



YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2019 • QUARTER 1 • SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION



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Your Offerings at Work



Three years ago, part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering funded Eastern Gate Primary School in Francistown, Botswana. See stories on pages 4-7.



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Dear Sabbath School Leader,

Andrew McChesney
Editor



This quarter we feature the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and seven Indian Ocean island-nations, including Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion, Rodrigues, and Seychelles.

The region is home to 193 million people, including 3.7 million Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 51 people.

This quarter's seven Thirteenth Sabbath projects are in two Portuguese-speaking countries on opposite sides of the continent: Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe.

In Mozambique, the school and

orphanage will be built from scratch, while Mozambique Adventist University will receive funds to expand its most popular department, food and nutrition. About 250 of the university's 350 students are majoring in food and nutrition, and I saw that the classrooms and laboratory are packed.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, I heard story after story about people struggling with alcohol and drug addictions, and the planned alcohol and drug rehabilitation facility promises to be a much-needed "center of influence" in the capital city. We have dozens of churches on the island, but many meet in crowded basements and rundown structures. Local church leaders told me that a new church building is needed to better reach to the middle class.

The children's project is especially exciting. I met a boy who loves the Bible and reads it with great interest every day at school. With longing eyes, he told me that he wished he had his own Bible to read at home. We can make ownership of a Bible a reality for thousands of children this quarter.

Special Features

This quarterly contains just a sample of mission stories from the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. For more great stories, visit bit.ly/sid-archive. At this link, you can also search for stories by country and theme.

If you have found especially effective ways to share mission stories, please let me know at mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org. Thank you for encouraging others to be mission minded!

Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will assist two countries:

- MOZAMBIQUE
 - Expand food and nutrition department at Mozambique Adventist University, Beira
 - Establish an orphanage for children who lost parents to HIV/AIDS, Nampula
 - Construct an elementary school, Milange
- SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE
 - Set up an alcohol and drug rehabilitation center, São Tomé
 - Build a new church, São Tomé
 - Construct an auditorium for K-12 school, São Tomé
- Children's Project: Portuguese Bibles for children from needy families in Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe

Pulled Over by Helicopter

BOTSWANA | January 5

Kenaope Kenaope, 50



Kenaope Kenaope, leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Botswana, didn't give a second thought to the police helicopter that buzzed his car as he sped between the African country's two largest cities.

But the helicopter swung low a second time and roared past him.

Kenaope wondered whether the police were in pursuit of a criminal, perhaps a man on foot whom he had seen walking along the highway a few minutes earlier.

Then the helicopter raced ahead of the car and slowly descended to the ground. Kenaope's heart began to pound, and he stepped on the brakes.

The helicopter touched down near Kenaope's stopped car, the thundering blades flinging a whirlwind of dust and grass over the vehicle.

Moments later, the rotors stopped and Kenaope stepped out of his car. In

Botswana, a motorist stopped by the police is supposed to approach the police vehicle. Kenaope, wearing a suit and tie after attending a church meeting, had never been stopped by a helicopter, and he wasn't sure whether he was supposed to walk over to it.

Two police officers alighted from the helicopter, and they met Kenaope on a patch of dry grass beside the road.

"Sir, we are stopping you," one officer said.

Kenaope didn't know what to say. His mouth went dry. But he managed to force out two words: "For what?"

"We're stopping you because you are speeding," the officer said.

Driving Too Fast

The officer was speaking the truth. Kenaope had left Francistown in northern Botswana to make the 270-mile (435-kilometer) drive south to the capital, Gaborone, in the late afternoon. In Francistown, he had attended a key church meeting about the opening of the Adventist Church's first elementary school in northern Botswana. Eager to return home, he had set the car's cruise control to 95 miles per hour (150 kilometers per hour)—a full 20 miles per hour (30 kilometers per hour) over the speed limit.

Kenaope handed his driver's license to the police officers. He felt deep

Story Tips

- Pronounce Kenaope as: ken-a-OH-pay
- Watch Kenaope Kenaope at the link: bit.ly/Kenaope-Kenaope
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Mission Post

- In 1962, the first Adventist school in Botswana opened in the small village of Ramokgoname, 40 miles (65 kilometers) from Palapye.
- Botswana has 228 churches and companies, and 44,554 members. With a population of 2,226,000, there is one Adventist for every 50 people in Botswana.

embarrassment. Cars stopped on both sides of the road, and their occupants strained to see what was happening. Kenaope detected a flicker of recognition cross the face of the second police officer. He knew Kenaope, perhaps from his occasional appearances on national television or his popular seminars at a police academy.

The first officer spoke. “Where are you going?” he asked.

“Gaborone,” Kenaope replied.

“Be careful,” the officer said and handed back the driver’s license. “You can go.”

Kenaope couldn’t believe his ears.

The officer looked at Kenaope and then glanced over at his car, covered with dirt and grass from the helicopter. “We’re sorry for making the car dirty,” he said.

Sweet Forgiveness

Shame and relief washed over Kenaope. He was free.

“At that moment, I felt the value of

forgiveness,” Kenaope said. “I noticed that this thing, forgiveness, which we take for granted, is very important. I got it from the police, and I am asking God to help me give it to other people.”

Being stopped by a police helicopter for speeding isn’t common in Botswana. But it is even more rare to be stopped and forgiven.

“Landing a helicopter and then letting me go was a waste of their time and energy,” said Kenaope, president of the Adventist Church’s Botswana Union Conference. “For me, this is not easy to explain. Being forgiven was as big a surprise as being stopped.”

Kenaope, 50, recounted the 2017 incident while driving an Adventist Mission writer on the Gaborone-Francistown highway for a visit to Eastern Gate Primary School, a project funded by a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2015. A police helicopter hovering overhead triggered the memory.

“Up to now, when I see a helicopter, I become nervous, check my speed, and think, ‘I hope that it is not coming for me,’” Kenaope said. “But then I remember sweet forgiveness—and I drive responsibly, so I don’t repeat the same mistake.” 🌍

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in fourth quarter 2015 helped open the Eastern Gate Primary School in Francistown in January 2017, a full year ahead of schedule. This is the first Adventist elementary school in northern Botswana, giving the church a total of three elementary schools and two high schools in the country. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney

BOTSWANA | January 12

“Mommy, Please Go”

Lethabo Masienyne, 8



Big changes have been happening in a Botswanan family’s home since the mother sent her eight-year-old son to the Seventh-day Adventist elementary school in Francistown.

The boy, Lethabo, now insists that his parents pray before meals. He asks for prayer when he gets up in the morning and when he goes to bed in the evening. He begs his mother to go with him to church on Sabbath.

