites in Ghana. This quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering also promises to have a big impact on lives in Ghana. It will help the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College expand, with the construction of new classrooms and dormitories. Thank you for considering a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 30.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- This week’s lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* speaks about the importance of witnessing to those in power. Ask the Sabbath School class to consider how the Adventist church in the military barracks has served as a witness to those in power. What other ways can Adventists reach out to influential people?
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities, ... among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions,” and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- The traditional cloth of the Ghanaian people is the bright and colorful kente (from the word “kenton,” meaning basket), made by handweaving strips of silk and cotton cloth. In the past the fabric was worn by the royalty of the Ashanti and Ewe, and by queens and princesses of the Dagbon people. Today, it is popular to wear it for special occasions.
- The Kejetia Market in Kumasi, Ashanti, Ghana, is West Africa’s biggest open-air market. It has more than 10,000 stores and stalls that sell a wide variety of products, from spices to Ashanti sandals, plastic beads to gold and silver.

The Scythe Attack

Nancy



Thirteen-year-old Nancy was walking to school with a sharp scythe in the West African country of Ghana.

Teacher had asked the children to help cut the grass around the school, so Nancy had borrowed the scythe from her father. She was ready to cut grass.

Then tragedy struck.

On the way to school, Nancy met a 16-year-old relative, Akuba, and the two girls got into a quarrel.

Akuba accused Nancy of spreading an untrue rumor, and Nancy angrily defended herself.

As the argument heated up, Akuba snatched the scythe from Nancy and waved it threateningly.

At that moment, Nancy's father appeared. Someone had seen the girls fighting and rushed to alert him.

Just as Akuba lunged toward Nancy and swung the scythe at her, Father stepped between the two girls.

The scythe sliced off the tip of Father's nose. Nancy was in tears. She felt devastated. Father was rushed to the hospital.

Nancy tried to go to the hospital with him, but someone held her back. She tried to retaliate against Akuba, but someone took the girl away.

Unfortunately, the physician couldn't reconnect the tip of Father's nose.

He treated the wound and placed Father under the care of a nurse named Esther at the hospital.

Father spent some time in recovery at the hospital.

He was impressed with Esther, and he introduced her to Nancy.

"She's a good nurse," Father said. "I've always wanted you to become a nurse."

Nancy saw the care that the nurse gave Father.

She also was impressed.

She resolved to become a nurse.

Several years passed, and Nancy graduated from high school. She looked for a nursing school and found the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College.

At first, she thought that only Adventists were allowed to study there. She wasn't an Adventist.

But the college accepted her application. Once she began her studies, she realized that many students were not Adventists. Some even weren't Christians.

Nancy had always considered herself a Christian, but she had second thoughts when she attended a week of spiritual emphasis at the college.

A pastor taught from the Bible how to live a Christian life, and she realized that she hadn't been living a Christian life. She wanted to be a real Christian. At the end of the week of spiritual emphasis, she decided to surrender her life to Christ and be baptized.

Today, Nancy is 22 years old and a new woman.

Her life has changed completely since she gave it to Jesus.

She used to only read her Bible in church on weekends, but now she has personal devotions and reads the Bible in her room every day. She also prays. She can't wait to graduate and care for people as a nurse. She may even continue her education and become a physician.

"My father was happy when I said that I wanted to be baptized," Nancy said. "He knew my past life. He was happy to hear that I have changed through the college and have a new life." 🌍

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that will help the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College, where Nancy studies, expand with the construction of new classrooms and dormitories. The college opened with 22 students in 2015 and now has 770 students. Demand is high, and the school lacks the capacity to admit additional students. This is a real mission school, where only 30 percent of the students are Adventists. A number of students, like Nancy, join the church every year. Thank you for considering a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 30.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- This week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* asks readers to look for bridges or points of contact that could open opportunities for deeper spiritual conversations with others (see Tuesday, December 5). What bridge or point of contact led Nancy into a deeper relationship with God? Possible answer: nursing. As Nancy pursued her desire to become a nurse, she connected with the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College, which, in turn, led her to a deeper walk with God.
- Know that Akuba is a pseudonym.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- Kofi Annan (1938–2018) is one of the most well-known Ghanaians. He served as secretary-general of the United Nations from 1997–2006, and he and the United Nations were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.
- Ghana, then called the Gold Coast, declared its independence from the British on March 6, 1957.



Madam Anatomy

Abigail

Abigail didn't know what to do. More than anything, she wanted to become a nurse.

But she needed to work to pay for her studies, and she didn't seem to have enough time to prepare for her classes.

She had just started her first year at the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College in the West African country of Ghana.

The anatomy and physiology class was especially difficult.

In the evenings, Abigail cried because she couldn't understand anatomy and physiology.

When she woke up in the morning, she cried again.

She was enrolled in eight classes, and her workload left little time for homework. She desperately prayed to God to help her pass her classes, especially anatomy and physiology.

After giving the first quiz, the teacher told the anatomy and physiology class, "The highest score was 75 percent."

Abigail sighed and thought, "Augh, then I got 35 percent."

The teacher didn't say who had received the top grade.

The next day, when the graded quizzes were returned to students, Abigail saw that she had received 75 percent. She couldn't believe her eyes.

A classmate sitting nearby whispered, "What did you get?"

Abigail showed her the paper.

"So, you are the one who scored the highest!" the classmate exclaimed.

Abigail was embarrassed. "Please, don't tell anyone," she said.

"OK, I won't," she said.

Abigail's secret was revealed to the class when she got 100 percent on the midterm exam.

The teacher addressed her in front of the class.

"You scored the highest on the first quiz," he said. "You scored the highest on the second quiz. Now you have 100 percent on the midterm. Don't hide anymore in class. When I ask questions, feel free to answer them."

Abigail started speaking up in class. When the teacher asked a question, she didn't mind

answering. Sometimes she didn't even raise her hand and just answered.

Before long, her classmates gave her a nickname, "Madam Anatomy." Abigail didn't mind her new name. She just smiled when her classmates called her Madam Anatomy. She smiled even bigger when she got back her final exam in the class. It was a perfect score.

Abigail credits God for helping in anatomy and physiology, and all of her classes. Today, she is halfway through her three years of nursing studies and has the highest cumulative grade point average of any student in the college. She also has received a partial scholarship, taking off some of the pressure to work.

"It's God," she said. "It's not me. It's God."

After attending a week of spiritual emphasis on campus, Abigail has decided that she would like to get baptized and join the Adventist Church. She loves God with all her heart and wants to live for Him.

But she faces resistance at home. A close relative who belongs to another denomination has disparaged her desire, calling it a sin.

Abigail doesn't know what to do. She doesn't know whom she can turn to except God. She is praying for God to help. She is sure that the God who helped her get good grades will help her serve Him faithfully now and forevermore. 🌍

Pray for Abigail as she seeks God's will in her life. Pray for all 770 students at the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand the college, which opened with 22 students in 2015, with new classrooms and dormitories. Demand far exceeds available openings at the college, where only 30 percent of the students are Adventists. Thank you for your generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 30.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- After sharing the mission story about Abigail's path to Christ at the Adventist college, ask the Sabbath School class to consider this question from this week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide*, "How did you come to know Jesus and the precious three angels' messages? List three spiritual blessings that you have experienced from Jesus in your personal life" (see Thursday, December 14). Did anyone in the class face a family conflict like Abigail? What advice would you give Abigail as she seeks to deepen her faith?
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, "To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples"; Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities [and] ... among unreached and under-reached people groups"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- The capital of Ghana is the city of Accra, located on the coast in the south. The city itself has a population of about 284,000, but the larger metropolitan area has nearly 5.5 million people.

Skipping a Commandment

GHANA | December 23

Nathaniel



Sixteen-year-old Nathaniel was surprised as he listened to a pastor preach in the West African country of Ghana.

The pastor was reading from the Bible at the pulpit on a Sunday, and Nathaniel was following along in his own Bible at his seat. With his Bible opened to Exodus 20, the pastor went through the Ten Commandments, one by one.

But he skipped one of the commandments.

After the sermon, Nathaniel went to the pastor to ask why he hadn't mentioned the fourth commandment.

"You can worship on any day," the pastor said. "It's not important which day you keep."

Nathaniel's surprise grew. He had never thought about any of the Ten Commandments being optional.

At home, he read and reread the fourth commandment in his Bible. He read the words of God, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall

do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11, NKJV).

He had gone to the Sunday church at the invitation of a friend. The next Sunday, he went to the pastor of his own church to ask about the fourth commandment. His pastor said the same thing as the other pastor.

"You can worship on any day," the pastor said.

Nathaniel began to study the Bible in earnest. Where did the Bible say he could worship on any day? He prayed to God to reveal the truth to Him. He found an answer in James 2:10, which says, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." He began to think

that it might be important to God to observe Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath.

Nathaniel had heard about Seventh-day Adventists, and he didn't know of any other Christians who worshiped on Saturdays. But there were no Seventh-day Adventists in his town.