The requests initially shocked his mother, Gomolemo, who was not raised in a Christian home. But she couldn’t be happier. “I just want to thank God for bringing me and my kids here,” she said after Sabbath worship services at the Eastern Gate Primary School, where her son attends third grade.

Her young daughter goes to the church’s Place of Love preschool up the street.

How did the mother end up in church?

Lethabo completed the first three grades in a privately run home school with 10

other students in Francistown, the second-largest city in Botswana with a population of about 90,000. After three years, however, he was struggling with reading and math, and his worried mother decided to enroll him at Eastern Gate Primary School. She had heard about the school from a mother who planned to send her daughter there. In addition, she wanted her son to learn about God.

“I was not raised in a Christian family, but I want to raise my kids in a Christian family,” she said. “A lot of events are happening in the world. We need to know God.”

Because of his poor reading and math skills, Lethabo was asked to repeat the third grade at the Adventist school. His mother noticed a drastic improvement in his studies in just a few months.

“Now my son can do everything alone,” she said. “He can read, and he’s a star in math. Math and Bible are his favorite subjects.”

Story Tips

- Pronounce Lethabo as: le-TA-bo
- Pronounce Gomolemo as: kho-mo-LE-MO
- Watch Lethabo and Gomolemo at the link: bit.ly/Gomolemo-Masienyne
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Mission Post

- Kanye Adventist Hospital has 168 beds and provides medical care to 40,000 inpatients and 108,000 outpatients annually. Around 1,200 babies are born in the hospital each year.
- In 1984, Botswana Union Conference divided into two conferences: the North Botswana Conference and the South Botswana Conference.

Lethabo especially loves the Bible. Tears come to his eyes when he hears stories about Jesus in school.

“This boy is very close to God,” his mother said. “Every morning, every evening, every meal—we pray. He encourages us. Every Sabbath, he and his sister come to church. Sometimes I just drop them off, and he says, ‘Mommy, you know what? You need to come to church.’”

His mother didn’t come to church, so Lethabo decided to make it a matter of prayer. For four months, his mother suffered severe morning sickness. Every day, he told his schoolteacher, “You know, Teacher, my Mommy is not well. She is vomiting every day. Can we pray for her?”

At home, he told his mother, “Mommy,

you need to go to church so the pastor can pray for you to get well.”

“Those words touched me,” his mother said.

Finally, she agreed to go to church. But she didn’t feel well the next Sabbath morning, and a church worker came to the house to pick up her children. Before leaving, Lethabo turned to his mother.

“Mommy, can you please go with us?” he said. “Why are you staying behind? Just go. If you go, the pastor will pray for you, and you will be healed.”

The words cut to his mother’s heart.

“Next Saturday, we will be together,” she promised. “I will go to church.”

That is how she ended up at the school on Sabbath.

“My son loves God. That is very good,” she said. “I think God sent him to us to show us the light.”

This Sabbath was the first day in four months that she hadn’t experienced morning sickness—an improvement not lost on her son, who stood nearby as his mother spoke.

“Praying is very good,” he told her. “You’re no longer vomiting.”

His mother smiled. “Thank you, my son,” she said. “I will keep coming to church.”

Part of a 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering funded the construction of Eastern Gate Primary School, the first Adventist elementary school in northern Botswana. Thank you for your mission offerings that helped build the school—and brought a little boy’s mother to church.

“I thank God to have this school,” the mother said. “I really wish God would provide them with everything that they need.” 🌍

By Andrew McChesney



Out of Darkness

Atija Jamal Caminete, 57

Atija first heard about the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an eight-year-old girl visiting her grandmother in a village some distance from her home in Nampula, a major city in Mozambique where 80 percent of the population is Muslim.

A church elder stopped her as she walked by an Adventist church and invited her inside for a meal. After she ate, the elder invited her to stay for a sermon. Atija still remembers the sermon vividly. The preacher spoke about Matthew 24 and described how Jesus would raise the dead at His second coming. Atija's young heart was touched. A month earlier, she had lost a four-year-old sister, Muanacha, to anemia.

"Listening to the preacher, I believed that would be able to touch my dear sister again," Atija said.

Seven years passed and, at the age of 15, she married a man who had been raised in a Sunday-keeping home but attended an

Adventist church in Nampula.

One Sabbath, she accepted his invitation to go to church. Sabbath School opened with the hymn, "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder," and Atija listened, transfixed, as a six-year-old girl standing nearby sang in a clear, sweet voice.

"I was touched when I heard her voice, and I felt something happen to my heart," she said.

From that day, she decided to stay in the Adventist Church.

In northern Mozambique, tradition requires consultations with family elders before making major decisions, so Atija went with her husband to visit her aunt, Carmen. The aunt had raised her, and she also was a witch doctor.

Aunt Carmen listened to Atija's request to become an Adventist and said, "Go talk about this with your mother."

Atija's mother, a widow, told her, "I didn't raise you. Go talk with your uncle."

Uncle Candido refused give his permission. He vowed never to visit her again if she were baptized.

The words frightened Atija, but she went ahead with the baptism. She and her husband were baptized the same day. No family members attended.

Atija, meanwhile, gave birth to a boy,

Dionisio, and he fell seriously ill. Atija refused to take him to her aunt or any other witch doctor for treatment.

Uncle Candido showed up at Atija's door one evening with a spear.

"I'm waiting for this child to die," he said. "When this child dies, I'm going to impale you in the neck."

Two days passed. The baby refused to eat and grew weaker. Atija and her husband tearfully prayed. On the third day, the baby began to nurse, and a hospital examination showed he would be fine.

The uncle went home with his spear.

"We saw that the devil had been defeated," Atija said. "I believe that my son was so sick that he would have died. But by God's grace, he lived."

The healing amazed one of Atija's sisters, and she joined the Adventist church. A year later, Atija's brother and another sister were baptized. Then Atija's mother was baptized and, sometime later, Aunt Carmen followed suit. "On the day of her baptism, the pastor put her under the water three times," Atija said.

When the aunt emerged from the water the first time, she began screaming words that no one could understand. The pastor took one look at her and said, "Let's baptize her again."

When she came up the second time, she continued to scream the torrent of incomprehensible words. The evil spirit left after the third immersion, Atija said.

Aunt Carmen is now a church deaconess.

Uncle Candido, who had vowed never to visit if Atija were baptized, entered her home after his wife's baptism. He announced that he also wanted to be baptized. He died a year after his baptism.