He prayed, "If the seventh day is truly important to You, please cause Seventh-day Adventists to come to my village and conduct evangelistic meetings here."

He thought that an answer to his prayer would prove two things: that God had heard his prayer, and that the Sabbath was important to Him.

He repeated his prayer the next day and the next.

"If the seventh day is the holy day of God, let Adventists come to my town to do evangelistic meetings," he prayed.

About eight months later, the Adventists came.

Nathaniel was so happy!

At the end of the evangelistic meetings, Nathaniel was baptized, together with his younger sister who had attended the meetings with him. In all, 50 people were baptized, and a Seventh-day Adventist church opened in the town.

Today, Nathaniel is a 23-year-old university student studying to become a teacher.

"God answered my prayers," he says. "Before the Adventists arrived in my town, they had already won a soul." 🌍

Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help expand Seventh-day Adventist education in Ghana. The funds will go toward the construction of new classrooms and dormitories at the Nursing and Midwifery Training College, which opened with 22 students in 2015 and now has 770 students. Demand is high, and the school lacks the capacity to admit additional students. This is a real mission school, where only 30 percent of the students are Adventists. A number of students join the church every year. Thank you for

Story Tips

- This week's lesson in the *Adult Bible Study Guide* emphasizes how God can use a single light to bring many people to Him. The memory verse reads, "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6, NRSV). Ask the Sabbath School class how Nathaniel was a light to his community. Possible answer: The Holy Spirit convicted Nathaniel about the truth and led him to pray for evangelistic meetings in his town. God heard his eight months of prayers, and the meetings resulted in the baptism of 50 people.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Fact

- In 1983, Ghanaian Ferdie Adoboe set a Guinness World Record for the fastest 100-yard backward sprint, which he completed in 12.7 seconds.

considering a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 30.

By Andrew McChesney

Importance of an Invitation

13th SABBATH | December 30

Susana



Several hundred Seventh-day Adventist students and their friends packed a church on the campus of a public university in the West African country of Ghana.

From the front, a pastor invited those who had a personal testimony about how they had given their hearts to Jesus to tell a visiting Adventist Mission worker after the Sabbath worship service.

Among those who remained after the worship service was a 22-year-old student named Susana.

Susana, flashing a shy smile, said she had given her heart to Jesus just a few months earlier after befriending Adventist students at the university.

When she was pressed for details, she said the story began two years earlier in her hometown.

While she was home on vacation, her brother's wife had invited her to go to a Seventh-day Adventist church for a baby dedication. The sister-in-law, whose name was Comfort, was the only Adventist in the family. She wanted her newborn son, Righteous, to be dedicated to the Lord.

Susana had never worshiped in an Adventist church. She had never set foot into an Adventist church.

She agreed to go.

The worship experience moved her. She especially liked the music and the singing. She wanted to go back.

But Comfort didn't invite her again, so she didn't go.

Back at the university, Susana became good friends with an Adventist student named Lydia.

Some time passed, and Lydia invited Susana to join a group of 30 Adventist students for a prayer meeting. The students sang and prayed, and one of them preached about Jesus. Susana enjoyed the prayer meeting, and Lydia invited her to attend again. Susana began to worship regularly with the group of students.

One day, Lydia said to her, "We are going to do evangelism. Would you like to join us?"

The Adventist students planned to spend part of an upcoming break between semesters by going door to door in a town about 12 miles (20 kilometers) from the university. The students would invite people to attend evangelistic meetings in the evening. A pastor would preach at the meetings. Susana agreed to help.

She joined 25 other students, all Adventists, in going from house to house in the mornings and then attending the evangelistic meetings in the evenings. More than 50 people came to the meetings every evening.

At the beginning of the meetings, Lydia asked Susana if she would like to get baptized.

“Yes,” Susana replied.

As she listened to the preacher speak every night, the desire for baptism grew in her heart. She was especially interested to hear the preacher speak about the seventh day, Saturday, being the biblical Sabbath. She saw that the preacher was following the Bible. She loved the music and the singing. She knew what she wanted to do next. But would she get an invitation?

At the end of the meetings, Lydia asked her, “Do you really want to be baptized?”

Susana knew for sure now.

“Yes,” she said.

Susana was among the 20 people who were baptized.

Lydia was overjoyed when Susana came out of the water and gave her a big hug.

After the meetings, Susana returned to her hometown and told Comfort about her baptism. Comfort was very happy. She was no longer the only Adventist in the family.

Why did Susana give her heart to Jesus? There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit spoke to her heart. But the process started with a simple invitation to church.

“When I went to the Adventist church for the first time, I loved how they worshiped,” Susana said. “But I wasn’t invited back, so I didn’t go. I was waiting for another invitation. Then I was invited at the university, and I went, and I ended up becoming an Adventist.” 🌍

Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help expand Seventh-day Adventist education with two projects in the West-Central Africa Division. The funds will go toward the construction of new classrooms and dormitories at the Nursing and Midwifery Training College in Ghana, where Susana studies, and the opening of a bilingual school in Cameroon where children will be able to learn about Jesus in French and English. Thank you for your generous offering today.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- A major challenge in this week’s *Adult Bible Study Guide* is to invite someone to church (see Thursday, December 28). Susana only gave her heart to Jesus after being invited to church several times. Discuss in the Sabbath School class the importance of inviting someone to church. What would have happened if no one had invited Susana a second time? More important, what happened because Lydia did invite Susana to worship with her and to go door-to-door with Adventist students? Who can you invite to church next Sabbath?
- Show the locations of the Thirteenth Sabbath projects on the map. In Ghana, today’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will support the Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College in Asamang. In Cameroon, the offering will support a French-English elementary school in Bandjoun. You can download a mission map with the West-Central Africa Division projects on Facebook at bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the West-Central Africa Division: bit.ly/wad-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Candied Nuts

(CAMEROON)

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups (250 g) roasted peanuts, shelled
2/3 cup (10 ml) water
2/3 cup (133 g) granulated sugar
1/3 cup (67 g) brown sugar

2 tsp (10 ml) ground cinnamon (optional)
1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) nutmeg (optional)
1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) vanilla extract (optional)
1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) cayenne pepper (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Heat water in a 12-inch (30-cm) heavy pan over medium heat. Add sugar, spices, and vanilla extract, and bring to a boil. Add the roasted peanuts.

Turn the heat to medium-high to high, stirring occasionally, until the sugar coats the peanuts and is grainy and crystallized, 15 to 18 minutes. Do not caramelize the sugar.

Remove from heat, and spread the peanuts on a cookie sheet or tray. Let them cool and serve.



Future 13th Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will support 10 projects in the Southern Asia Division:

- Construct classrooms and labs at school, Palakkad, India
- Construct English church, Lowry Adventist College, Bengaluru, India
- Construct Central English Church, Bengaluru, India
- Construct high school, Aurangabad, India
- Construct girls' dormitory, E. D. Thomas Memorial Higher Secondary School, Thanjavur, India
- Construct girls' dormitory and children's auditorium, Siang Valley Academy School, Pasighat, India
- Reconstruct church, conference center, and dining hall, Quiet Corner Campsite youth training center, Manginapudi, India
- Reconstruct school building, Anni, India
- Construct classrooms at school, Namunagar, Andaman Islands, India
- Construct classrooms and administrative building at school, Gadhi Rural Municipality, Udayapur, Nepal

Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free Mission Spotlight video, featuring video reports from around the West-Central Africa Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

Online Information

Following are sources of information that may be helpful in preparing for the mission segment of Sabbath School. For more information on the countries featured in this quarterly, visit:

Websites

Ghana: government website	bit.ly/Gov_Ghana
World Travel Guide	bit.ly/WTG_Ghana
WikiTravel	bit.ly/WT_Ghana
Cameroon: government website	bit.ly/Gov_CamPM
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LP_Cameroon
WikiVoyage	bit.ly/WV_Cameroon
Guinea: government website	bit.ly/Gov_RoG
World Travel Guide	bit.ly/WTG_RoG
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LonePlan_RoG

Seventh-day Adventist

West-Central Africa Division	bit.ly/WAD-FB
Cameroon Union Mission	bit.ly/SDA_CAUM
Northern Ghana Union Conference	bit.ly/SDA-NGUC
Eastern View Ghana Conference	bit.ly/SDA_EVGC
Universite Adventiste Cosendai (Cameroon)	bit.ly/SAD_UAC