"My whole family has surrendered

Story Tips

- Pronounce Atija as: a-TI-zha
- Pronounce Nampula as: nam-POO-la
- Pronounce Muanacha as: mwon-ASHA
- Pronounce Candido as: can-DEED-o
- Watch Atija at the link: bit.ly/Atija-Caminete
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Mission Post

- A church publishing house, Casa Publicadora do Indico, operates in Mozambique's capital, Maputo.
- In 1937, 1,500 people attended the first camp meeting. They were timid and suspicious but listened. However, when Webster tried to take photographs, they fled into the bush. In 1939, the first converts were baptized.

themselves to Christ and are now church members," Atija said. "I praise the Lord because the same family who opposed me and said I was wrong are now Seventh-day Adventists."

Today, Atija is 57 and an active pastor's wife. Her husband, Lazaro, completed ministerial studies and serves as a pastor in Nampula. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build an orphanage for children who lost parents to HIV/AIDS in Nampula. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Finding a Sabbath Church

MOZAMBIQUE | January 26

Ivaldo da Conceicao Nazare, 23



High school student Ivaldo had every intention of becoming a priest.

He diligently studied the catechism and taught in his church in Nampula, Mozambique's third-largest city with a population of half a million. He prepared to move to the capital, Maputo, for his training to be a priest.

But then he compared the catechism with the Bible as he prepared to teach about the Ten Commandments one Sunday. He saw that the Bible's teachings were quite different.

He asked a priest to explain the discrepancies, but the priest couldn't answer.

At his high school, Ivaldo formed a social group of 30 students to count the differences between the Bible and the church's teachings. The students' work alarmed the bishop, who declared that their research was a sin and demanded

that they confess to him or risk being ejected from the church.

"We must confess sins only to the Lord," the students replied.

The bishop banished the students from the church.

The 30 students read in the Bible that early Christians worshipped on the seventh day, but they didn't know of anyone who kept the Sabbath in Nampula. The group ended up splitting, with some students joining evangelical churches and others converting to Islam. Ivaldo's parents had some influence with their church, and their son was allowed to return but not become a priest.

One Sunday, Ivaldo was speaking about the Sabbath at church when a woman spoke up. "You know, there is a church that keeps the Sabbath in Nampula," she said.

Ivaldo excitedly called his 30 friends to announce the news. Many of them, however, were no longer interested. Only Ivaldo and three friends went to the Seventh-day Adventist church the next Sabbath.

Five months later, Ivaldo was baptized. When he told his parents about his decision, his mother said she already knew. "I noticed that your behavior has changed a lot," she said. "You started talking about the Bible all the time."

Father was furious and threatened to

Story Tips

- Pronounce Ivaldo as: ee-VALD-o
- Pronounce Nampula as: nam-POO-la
- Watch Ivaldo at the link: bit.ly/Ivaldo-Nazare
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Fast Facts

- Mozambique has some of the world's richest coral reefs. More than 1,200 species of fish have been identified in the coastal waters of Mozambique.
- There are 147 airports in Mozambique, although only 22 have paved runways.

disown him. "If you go to the Adventist church next Sabbath, I will throw you and all your clothes out of the house," he said.

Ivaldo went to church the next Sabbath, and Father ordered him out of the house. His mother, however, convinced Father to back down.

Still, Father refused to support Ivaldo in any way, including with his high school fees.

"I'm not going to spend any money on you anymore unless it is to buy your coffin," he said.

Ivaldo received food from his mother, and church members provided money for school fees and other expenses.

Seeing that Ivaldo was prospering, Father's wrath grew. He told the neighbors that his son had HIV and other illnesses.

"People began to shun me," Ivaldo

said. "The neighbors even forbade their children from talking to me."

He lived with his grandmother for a year. Then Father sent a message asking forgiveness and inviting him to return home.

Father tried to help Ivaldo get into a university, but classes were on Saturdays so Ivaldo wouldn't go. The father arranged a job with a government agency, but the job interview fell on Sabbath.

Father was angry. "I don't understand what you want in life," he said. "I'm trying to help you, but you are losing many opportunities because of the Sabbath. Don't expect me to help you anymore."

Ivaldo started working as a freelance journalist and used his income to put himself through journalism school. He worked for several radio and television companies, but no one would hire him full time because of the Sabbath.

But Ivaldo, now 23, is not despairing. Through his influence, 10 young people have joined the Adventist Church. In addition, three younger brothers have started attending the church, and his mother wants to join. Father has threatened divorce.

"I'm praying for my mother and hope that she will become an Adventist," he said. "I'm praying that my father will at least allow the rest of the family to attend church." 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build an orphanage for children who lost parents to HIV/AIDS in Ivaldo's hometown, Nampula. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Armed With a Bible

MOZAMBIQUE | February 2

Moises Francisco Pelembe, 32



Moises joined Mozambique's military after flunking out of school. His father hoped the military would stop him from drinking alcohol and using drugs.

Not long after joining, Moises met a Seventh-day Adventist named Alfredo in the military cafeteria. "I was impressed by his lifestyle," Moises said. "He took food from his plate and gave it to me."

Alfredo paid careful attention to what he ate, and he refused a popular fish that he deemed unclean. Moises quickly realized that Alfredo's preferences meant more food for him.

"Every time they prepared this fish, I sat with him because I knew he would give it to me," he said. "He was kind to me."

After dining together for two weeks, Moises was transferred to another location for military police training. In the barracks, he was placed beside a soldier

who kept a Bible on his bed. When Moises woke up, he saw the Bible. When he went to bed, he saw the Bible. This troubled him. He had always thought that the Bible was only for pastors and old people, not for young people like him.

One day, Moises asked the soldier why he had the Bible.

"I'm a Christian," the young man replied.

"Do you believe in God?" Moises said.

The soldier confirmed that he did and shared John 3:16, which says, "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (NKJV).

Moises asked to borrow the Bible. As he read, he began to believe in God. His father was delighted with his son's new faith and presented him with a Bible as a gift.

When the military police training ended, Moises returned to his military unit to work as a military police officer.

Back at the unit, a Sunday-keeping soldier saw Moises reading the Bible and said, "I know a group that studies the Bible at 6 p.m. every day. I can take you to the group if you wish."

That evening, Moises accompanied the soldier to the Bible study group but left confused. Seeing his confusion, the soldier said, “I know about another group that meets at 6 p.m. I can take you there tomorrow, but I don’t like them.”

“Why don’t you like them?” Moises asked. “Because they talk about my church,” he said.

The next evening, Moises attended an Adventist Bible study. Moises was stunned to learn that the group leader had been baptized after studying the Bible with Alfredo—his food-giving friend in the cafeteria.

The Bible study focused on Malachi 3:8, where the Lord says, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.”

Moises had never given tithe, and the words pierced his heart. He returned the next evening and learned about the seventh-day Sabbath. That night, he wept in bed. A fellow military police officer noticed him sobbing. “Who beat you?” he said. “We’ll get him back.”

What the officer didn’t know was that Moises hadn’t been beaten by a person but by the Word of God.

The next Sabbath, Moises joined his new friends for the nine-mile (14-kilometer) walk to the nearest Adventist church. He returned tithe for the first time. After that, he attended church every Sabbath and was baptized at the age of 22, just two years after joining the military.

After military service, Moises worked in the police force but quit over Sabbath conflicts. He then went door to door as a literature evangelist and enrolled at

Story Tips

- Pronounce Moises as: moi-ZAY-ish
- Moises means Moses in Portuguese, the most commonly spoken language of Mozambique
- Watch Moises at the link: bit.ly/Moises-Pelembé
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Fast Facts

- Maputo in Mozambique is known as the City of Acacias because of the acacia trees commonly found along its avenues.
- The diet of people in the countryside is based on the cassava root, which can be baked, dried, or mashed into porridge.
- Literacy in Mozambique is very low. The latest statistics indicate that total adult literacy rate is 54 percent.

Mozambique Adventist University.

Today, Moises is 32 years old and completing his third year of theology studies at the university. “My father sent me to the military with a plan to change my behavior,” he said. “But I see that God had a bigger plan. God wanted me to become a Christian.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help fund the expansion of Mozambique Adventist University, where Moises studies. In addition, part of the offering will provide Bibles to children in Mozambique whose parents can’t afford to buy them. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney



Worrisome Dreams

Antonio Jose Abreu, 45

Antonio's life was a mess. In a short period of time, he married his first-ever girlfriend, had an affair with another woman, and lost his job as a customs police officer in São Tomé, capital of the island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe off the West African coast.

A year passed, and he landed a job at a brewery. He tried to make up with his wife, but she refused, and they got divorced.

Then his father died.

Antonio began to drink heavily.

He moved in with another woman, Alcina, and they had two boys and a girl.

"Life was complicated," he said. "I drank a lot, and there wasn't enough money for my family."

Making life even more complicated, Antonio started to have dreams—strange dreams that he didn't understand. In São Tomé, people pay close attention to dreams. A dream about a flood is believed

to mean that trouble is looming. A dream with the local safou fruit means a family member will die.

Antonio didn't dream about floods or fruit. Instead, he had a dream in which he was carrying a backpack on his shoulders and standing before two sets of stairs. One set of stairs was wide, and the other was narrow. He discovered that he could climb the wide stairs with the backpack, but he couldn't get up the narrow stairs.

Then he had another dream. In this dream, he was walking toward a door when suddenly a woman blocked his path with a large rock. Antonio couldn't push aside the rock, but he found a narrow opening that he could squeeze through. Entering the opening, he saw a cave with a pool of water. Someone stood there, pointing at the water.

Antonio woke up baffled after each dream.

He didn't understand the dreams, but it seemed to him that God was revealing something.

One day, Antonio was working at the home of his boss, the brewery owner, and a neighbor invited him to attend an evangelistic meeting at the local Seventh-day Adventist church. Antonio accepted.

That evening, he was shocked to hear the pastor read Matthew 7:13, 14, where Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (NKJV).

Antonio returned the next evening to hear more.

"As I kept going to the meetings, I realized that I needed to remove everything to get through the narrow opening in the stone. I needed to remove everything in my life to take the narrow stairs," he said.

He understood that the backpack represented the burdens weighing him down in life, and the pool of water symbolized baptism.

"To get baptized, I needed to remove everything in my life that I was a slave to," he said.

After Bible studies, Antonio and his wife were baptized—and officially married.

Today, Antonio is 45 and works as a cashier at a small wood-working business. He also is a deacon at the church where he attended the evangelistic meetings.

Life is no longer complicated for him.

"I am happy, and I thank God for everything that He has given to us," he said. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a drug

Story Tips

- Pronounce São Tomé and Príncipe as: SOW toe-MAY and PRIN-si-pay
- Pronounce Alcina as: AL-seen-a
- Watch Antonio at the link: bit.ly/Antonio-Abreu
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Fast Facts

- São Tomé and Príncipe is comprised of two volcanic islands off the coast of West Africa in the Gulf of Guinea and is one of Africa's smallest countries. São Tomé is six times larger than Príncipe.
- The island of Sao Tome was named after Saint Thomas by the Portuguese explorers who arrived at the island on the saint's feast day.
- Cacao is the main crop of the island nation and represents 95 percent of the country's export. Other export crops include copra, palm kernels, and coffee.
- The cuisine of São Tomé and Príncipe is based on tropical root crops, plantains, bananas, and fish. The vegetables mainly consist of indigenous greens that are cooked in red palm oil.

and alcohol rehabilitation facility—a "center of influence"—in São Tomé to help people like Antonio quit drinking. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Man With Three Wives

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE | Feb. 16

Carlos Freitas, 48



Carlos had three wives in São Tomé, capital of the island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe off the West African coast.

He and seven brothers grew up in the home of a Seventh-day Adventist grandmother. But he and his siblings drifted away from the church after their grandmother died.

When he was 21, Carlos moved in with his Sunday-keeping common-law wife, Edite, and they had a baby daughter.

An argument soon erupted. On the island, it is customary to put earrings on a newborn girl to supposedly protect her from harm. Although Carlos no longer went to church, he was opposed to jewelry and asked Edite not to pierce their daughter's ears.

As the couple heatedly discussed the

issue, Edite had a priest baptize the baby without Carlos' knowledge.

When Carlos learned about the baptism, he left Edite and found a second common-law wife, Maria.

Edite, however, wasn't ready to give up on the relationship and kept calling Carlos.

"So, I ended up with two wives," Carlos said.

Then he found a third woman and began dating her. They moved in together and had a child.

Carlos wound up with five children with his first wife, four children with his second wife, and one child with his third wife.

As Carlos split his time between his three families, his first wife grew lonely and befriended an Adventist couple. She started attending church with them and was baptized.

Carlos, meanwhile, was working for Voice of America, a U.S. government-funded news broadcaster, and had little interest in God. But he accepted an invitation from Edite to attend the baptism of two daughters one Sabbath.

Their teenage daughters sang a hymn from the church platform that made him weep. He remembered attending church as a child, and he hid his face so people wouldn't see the tears. After that day, he started attending church with his first wife.

When his second wife, Maria, learned that he was going to church, she accused him of planning to abandon her.

“Adventists don't allow couples to live together without marriage, and this means you are planning to get married to Edite,” she said.

Carlos denied going to church to look for marriage. “I went to look for salvation,” he said. “You also need to be saved. Please attend church with me.”

Maria started attending church. Every Sabbath, Carlos picked up his first wife and drove her to church. Then he drove his second wife to another church. He took turns worshipping with his two wives.