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Determine a goal for your class's weekly mission offering. Multiply it by 14, allowing a double goal for the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will be collected on December 30. Remind Sabbath School class members that their regular weekly mission offerings help the missionary work of the world church, and that one-quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in the West-Central Africa Division. On December 23, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving on the upcoming Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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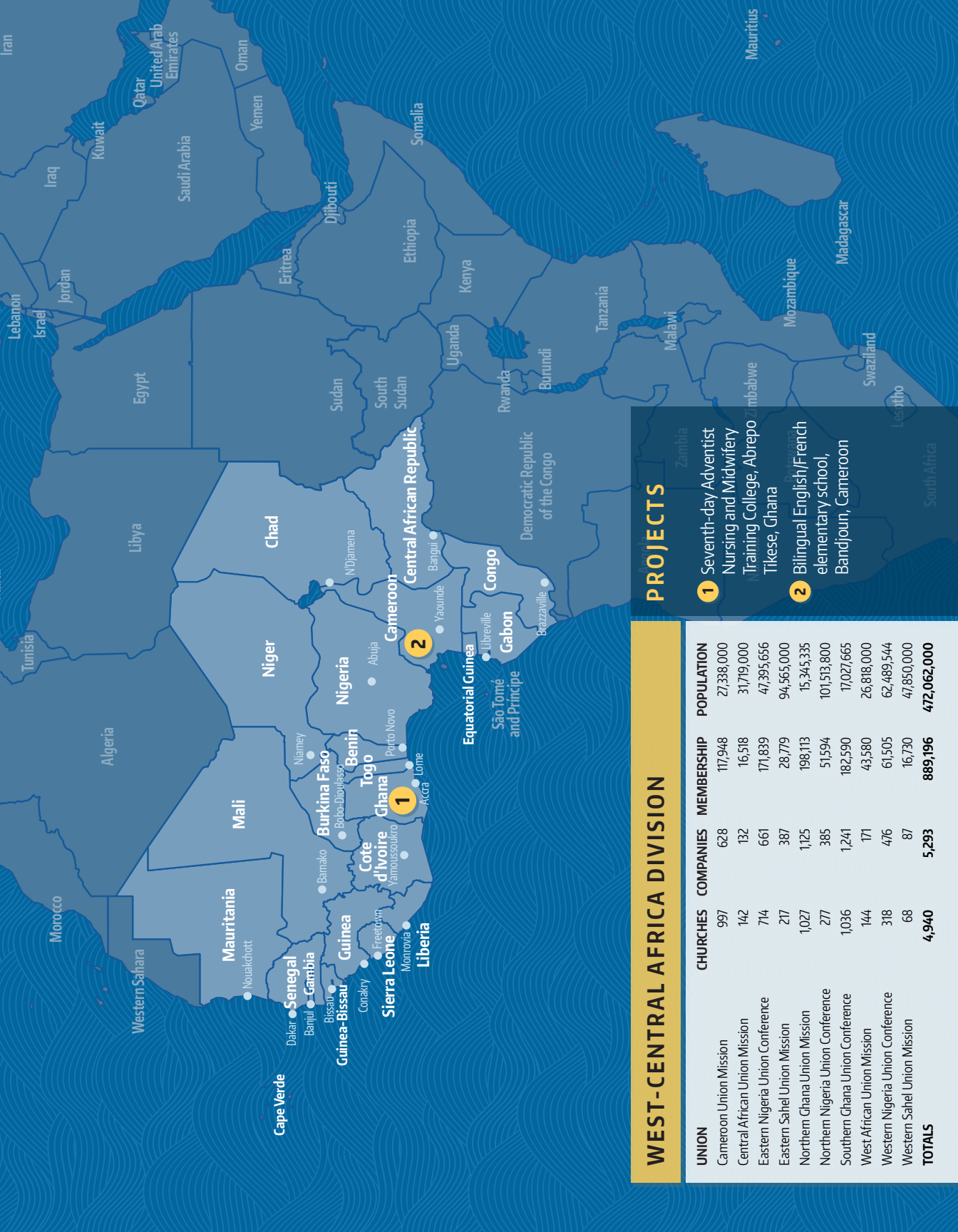
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WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION

UNION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Cameroon Union Mission	997	628	117,948	27,338,000
Central African Union Mission	142	132	16,518	31,719,000
Eastern Nigeria Union Conference	714	661	171,839	47,395,656
Eastern Sahel Union Mission	217	387	28,779	94,565,000
Northern Ghana Union Mission	1,027	1,125	198,113	15,345,335
Northern Nigeria Union Conference	277	385	51,594	101,513,800
Southern Ghana Union Conference	1,036	1,241	182,590	17,027,665
West African Union Mission	144	171	43,580	26,818,000
Western Nigeria Union Conference	318	476	61,505	62,489,544
Western Sahel Union Mission	68	87	16,730	47,850,000
TOTALS	4,940	5,293	889,196	472,062,000

PROJECTS

- 1** Seventh-day Adventist Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Abrepo Tikese, Ghana
- 2** Bilingual English/French elementary school, Bandjoun, Cameroon