Around this time, his third wife left him for another man and things got really complicated. Carlos wondered which woman to marry.

Carlos prayed and fasted every Sabbath for two months. Increasingly, he felt impressed to marry his first wife, but he longed for confirmation from the Bible. One day, he opened his Bible and prayed, “Help me to find the answer in the Bible.”

He looked down and saw the book of Malachi. His eye then fell on Malachi 2:14, which says, “The Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.” (NKJV).

The second wife was devastated by Carlos's decision to commit to his first wife. They wept together, but she

Story Tips

- Pronounce São Tomé and Príncipe as: SOW toe-MAY and PRIN-si-pay
- Pronounce Edite: ee-DEE-TEE
- Watch Carlos at the link: bit.ly/Carlos-Freitas
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq
- Read more about Carlos next week.

Mission Post

- Adventists began work on São Tomé Island with the arrival of José Freire, a Portuguese colporteur, in 1936. In 1938, he settled as a missionary, and in February 1939 the first baptisms were conducted.
- An elementary school was opened in 1946 (with Capitolina Grave as its first teacher). It had an average attendance of 250 students. It was closed by the Communist government in 1975.
- Originally São Tomé and Príncipe Mission was under the Angola Union Mission, but it is now attached directly to the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

understood. Carlos married Edite on Dec. 29, 2013, and later was baptized.

“Then I started having a new life,” he said. “Now I am a new creation, prepared to go anywhere to tell the world what God has done for me.” 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a much-needed church in São Tomé. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Risking All for Sabbath

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE | Feb. 23

Carlos Freitas, 48



After baptism, Carlos told his supervisor that he could no longer work Saturdays at Voice of America, a U.S. government-funded news broadcaster.

The supervisor, a U.S. citizen, looked at Carlos quizzically.

“Sabbath-keeping is an Old Testament law,” he said, “Christians follow the New Testament.”

Carlos went to his home in São Tomé, the capital of the small island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe, and made a list of Sabbath references in the New Testament. He handed the list to his supervisor the next day.

“The Sabbath is in the New Testament and needs to be kept,” he said.

“Is that your final decision?” the supervisor asked.

“Yes, my decision is to keep the Sabbath because anything else would be a sin.”

The supervisor shook his hand.

“This is the first time that someone has challenged me over the Sabbath at work,” he said.

That was the end of the discussion. The supervisor never asked Carlos to work on Saturdays again.

Then the supervisor left.

Carlos, a father of 10, worked as an electrician for the broadcaster. One of his duties was to unload boat shipments of fuel for the broadcaster’s power generator. The boat docked on Thursdays, and he and several coworkers would begin unloading the fuel immediately. They always finished the task on Friday.

Then one day the boat docked on Friday, a day late.

Carlos didn’t bother appealing to his new supervisor, a native of São Tomé and a devout Sunday-keeper. Instead he went to his manager, a U.S. citizen.

The manager promptly denied his request to leave work by 5:30 p.m. Friday.

“But I have a commitment with God,” Carlos said.

“It’s up to you to decide,” the manager said.

Carlos locked himself in the bathroom and prayed. It wasn’t easy to find a good

Story Tips

- Pronounce São Tomé and Príncipe as: SOW toe-MAY and PRIN-si-pay
- Watch Carlos at the link: bit.ly/Carlos-Freitas
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq
- Read more about Carlos last week.

job in São Tomé, and Carlos thought, “What will happen to my family? What will I tell them?” He didn’t want to be fired, but even more he wanted to honor God. He decided to work until 5:30 p.m. and leave.

Shortly before 5:30 p.m., the boat’s engines flooded. Carlos and his coworkers fought to resolve the problem, but matters only grew worse. Finally, the men came ashore, where the manager was waiting.

“The situation is really bad,” a coworker said. “There is no way that we can unload the fuel this weekend.”

The manager didn’t say a word. Carlos went home for the Sabbath.

All weekend, Carlos dreaded facing the manager on Monday. He worried that he would be blamed for the flooding.

On Monday, the manager didn’t say a thing. He also remained silent on Tuesday and Wednesday. A week passed, and he still didn’t say anything.

Then a coworker said to Carlos, “Do you know what the manager said about the boat? He said that what happened was the hand of God.”

Carlos couldn’t believe it. At home, he and his wife thanked God for protecting his job.

A few days later, another coworker provided more details about the manager’s thinking. It turned out that the manager had secretly planned to allow Carlos to leave at 5:30 but the boat’s engines had flooded before he could announce his decision. As a result of the incident, nobody could work on Sabbath.

Unbeknown to Carlos, a company security guard had been observing him for some time, wondering what would happen if he stuck to his Sabbath convictions. When the guard saw how God had intervened with the boat, he exclaimed to Carlos, “Your God is great!”

The guard started attending the Adventist church.

Carlos has never had another Sabbath conflict.

“God is good to all who trust Him,” said Carlos. “I have had some challenges that I thought were impossible to solve, but then everything was solved without me doing anything.”

Many people in his country of 200,000 people don’t know the Sabbath. More than half of the population are Roman Catholic, while the Adventist Church only has about 8,000 members worshipping in 13 churches and 56 companies.

Carlos loves to share his Sabbath story.

“That is my duty now—to tell other people my experience and what I have found in the Bible,” he said. “My desire is to do everything that I can to spread the word of God.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a much-needed church building in São Tomé. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Falling for Jesus

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE | March 2

Constâncio Triste Afonso, 51



Constâncio fell seven feet (two meters) onto his head before he managed to quit drinking and accept Jesus.

Constâncio, a farmer with two young children, was intrigued when a group of Seventh-day Adventists arrived for a camping trip at his mountaintop village on São Tomé and Príncipe.

He began to watch them even more closely after a woman camper asked him, “Do you notice anything different about us?”

He noticed that the Adventists didn’t drink or smoke.

After the campers left, he wanted to learn more about the Adventist Church and began to follow a church member who gave Bible studies in people’s homes. Soon he asked the district pastor to be baptized.

“First, you need to surrender your life to God so He can help you overcome drinking and smoking,” the pastor said.

Constâncio gave up those habits and was baptized.

Six months later, however, he returned to his old ways. Constâncio’s wife was furious. Although she wasn’t baptized, she liked the new man that he had become.

She scolded him, saying, “Adventists don’t do those things, and you shouldn’t either.”

She forbade him from sleeping in their bed until he quit.

Constâncio was displeased with her decision, and he studied the Bible for more information about the Christian lifestyle. He stopped at Isaiah 55:2, which says, “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance” (NJKV).

Constâncio thought to himself, “Why am I spending money for what is not bread and I’m still not satisfied?”

He prayed for several weeks for God to help him overcome his addictions. But even as he prayed, he kept buying alcohol and tobacco.

Story Tips

- Pronounce Constâncio as: kon-STAN-see-o
- Pronounce São Tomé and Príncipe as: SOW toe-MAY and PRIN-si-pay
- Watch Constâncio at the link: bit.ly/Constancio-Afonso-2
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Fast Facts

- São Tomé and Príncipe has the second-smallest population of any African country after Seychelles.
- Malaria is the most common and the most dangerous disease prevalent on the islands.

One night, he drunkenly climbed the ladder to his home. Like many villagers, he and his family lived in a traditional wooden house on stilts. His wife, seven-year-old son, and four-year-old daughter were sound asleep when he arrived.

After turning a few times in his bed, Constâncio realized that he hadn't washed his feet, which were especially muddy after a rainy day. He stumbled outside onto the house's wooden porch. As he bent over to wash his feet, he lost his balance and fell head-first to the ground, seven feet below. His head crashed into the damp earth, barely missing a rock and creating a small, round crater.

The family dog began to howl. The wife and children scurried outside to check on the dog and found Constâncio lying on the ground, unhurt, but in a drunken stupor.

The wife called for help.

Soon, a crowd of neighbors gathered

around Constâncio, and they quickly ascertained that he had fallen from the porch. They declared that he must have been pushed off by the devil.

An uproar broke out at the thought that the devil was in the village, and the people debated how to protect themselves. They decided that Constâncio needed to be cleansed. So, the villagers frantically urinated in each other's cupped hands and tossed the liquid on Constâncio. When they finished, several men carried him home.

In the morning, several friends invited Constâncio to have a drink. Rubbing his sore head, he refused, saying, "I will no longer drink or smoke."

And he never has.

"My desire to drink and smoke was gone," he said in an interview at the village's Adventist church, where he serves as an elder. "It was an answer to prayer."

Today, a third of the village's population of 200 are baptized Adventists, and church attendance swells to 120 people on Sabbaths. Among them are Constâncio's wife, children, and five former alcoholics who have been converted through his influence.

"I tell my story to help others who have the same challenges," he said. "The community where I live has many people who drink and are ashamed to come to church. I tell them, 'I used to be like you. You can quit, too, with God's help.'" 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center in São Tomé to help people quit drinking. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney



Trouble With Pork

Gilson Neto, 29

Ask a male teenager to share this first-person account.

A neighbor told me about the Seventh-day Adventist Church when I was 17. I wasn't interested because I loved to eat pork and Adventists don't eat pork.

Then someone invited me to attend an evangelistic series on the other side of São Tomé, capital of the island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe. I went to every meeting and wrote down my name to receive more information.

Before I knew it, my neighbor told me that his church had received my name and invited me to go with him to church on Sabbath for more information. I was shocked and asked him, "How did my name get to your church when I wrote it on a piece of paper across town?"

I didn't go to church with him because I had to work on Saturdays. I was a construction worker.

When my neighbor saw that I wasn't

coming to church, he suggested that we study the Bible together in the evenings instead. After several weeks, I decided to skip a day of work to go to church.

At the church, I met many of my neighbors, and they were thrilled to see me.

But this created a problem for me. I couldn't take another day off work on Sabbath. But all my neighbors had seen me at church and would ask me where I was going if they saw me headed to work on Sabbath.

The next Sabbath, I took a long, roundabout route to work so no one would see me. But I still ran into a church member, and he asked where I was going.

"To cut my hair," I lied.

My conscience troubled me all day. After work, I took the long way home again and met more church members, who were returning home from church. "Why didn't you go to church today?" they asked.

I admitted that I had gone to work.

From that day, I decided to stop working on Saturdays. Soon I lost my job.

No one in my family was Adventist, and my parents were angry that I was no longer working. My mother cooked food that I couldn't eat. She added pork to everything: rice, soup, and side dishes. I still loved pork, but I refused to eat it. Many times, I went to bed hungry.

"Why are you going to this church that doesn't eat pork?" my mother said.

"Why don't you work on Saturday?" my father said.

My seven brothers watched my predicament silently.

Nine months later, I was baptized.

The pastor gave a welcome sermon to new church members, and one woman declared that we would immediately face spiritual challenges because of our decision. I said, "That can't be. I already have many challenges."

But she spoke the truth. When I told my parents that I had gotten baptized, they kicked me out of the home. I wept because I didn't know where to go. For two months, I left the house before my parents woke up and returned after they were asleep.

A woman who was baptized on the same day as me gave me food to eat. I walked around during the day. There was nothing to do, and I had no job. I cried and prayed, "God, help me to become stronger in my faith and to find a job."

After a while, a Taiwanese agricultural company hired me to assist with a project, and I was able to give some of my salary to my parents. That helped restore our relationship.

Then God worked a huge miracle. Five of my seven brothers became Adventists. Then two cousins were baptized. In all, 10

Story Tips

- Pronounce Gilson as: JILL-son
- Pronounce São Tomé and Príncipe as: SOW toe-MAY and PRIN-si-pay
- Watch Gilson at the link: bit.ly/Gilson-Neto
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

family members have joined the church. My father even attended a few times before he was paralyzed by a stroke.

Today, I work for the only Adventist school in São Tomé. I teach children how to do gardening and grow vegetables.

I'm also married. I fell in love with the younger sister of the woman who gave me food during my darkest period. We have a one-year-old daughter.

A Bible promise that inspires me to remain faithful is Psalms 125:1, which says, "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever" (NKJV).

The person who trusts in God will be like Mount Zion and abide forever. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help the only Seventh-day Adventist school on São Tomé and Príncipe construct an auditorium. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Gilson Neto, as told to Andrew McChesney

Friendship Is the Secret

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE | March 16

Vitalina Mendes Moreira, 57



Something went terribly wrong as Vitalina prepared to give birth to her second child in São Tomé and Príncipe, a tiny island nation off the coast of West Africa.

She began to bleed heavily, and doctors mistakenly gave her the wrong type of blood during a blood transfusion. The baby boy was born safely, but Vitalina suffered a severe infection in her legs. To save her life, doctors amputated both legs.

Vitalina was just 19.

When she returned home from the hospital nine months later, she found that her husband had moved in with another woman.

Depression overwhelmed her, and she considered suicide.

Then an elderly Seventh-day Adventist friend started visiting. The woman gathered Vitalina's dirty clothes and took

them to a nearby river to wash every week. When the woman's doctor forbade her from wading into the river for health reasons, she summoned other church members to take over the laundry work.

Vitalina was grateful for the assistance, but she felt uncomfortable.

"I was shy because I wasn't Adventist," she said. "I couldn't understand why they would wash clothes for me."

She gave the women only some clothes for washing and hid the rest in a room. For two weeks, she told her visitors, "That's it. I don't have many clothes this week."

The Adventist women couldn't believe it, and they searched her house. They found the pile of dirty clothes in a corner and washed them.

Vitalina prayed for God to help her survive. After a while, she secured an old, hand-operated sewing machine and taught herself to cut fabric and make pants. Her business flourished, and she had five more children with her husband,

Story Tips

- Pronounce Vitalina as: vi-TAL-eena
- Pronounce São Tomé and Príncipe as: SOW toe-MAY and PRIN-si-pay
- Watch Vitalina at the link: bit.ly/Vitalina-Moreira
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Fast Facts

- The country is home to the world's smallest ibis (the São Tomé ibis) and the world's largest sunbird (the giant sunbird), as well as several species of giant Begonias.

who periodically visited. Then her husband died.

A church member discussed the Bible with Vitalina, but she wasn't interested. She didn't want to change her diet.

Then an Adventist pastor led a two-week evangelistic series.

"When I went to the evangelistic series, I began to realize the wonderful things that God had done in my life," Vitalina said. "He answered my prayers to learn a way to make money with the sewing machine. This is one of the reasons that I accepted the gospel."

Vitalina attended every night and was baptized. Eager to share her newfound faith, she told her personal testimony to everyone who would listen.

"Look at me," she told people who stopped by her home. "God is working in me, and I'm able to work. God is wonderful, and you need to trust Him."

Through such conversations, Vitalina

convinced seven people to go with her to the Adventist church, located two miles (three kilometers) away. Vitalina paid their bus fare for weeks. All seven people are now baptized church members.

Vitalina also organized a Bible study group outside her home, and six people were baptized.

Soon, 40 people were baptized, including two of her children, and church leaders drafted plans to open a church in her neighborhood. Lacking funds to buy land, the church accepted an offer from Vitalina to build a temporary structure outside her house. The wooden church building was constructed in September 2017.

"I'm so happy to see the church at my front door," Vitalina said, seated on a couch in her living room. "But even more than that, I'm happy to see so many people converted."

Vitalina said that the secret to leading others to Christ is being a friend.

"It is difficult to lead people to God without friendship," she said. "I make friends with those in the community and invite them to church."

Her favorite Bible verse is Matthew 6:33, where Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (NKJV).

"This verse encourages me because it says if I put God first, He will give me everything that I need," she said. "And He has." 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a church in São Tomé, where most members meet in basements and dilapidated structures. Thank you for your mission offering.

By Andrew McChesney



Saving Angola

Paulo Pinto

Paulo infuriated his mother by quitting his job and preaching to inmates.

Paulo, raised in a Seventh-day Adventist family in Angola, had taught at a public school. He used the money to pay for his university tuition and to support his mother and 10 siblings. As the eldest child, he was responsible for the family after his father died of typhoid fever.

But in his second year of studies, he was hospitalized with typhoid fever in Benguela, a city of 130,000 people on the Atlantic coast. For two months he lay in the hospital, a high fever ravaging his body. Members of the local Adventist church prayed for him and paid his medical bills.

“When I got out, I decided to change my life,” Paulo said.

Leaving the hospital, he quit the elementary school and the university.

“I didn’t go back to either because I was afraid that I would return to my old life,” he said.

Paulo wanted to study theology at Solusi University in Zimbabwe. But he needed money for tuition—and he had to wait for the next school year to begin the following January. So, Paulo spent the next seven months preaching to inmates. With assistance from relatives who worked in law enforcement, he gained entry to prisons and visited them together with a local church elder responsible for prison ministries. Twenty people were baptized in one prison alone in Benguela.

His family couldn’t fathom his new life. Paulo no longer had a job to support them and, in their view, had forsaken a promising career by quitting the university. His mother disowned him.

Paulo arrived at Solusi University in January with barely enough money for food and English lessons. He only spoke Portuguese and had to learn English to study at the university.

Paulo prayed, “If You allow me to finish, I will work in ministry full time. I will show those who need Christ why I went to Solusi.”

On the campus, he quickly found that

he had much to learn about God. Even though his family was Adventist, he had been raised in a country ravaged by a 27-year civil war where knowledge of God was weak.

“We didn’t have much information about God and the Bible,” Paulo said. “My first time to interact with the Bible full time was at Solusi.”

He also learned that God has a special love for foreigners.

He said foreign students receive special treatment at Solusi.

“Sometimes teachers come to our rooms and visit with us and pray for us,” he said. “Sometimes people we don’t even know give us food for free.”

He saw that Solusi was fulfilling God’s instructions in Leviticus 23:22, which says, “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God” (NIV).

An older cousin in Angola paid his tuition for a while. When the cousin died, an Angolan church member sponsored him for a semester. Now, an Angolan woman whose grandson graduated from Solusi is covering his tuition.

At Solusi, Paulo has connected with other Angolan students in Zambia, Uganda, and the Philippines, and they intend to coordinate their evangelistic efforts in Angola after graduation. He also wants to share his new knowledge about God with his family.

Paulo requested prayers for Angola, a country of 29 million people, including nearly 176,000 Adventists.

“We aren’t trying to convert everyone,”

Story Tips

- Watch Paulo at the link: bit.ly/Paulo-Pinto
- Find photos for this story at the link: bit.ly/fb-mq

Mission Post

- Angola is made up of the North-Eastern Angola Mission and the South-Western Angola Mission. Together they have 3,536 churches and companies and a membership of 448,554.
- Angola has a population of about 26 million, which means there is one Adventist for every 58 people.
- Angola has three medical facilities: a dental clinic in northeast Angola, and the Bongo Mission Hospital and Quicuco Dispensary in southwest Angola.
- Church members run an Adventist Book Center, a Bible correspondence school, and a publishing house in Angola.

he said. “Matthew 24:14 says, ‘And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.’ So, we need to preach the gospel as a testimony so everyone knows Jesus—and then Jesus will come.” 🌐

Part of a 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering went to Solusi University to double the size of its cafeteria to 1,000 seats. Thank you for your mission offerings that allow Adventist schools like Solusi to prepare people to proclaim Jesus’ soon return.

By Andrew McChesney

Casting Out Demons

13th SABBATH | March 30

Global Mission pioneer
Mordecai Msimanga, 68,
in Zimbabwe



Note: The narrator doesn't need to memorize the story, but he or she should be familiar enough with the material so as not to have to read it. Remember, you can supplement the story with photos from the Mission quarterlies' Facebook page and a short video at the link: bit.ly/Mordecai-Msimanga. Also, you can read about Mordecai Msimanga's own remarkable conversion in the Inside Story in this week's Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide.

This quarter we have met people from Botswana, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Angola. Today we will hear one more story from a Global Mission pioneer in Zimbabwe.

A 35-year-old single mother approached the Global Mission pioneer with an unusual dilemma: Every morning she woke up without any clothes on, and she was scared.

"Every day I go to sleep, but I wake up naked in the morning," the woman said.

"Why is that?" asked Mordecai, who was leading a two-week evangelistic series in her hometown of Nkai, Zimbabwe.

"I don't know," the woman said.

Mordecai had a hunch about the strange occurrence. He had heard similar stories, and all involved evil spirits. He knew what to do.

"Do you accept Christ?" he asked.

"If you do, we can pray, and Christ will provide understanding about why you wake up naked."

The woman accepted Christ into her life, and Mordecai gathered church members to pray. For three days, they prayed. On the third day, Mordecai asked the woman for an update on her condition.

"I've been fine for the past three days," she said. "In the morning, my clothes have not been taken off."

The woman was later baptized, and she has never been disturbed by evil spirits again.

Evil spirits are a common issue in

Thirteenth Sabbath Program

➤	Congregational Song	“Stand Up! Stand Up for Jesus!” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 618
➤	Welcome	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
➤	Prayer	
➤	Program	“Casting Out Demons”
➤	Offering	
➤	Closing Song	“Onward, Christian Soldiers!” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 612
➤	Closing Prayer	

Zimbabwe, an African country where many people are superstitious and practice traditional beliefs. Mordecai, a Global Mission pioneer who works in areas without any Adventist presence, has had several experiences with spirits.

At his current posting, in the southern Matopo district, he was invited to speak at a Sunday church, and a woman with a knee problem asked for prayer. When he mentioned the name of Jesus in the prayer, the woman abruptly fell to the ground.

“When this happens, it means a demon has departed,” said Mordecai, 68. “I prayed for her and raised her up. Today, she is a member of the Adventist Church.”

Not all of Mordecai’s stories involve demons. He is especially thrilled about his time in Zezana, where he was sent in 2007, a year after becoming a Global Mission pioneer. He went from house to

house, teaching people about the Sabbath truth and Jesus’ soon coming. As a result, all 16 members of one church, including its pastor, were baptized, and they opened the first Adventist church in the area.

Sometime after that, Mordecai had a direct encounter with eight evil spirits while leading an evangelistic series in a public elementary school in Beitbridge, a town near Zimbabwe’s border with South Africa. As he flashed up a picture of the crucified Christ on the screen, a 48-year-old woman leaped to her feet and ran from the room.

After the meeting, Mordecai found the woman lying in the schoolyard. She was motionless and appeared to be dead. Several people carried her back into the school room and placed her on the floor.

Mordecai gathered 10 church members around the woman and led them singing

and praying. As they spoke the name of Jesus, the woman suddenly sat up, shook violently, and collapsed back onto the floor. Her actions indicated that an evil spirit had fled her body, Mordecai said. He needed to know whether she was free.

“Will you pray to Christ?” he asked.

The woman remained motionless on the floor. It was a sign that she was still possessed.

The church members sang and prayed again. Hearing the name of Jesus, the woman again sat up, shook, and collapsed onto the floor. Another demon had left.

“Will you pray to Christ?”

Mordecai asked.

The woman didn’t move.

The scenario repeated itself over and over. The group sang and prayed from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Finally, after the eighth time, the woman responded to Mordecai’s invitation to pray. She sat up and with a clear voice prayed, “Dear Jesus, thank

you for releasing me from the demons. I ask you to come to my assistance so I may become a church member and be as strong as the others in this room.”

The woman is now a Seventh-day Adventist and serves as a deaconess.

“God is good all the time,”

Mordecai said.

God is good all the time! Thank you for your prayers for the 193 million people who live in the 18 countries of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Thank you also for your big Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that will help spread the news about Jesus’ soon coming.

[Offering]

By Andrew McChesney

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for second quarter 2018 will help open a:

- Church and health center in Aruana, Brazil
- Church and health center in Salvador, Brazil
- Church and English-language school in Cusco, Peru
- Church and medical center in Pucallpa, Peru

Leader's Resources

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

Following are sources of information that may be helpful in preparing for the mission segment of Sabbath School. For more information on the cultures and history of the countries featured in this quarterly, visit the websites listed below.

Angola: government website	bit.ly/GovAng
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LPAngola
Botswana: government website	gov.bw
Wikitravel	bit.ly/WikiAng
Mozambique: government website	bit.ly/GovMoz
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LPMoz
São Tomé and Príncipe: government website	bit.ly/GovSTP
Fodors	bit.ly/FodorSTP
Zambia: government website	bit.ly/ZamGov
Condé Naste	bit.ly/CNZambia
Zimbabwe: government website	zim.gov.zw
World Travel Guide	bit.ly/ZimWTG
Seventh-day Adventist	
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division	sidadventist.org
Botswana Union Conference	bu.adventist.org
Northern Zambia Union Conference	nzu.adventist.org
Southern Zambia Union Conference	szu.adventist.org
Zimbabwe Union Conference	zuc.adventist.org

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.

Remind your Sabbath School members that their regular weekly mission offerings will 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 Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving on Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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Website: AdventistMission.org

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SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION

UNION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Botswana Union Conference	143	85	44,554	2,226,000
Indian Ocean Union Conference	969	1,135	162,371	26,917,000
Malawi Union Conference	1,434	1,808	530,767	17,225,000
Mozambique Union Mission	1,038	1,648	361,962	27,818,000
North-Eastern Angola Union Mission	464	852	204,586	10,332,400
Northern Zambia Union Conference	1,604	1,784	511,775	9,012,270
Southern Africa Union Conference	1,263	457	175,016	61,663,000
Southern Zambia Union Conference	1,115	2,714	633,990	6,921,730
South-Western Angola Union Mission	834	1,386	243,968	15,498,600
Zimbabwe Union Conference	2,233	2,506	902,512	15,987,000
São Tomé and Príncipe Mission	13	56	7,867	198,000
TOTAL	11,110	13,891	3,779,368	193,162,000

PROJECTS

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

- 1 Set up an alcohol and drug rehabilitation center, São Tomé
- 2 Build a new church, São Tomé
- 3 Construct an auditorium for K-12 school, São Tomé

MOZAMBIQUE

- 4 Construct an elementary school, Milange
- 5 Expand food and nutrition department at Mozambique Adventist University, Beira
- 6 Establish an orphanage for children who lost parents to HIV/AIDS, Nampula

CHILDREN'S PROJECT

Portuguese Bibles for children from needy families in Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe