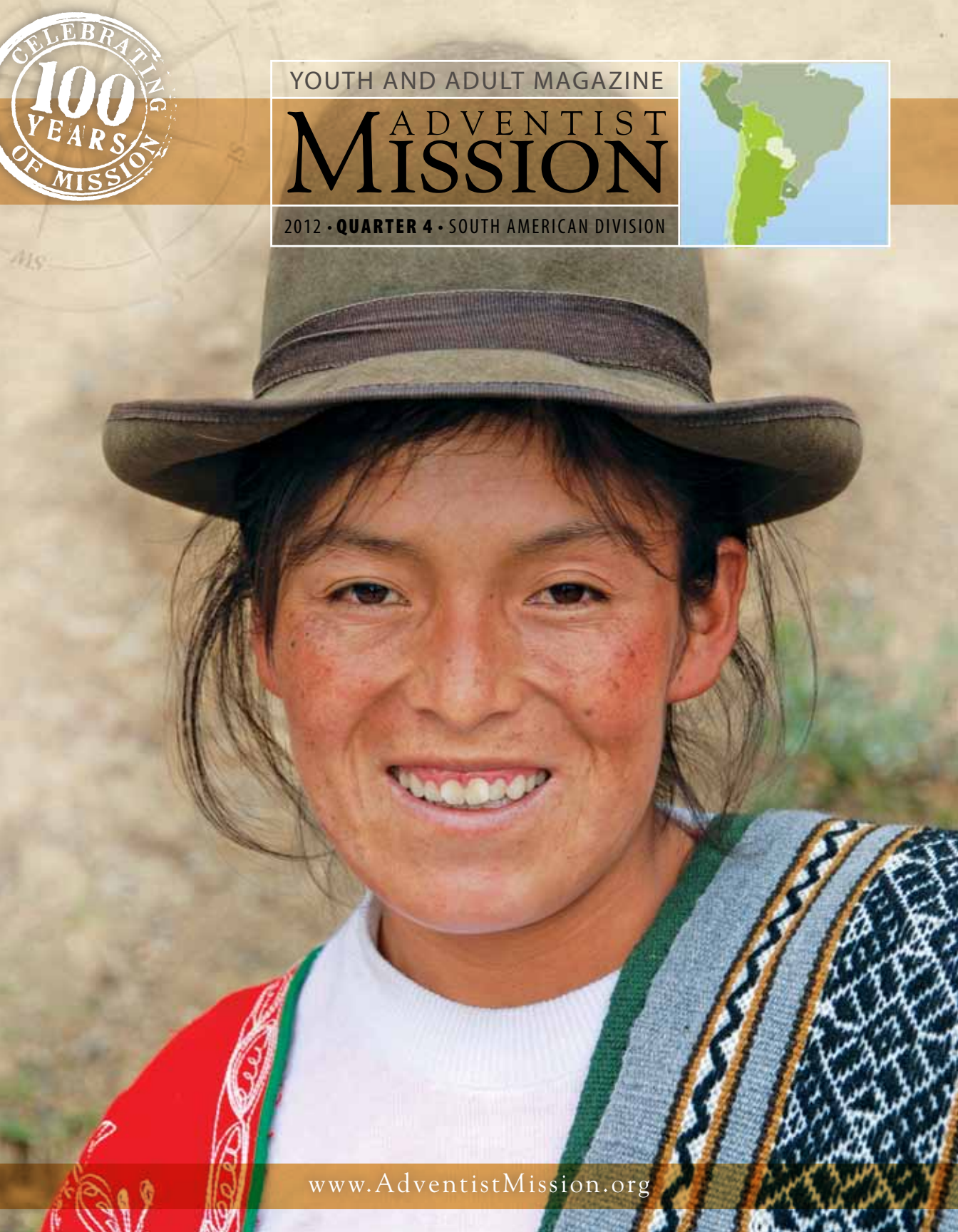




YOUTH AND ADULT MAGAZINE

ADVENTIST MISSION

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Your Offerings at Work



Believers in Ecuador have long supported Adventist radio stations to take the good news of God's love to others in their homeland. Three years ago part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped link the radio stations so that they could use one another's programming. Thanks to your offering many more people in Ecuador can hear the messages of hope and love in Jesus via radio.



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12501 Old Columbia Pike,
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6601
800.648.5824 • www.AdventistMission.org

Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter features the South American Division, where more than 315 million people live. More than 2 million of them, about one out of every 150, is a Seventh-day Adventist.

Special focus this quarter is on west-central Brazil and northern Peru.

The Challenges

Brazil is the largest country in South America and the fifth-largest in the world. It occupies roughly half of the territory of the South American Division and has a population of about 200 million citizens. Some 1.3 million Adventists live there, about one Adventist for every 150 people.

As with any large country, Brazil

displays great diversity. Modern cities with populations in the millions lie along the Atlantic Ocean. São Paulo, Brazil's largest city, is the seventh-largest city in the world. Much of Brazil, however, lies in the heartland, a less-developed and less-affluent region of the country. With the exception of Brasília, Brazil's capital city, much of central Brazil is sparsely populated and less developed. In this region lies the territory of the West central Brazil Union. Outside a few cities, most people rely on fishing, farming, and manual labor to earn a living. The church is growing here, but difficult economic conditions hamper the work. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help several projects in this region.

Peru lies on the west coast of South America. Peru was once part of the great Incan Empire that ruled western South America until the Spanish arrived in the sixteenth Century.

In the past 20 years church membership has exploded thanks to small-group ministries. Today about one person out of every 80 is an Adventist. In 2006 the church membership had grown enough to divide the country into two unions. The North Peru Union is the focus of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter.

Yours for the kingdom,



Opportunities

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide:

- churches for existing congregations in west-central Brazil
- a church for Central Brazil Adventist Academy
- churches for existing congregations and church plants in northern Peru
- CHILDREN'S PROJECT: training material for children who lead small groups in northern Peru

Crazy About God



PERU | October 6

Juan

Francisco often visited Juan, and one Sabbath he even coaxed him out from under the bed. He washed Juan up as well as he could and took him to church. Juan sat in church staring blankly at the ceiling. But something happened that day that changed Juan forever. The next morning he crawled out from under his bed and said, “I need water.”

Maria hadn’t heard Juan speak in two years. Hope fluttered in her heart as she hurried to get him some water. But when she returned, she found Juan unresponsive on the floor. Her shoulders slumped, and her spirits slid to despair. *God, why don’t you just let him die?* her heart pleaded.

Half dressed and unwashed, Juan wandered the streets of Lima, Peru. He seldom spoke, and his eyes showed no glimmer of understanding. Most people kept their distance from this man they called Crazy Juan.

Loving Friend and Family

But Francisco didn’t avoid Juan. Instead he searched the streets for his friend. Often Francisco would find Juan only to lose him as he began to cry and ran down an alley. But Francisco didn’t give up. He’d search and find Juan and try to take him home to his family or at least to tell Juan’s wife, Maria, where to find him.

But getting Juan home didn’t restore his sanity. Often he’d spend days lying under the bed, not even coming out to eat. Maria grew desperate, wondering whether she’d ever have her husband back.

A New Man

Then Juan stirred and sat up, shouting, “Jesus has healed me! I’m well!” Maria hugged her husband tearfully; and their children crowded into the room, hopeful but unsure about what had happened.

“I’m hungry,” Juan said. “Bring me some of the food I prepared last night.”

“Juan,” Maria spoke hesitantly, you haven’t made a meal in two years.” Juan’s eyes widened as he looked at his dirty clothes and smelled his unkempt body. He went to take a shower and scrub off years of grime.

Later that morning Juan answered the door and found Francisco there. Juan exclaimed, “Jesus has saved me! I want to become a Christian.” Francisco hugged

his friend and rejoiced with the family. Then he invited everyone to attend the Adventist church with him. Before long Juan and Maria and their older children were studying the Bible together.

New Life, New Mission

Juan bubbled over with new life and energy. One day he told Maria, “The church is too far away. We must start a small group here in our home. The couple invited their neighbors to hear how God had saved Juan. Francisco taught Juan leadership skills as he coached his friend in how to give Bible studies and how to preach. The formerly silent crazy man preached God’s praises with passion. Within three years the small group that met in Juan’s house grew to 30 members. It was time to move on.

Juan suggested that the small group divide and plant another small group in a nearby community. The mother church,

where Juan and his family had been baptized, provided outreach resources for the small group. Juan taught the children and youth how to give Bible studies, and everyone worked together to plant God’s love and truth in the hearts of others.

The 30 members grew to 200 and started another church. Juan knew that when the group was small, everyone worked; but when it grew larger, it was more difficult to get people involved. The members agreed, and two more churches were planted, one nearby and the other farther up the mountain.

God is blessing Juan, who has just a third-grade education. His children, who could not study while Juan was mentally ill, are now in school.

A Passion for Souls

Juan’s passion for leading others to Jesus continues. He and the members of one of the churches he helped found have bought land and are working to build a simple church as a base for further ministry. But the members are poor and find it difficult to buy the bricks they need for the church. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a church for one of the congregations Juan helped establish. In turn, this congregation will help the other believers build churches of their own.

“We must keep growing, keep opening new churches,” Juan says eagerly. “Small groups are the future of God’s work here in Peru.”

We can help the church in Peru grow by giving our weekly mission offerings, and through our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering we can help build chapels for several congregations such as the one Juan helped start. 🌍

Fast Facts

- Peru lies on the western coast of South America between Ecuador and Chile. Most of the economic centers lie along the coast, including Lima, the country’s capital city. The Andes mountains divide the country north to south. East of the mountains the country is tropical jungle.
- Lake Titicaca, the world’s highest commercially navigable freshwater lake, lies in southeastern Peru.
- The Incan Empire dominated western South America until the Spanish arrived in the sixteenth century. Armed with horses and guns, the small bands of Spanish conquered the Indians. Many of those who survived died from diseases brought by the conquerors.



By Faith I See

Rony

Rony hurried down the dusty hillside toward the church on the campus of the Adventist university in Peru. He was a Pathfinder leader and thought about the program he would lead. He didn't see the iron bar on which some students had hung their tennis shoes.

Suddenly a sharp pain pierced Rony's eye, and his head felt as if it were on fire. He staggered and fell. A friend ran to help.

Doctors at the local hospital examined his eye. "I'm sorry," a doctor said. "Your eye is so damaged we can't save it." Rony struggled to understand the doctor's words. *Lose my eye? How do I tell my parents? he wondered. They'll think God has abandoned me.*

The best eye doctor in the nation insisted that Rony would lose his eye. "You need to sign the papers so I can remove your eye before infection sets in," the doctor said.

"Please, Doctor," Rony begged. "I am a Christian. I believe that if it's God's will, He will save my eye. Can we wait a few days?" Reluctantly the doctor agreed.

Rony lay in the hospital bed praying and wondering what his future would hold.

How God Had Led

Rony was 14 and living alone after his parents' divorce. He didn't like the life he was living and wanted something better. But it had been easier to go along with his friends. Then he found a dusty book that introduced him to God. As he read the book, he felt a desire to learn more about God.

He learned about evangelistic meetings and went. Some of his friends went to disturb the meetings. But Rony listened to the speaker's messages.

On Friday night Rony had planned to go out with his friends. But he felt drawn to the meetings. He changed his course and entered the meeting place. He walked past some friends sitting in the back and went down to the front.

When the pastor invited listeners to give their hearts to God, Rony went forward. He could hear his friends whistling at him.

Later his friends made fun of him, but something had changed in Rony's life that night, something precious and lasting.

He was baptized and became a member of a little Adventist church, where he was asked to teach the youth Sabbath School class and help with Pathfinders. His pastor saw Rony's leadership ability and challenged him to organize a small-group meeting at a member's house. Rony invited his neighbors and his high school friends, and soon the group numbered more than 30.

Confronting His Parents

Rony's parents learned of his decision to become a Christian and couldn't understand what had happened to him. When he told them that God was calling him to become a pastor, his father became angry. "If you do, you'll be on your own," he said.

Rony's pastor encouraged him to study at the Adventist high school. Rony worked hard to succeed. When he graduated, he enrolled at Peruvian Union

University. His local mission helped, and he sold literature to pay his remaining tuition. He felt blessed and knew that God was leading him.

Seeing God's Hand


Then tragedy had struck. While Rony lay in the hospital in great pain and uncertain of his future, he prayed constantly, "Lord, Your will be done. If You want me to be a pastor with just one eye, I will accept that. But if it can bring honor to You, please let me keep my eye."

He worried about his family's reaction to the news of his injury, but when they learned about the accident, they called and encouraged him. He used every opportunity to tell them that his future was in God's hands. One by one his sisters, his mother, and other family members told him that his faith had changed their lives. His sister has begun studying the Bible and even brought a friend to hear Rony's testimony.

Still Rony didn't know whether God would save his eye. Before being wheeled into surgery, Rony prayed once more that God's will be done.

When he awoke following surgery, he was in great pain and couldn't see. Then the doctor entered and told Rony, "Son, we didn't remove your eye. I can't explain it, but it's healing." Rony could explain. God had answered his prayers. Rony forgot his pain. God would give him back his eyesight.

Although Rony still faces more surgery, he knows that God has saved his eye for a reason. "God used this accident to let me share His love with others," he says. "And many are coming to God because of it."

Your mission offerings help young people such as Rony fulfill God's plan for their lives, plans to serve and honor God. 

Mission Post

- Rony's eyesight continues to improve. Rony asks for prayer that the doctor who saw God's hand save his eye will give his life to Christ.
- Rony comes from a region where several congregations have no church in which to worship. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a church in one of these regions.
- For more on the work in northern Peru, watch this quarter's Adventist Mission DVD.

A Passion to Share

PERU | October 20

Eva



Eva Sanchez looked out the window and sighed. She and her husband had just moved back to his hometown on the coast of northern Peru. But Eva couldn't find an Adventist church in town, or even a single Adventist believer.

Eva eventually found an Adventist congregation some 30 minutes away by bus. She joined that church and became involved in women's and children's ministries. But she couldn't forget the mission field in her new hometown. She invited her new neighbors to a small group meeting in her home. Then during Holy Week, the week leading up to Easter, Eva rented a little hall and held special meetings. She invited her small-group members and urged them to invite their neighbors and relatives. And they did.

Pedro

Eva learned that Pedro, one man who was attending her meetings, lived in a

trash dump. He came to the first meeting smelling of filth and alcohol. Pedro returned every night, and every time he smelled a little cleaner than he had before.

When Eva offered to study the Bible with those who were interested, Pedro was the first to respond. He was the first to ask for baptism after the Bible studies were completed. When Eva gently suggested that he might not be ready for baptism yet, he responded, "Oh, yes, I am. I have met my Father, and I want to follow Him." Eva thought of the changes she had seen in Pedro's life. He was clean and sober, and he loved Jesus. He and seven others were baptized together.

Pedro was a new man, but he still lived in the dump. Then a few days after his baptism, a longtime friend asked Pedro to live in his house and be the caretaker.

Because there was no church in town, Eva took the new believers to the church 30 minutes away by bus.

The Park People

Eva looked for more ways to reach the residents of her new community for Christ. Across the street from her home was a park. Loud music pulsed through the night air, and youth gathered to drink and use drugs. Often the young people threw trash

in neighborhood yards, and sometimes they even threw stones. Eva wondered how she could reach out to these young people. But she didn't know their culture or how to connect with them. "God, help me get to know these young people who need You so much," she prayed.

Eva learned that Daisy, one of her small-group members, knew one of the girls who often hung out in the park. Daisy offered to introduce Eva to the girl. Eva baked a cake and wrote, "I love Nelita, but Jesus loves her more." Then she and Daisy took the cake to Nelita, the girl in the park. Nelita accepted the cake, and the three talked. Nelita told them about the problems at home that had driven her to the park and a troubled lifestyle.

Eva listened with sincere concern. As the two became better acquainted, Eva invited Nelita to study the Bible. Nelita agreed. She was concerned about how her

parents would react, but she was eager to find a better life and decided to invite her friends to join her.

Eva invited her teenage son Moses to lead the Bible study group. Moses wasn't sure he could do it, but finally he agreed, saying, "I'll go, but you must pray." Eva agreed.

Moses returned from the Bible study glowing with excitement. "Everyone had so many questions," he said. Several weeks later Eva visited the small group. As she approached the house, she heard singing. She smiled, for the young people who had once cursed God were now singing His praises.

A New Church Home

Several months later Nelita and two other young people were baptized. One of them, Matias [Mah-TEE-us], had once thrown stones at Eva's house. Today he leads the youth group in the growing congregation that now meets in their town.

Nelita, who had once caused some of the disturbance in the park's neighborhood, now shares her faith with those same young people.

"When I came to this town I was the only Adventist," Eva says. "But God has given me a wonderful family." Eva's church family has grown to more than 75 members plus many children. They meet in a small building with a courtyard over which they have spread a tarp. With the help of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, the congregation will build a church where the tarp now hangs. "It will be simple," she says smiling. "But it will be to the glory of God."

Thank you for helping reach the people of Huanchaco [wahn-CHAH-koh], Peru, with your offering. 🌍

Mission Post

- About one out of every 80 people in Peru is an Adventist. One reason for the rapid growth of the Adventist Church in Peru is small groups, members inviting friends to study the Bible and fellowship in their homes.
- Many of these small groups have grown into large congregations, but for some it's difficult to rent a building in which to worship. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Eva's congregation build a chapel in which to worship.
- To see more about how your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help fund chapels for congregations, watch the Adventist Mission DVD.

God's Thousand Ways

PERU | October 27

Felipe



It's said that God has a thousand ways to lead someone to Jesus. Felipe believes that. He found God's path through a cap.

Felipe works at a university outside Lima, Peru. Every day he walks past a little store on his way from the bus stop to his job at the university. One day he stopped at the store just to look around. A display of caps caught his attention. Felipe loves caps. One cap caught his attention, and he tried it on. He didn't know what the cap's insignia stood for, but he liked the cap and bought it. He wore his new cap everywhere.

Felipe's Search for God

Felipe had been searching for a church for some time. He had visited several churches, but he hadn't found one that satisfied his need for a closer walk with

God and the peace only God can bring.

Then one day a stranger walked up to Felipe at work and greeted him strangely. "Hello, Brother!" the man said.

Felipe studied the man. He had never seen him before. "Why do you call me Brother?" Felipe asked.

The man pointed to the cap Felipe was wearing and said, "You must be an Adventist."

The man's remark confused Felipe even more. "What's an Adventist?" he asked. "And why must I be one?"

Your cap bears the insignia of the Adventist youth organization," the man said, smiling. "Those three lines on the right represent three angels. The symbol of the Adventist Church is three angels flying.

What's an Adventist?

"What does it mean to be Adventist?" Felipe asked the man. The stranger told him that Adventists walk with God, read their Bible, obey God's commandments, and share His love with others.

The stranger invited Felipe to visit the Adventist church near the university on Sabbath. But when he learned that Felipe lives far from the university, he suggested that he visit a little church much closer to his home. The man wrote down the address and directions to the church, and pressed it into Felipe's hand. "You will be welcomed

there,” he said with an earnest smile.

Felipe knew nothing of this church the stranger mentioned, but since he had been searching for a church anyway, he decided to learn more about the church represented by the logo on his cap.

On Wednesday morning he left home early to find the church before walking to the bus stop. As he drew near the church, he met an older man selling orange juice. Felipe stopped and asked the man for an orange juice, and while he drank it, he asked the man, “Do you know where there’s an Adventist church nearby?”

“Yes,” the man said, smiling. “There’s a church not far from here. Let me show you where it is.”

As the two men walked down the street, Felipe pointed to the logo on his cap and asked, “What does this mean?”

“It’s the insignia of Adventist youth. The three angels carry the promises of Revelation, and the letters JA* mean “Adventist Youth.” Just then the men arrived at the simple church. The man, who introduced himself as Sinfo, invited

Felipe to visit the church.

“When does the church meet?” Felipe asked Sinfo.

“Our main worship service is on Sabbath morning beginning at 9:00,” Sinfo said. “We have several meetings until 4:00 in the afternoon.” Felipe agreed to be at the church on Sabbath.

Finding God’s Family

Felipe went to church that Sabbath and immediately felt at home. “Everyone was so warm and welcoming to me, and I enjoyed the Bible study,” he said. “I was so inspired by everyone’s participation that I went home and spent hours reading the Bible and studying books about Adventist doctrines.”

Felipe returned the next week and the next. He knew that he had found the church he had been searching for. “I was so at peace, so happy in this little church. Four months later I was baptized.”

Sinfo has become Felipe’s best friend and his mentor in church. They study the Bible together and just enjoy being together. “We want to be together when Jesus comes,” Felipe says with a grin.

“Who would have thought that an interesting cap could lead me to God’s truth? Now I tell people, ‘This cap brought me to Christ. Let me tell you about it.’” He shares his faith with his wife and prays every day that she will find the joy in Jesus that he has found.

God will use whatever it takes to get someone’s attention, even a baseball cap. Felipe urges everyone to share God’s message of love and salvation through their testimony and through their mission offerings. 🌐

Mission Post

- God has a thousand ways to reach people and grab their attention. For Felipe it was a cap. But in order to bring these seekers to Christ, we must have willing witnesses and a place for them to worship.
- Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build several simple churches for congregations that have grown from small groups throughout Peru.
- To see more about Felipe and hear him tell his own story, watch the Adventist Mission DVD this quarter.

**Jovenes Adventistas* in Spanish



A Child Shall Lead

Ingrid

Seven-year-old Ingrid knelt with her mother and sister on the cement floor in their small living room. They asked God to bless their home and those they were studying the Bible with. Ingrid prayed especially for her father, Teodoro [Theodore]. She asked God to help him learn to love God and to stop drinking, smoking, and using drugs. Ingrid loved her father, but she hated what the drugs and alcohol did to him.

Just then the door opened and Teodoro stumbled in. He had been drinking again. He stopped when he saw his wife and daughters praying.

“Father, come and pray with us,” Ingrid said.

Teodoro had a soft spot for his daughters, and sometimes he would join the family for worship. Other times he fell asleep on the couch.

After worship Ingrid went to her father and brushed his hair from his forehead.

“Father, God loves you. He wants you to have a better life. Please stop drinking and using drugs. They hurt you.”

Teodoro’s bloodshot eyes filled with tears. He knew that his bad habits were destroying his family’s happiness, but he felt powerless to break free from his addictions.

He often stole to buy alcohol and drugs; he had been arrested twice and knew he was lucky not to be in prison. He felt terrible that his wife had to work to support the family and raise the children while he was out drinking. But no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t seem to change.

A Daughter’s Faith

From the time she was 5 years old Ingrid had accompanied her mother to Bible studies. She listened as her mother presented Bible truths to others. At age 7 she was sharing her faith with her friends and studying the Bible with them using children’s Bible study guides. At one

time she led a small group for children and other personal Bible studies that eventually resulted in 14 friends asking for baptism. But her greatest burden was to share God's love with her father.

Some nights Teodoro came home to find his wife and daughter giving Bible studies to someone. He didn't mind, but he didn't stay to listen. And if he found no one at home, he sometimes went to the church and shouted for them to come out. It embarrassed the family, but Ingrid never gave up hope that God would bring her father to Jesus' feet.

"Please, Father, come to church with us," Ingrid begged. "Please come with us and listen to God's message."

Teodoro couldn't say no to Ingrid, so sometimes he attended special church services. He could feel God's presence in the church. He could see how happy his family's faith made them. He yearned to have their faith, their joy, their relationship with Jesus. But temptation was stronger than his will, and when his friends called him to go drinking, he went.

The family and church members supported Teodoro as he fought his battle with addictions. He joined his wife's and daughter's Bible study group, and he felt God's power strengthen him. He gave his life to Christ and claimed the victory over the substances that had imprisoned him for years.

Sharing the Faith

Before he surrendered his life to Christ, Teodoro couldn't read or write. Ingrid helped him learn to read by reading the Bible. When he was tempted to feel discouraged, the two prayed together for wisdom. Ingrid taught her father how to give Bible studies, and he has proven a worthy student.

Teodoro is a new person. He has started a new business and shares his passion for Christ with customers and friends every chance he gets. Often customers enter his shop and find him with an open Bible on the counter. Last year Teodoro led 32 people to Christ. He loves to tell others that his little girl led him to Jesus.

Ingrid's mother also continues to give Bible studies. The family is united in their goal to share God's love with others. Ingrid, now 13, continues to lead her small-group meeting that includes 15 children and teenagers. She studies with them and encourages them to faithfully attend Sabbath School and church.

Ingrid thanks God for using her to bring her father to Christ. Many of her father's former friends are in prison or have died. The old Teodoro died as well, and in his place God has created a new Teodoro who has helped establish two new congregations of believers and is head elder of his home church. He is living proof that with God, anything is possible. 🌱

Mission Post

- Ingrid leads a small-group meeting for children and teens in her neighborhood. Her parents lead a small group in their home for adults. These small groups have grown and spawned three congregations in their city.
- Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide churches for congregations that have no place large enough to meet.
- To see more about the work of small groups, look for a story on the Adventist Mission DVD.

From Tragedy to Triumph

PERU | November 10

Anival



Anival [AH-nee-vahl], 18, and his cousin, Floresmilo [flo-res-MEE-lo], stalked a deer through the jungle of eastern Peru. Anival took aim at the animal. Suddenly a blinding blast threw him backward into the brush. “Awgggg!” he cried out in pain. His cousin ran to Anival, who was covered in blood. His left arm was mangled and bleeding.

Floresmilo ripped his shirt to make a bandage and stop the bleeding. “We’ll get help,” he said, trying to help his cousin to his feet.

“The pain . . . I can’t stand the pain. Just kill me!” Anival begged. But Floresmilo urged his cousin to his feet and half-dragged him to the nearest medical clinic five hours away on foot.

The clinic had no doctor, but the nurse cleaned the wound and gave Anival something for pain. Then she sent the

two young men to the nearest hospital an hour away. There doctors amputated Anival’s mangled arm and treated his other injuries.

For days Anival lay in bed staring at the wall. He struggled with pain and depression, sure that his life was over.

From Despair to Hope

Neither Anival nor his cousin knew much about God. But Floresmilo had occasionally attended the little Adventist church near his family’s home. He realized that Anival needed spiritual help. He found an Adventist church near the hospital and asked the pastor to visit Anival.

The pastor came and read Anival some encouraging Bible texts. “You’ve lost your arm,” he told the lad, “but God has spared your life. God wants you to know that He loves you. He has work for you to do while you are on this earth. And when Jesus comes, He will make you whole again.”

Anival was skeptical of the pastor’s words. But the more he thought about what he’d said, the more hopeful he felt. Perhaps God *could* make something good come from his terrible situation. He

sensed God's presence taking away the depression and filling his mind with hope. When the pastor returned to visit, Anival was eager to hear more about God.

The pastor left him a small Bible, and Anival began reading a portion every day, turning pages with his thumb—the only part of his right hand that was not covered in bandages. The pastor recommended Bible passages Anival could understand. Other members of the church visited him too, and he felt encouraged by their friendship.

A New Life

Several weeks later Anival left the hospital. He and his cousin visited the Adventist church and soaked up the messages of hope and love. The cousins found new meaning to life. Anival realized that God did have plans for him, and he asked to be baptized. A few months later Floresmilo was baptized too.

Anival returned to his parents' house a different person. He had left an unhappy and undisciplined teenager, but he returned a man with purpose and a new direction to his life. Instead of being filled with anger over the loss of his arm, he was filled with joy and focused on others. His brothers noticed the difference and asked what had happened to him. Anival gladly shared God's love with them.

Anival's oldest brother, Absalom, responded to God's love first, followed by several other siblings. Anival's human brothers became his brothers in Christ. His parents also saw the changes, first in Anival and then in their other sons. They asked to learn more about God's love as well.

A New Mission

Today Anival, Floresmilo, and Absalom

Mission Post

- Many people in Peru struggle to meet their family's daily needs. But believers have a passion for sharing God's love and His promise to come again to take His children home. They give sacrificially to provide seekers with books and a place to worship.
- Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build at least one chapel for believers in the jungle region of eastern Peru.

are inseparable. They travel to villages to share God's love whenever they can. Anival's father is preparing to build a chapel in the village near the family's hometown several hours away. They plan to travel there and hold evangelistic meetings.

The three young men work as farmers to earn money to share their faith with others. So far they have held eight evangelistic series in neighboring towns. More than 50 people have been baptized.

"I have lost my arm," Anival says, "but I feel that I have gained four more arms—those of my brother and cousin, who are always there for me. We will continue to share our faith with as many people as we can. In turn we want them to share their faith with others so that God's good news will spread fast and Jesus will return soon."

Dozens of villages in eastern Peru lack even the simplest church in which to worship. Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a chapel in one of the towns where the work is growing rapidly. Thank you for giving so that others can share God's love with those who haven't yet met Jesus. 🌍



Following the Light

Itelvina

Itelvina [ee-tehl-VEE-nah] traced the Bible verse with her finger as she read it again. It clearly said that God had set aside the seventh day as a holy day. But she didn't know anyone who worshipped on the seventh day and didn't know how to keep it holy. What could she do?

Not a Chance Encounter

Itelvina lives in a small town in central Brazil.

One day while taking a sewing class, Itelvina told her teacher what she had discovered in the Bible about keeping the seventh day holy.

"I've heard of a church that worships on Saturday," the teacher said. It's the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I don't know of any Adventists around here though." Itelvina was glad to learn that there *was* a church that worships on Sabbath, but she was sorry there wasn't one nearby. She continued to study the Bible alone.

One day Itelvina answered a knock on

her door and found an unfamiliar woman standing on her doorstep. "I'm Maria," the woman said. "I'm visiting my family in town. I heard that you are studying your Bible, and I wondered if you'd like to study the Bible together."

"Why, yes, I would," Itelvina replied. She was even more excited when she learned that Maria was an Adventist. Maria gave her Bible study guides to complete, and the two studied them together. When Maria returned home, the Bible studies continued coming, and Itelvina would save her questions for when Maria came to town.

A Church Family

One day another woman knocked on Itelvina's door. "My family has just moved here," the woman said. "We are looking for people who want to study the Bible." Itelvina was thrilled to learn that this woman also was an Adventist. She accepted the woman's invitation to worship with her family on Sabbaths. It was Itelvina's first chance to attend an Adventist worship service. Before long the members of the little group became like family. Some months later Itelvina was baptized.

Then she moved to another town to be closer to her family. But the town had no Adventist church. She missed

the fellowship she'd enjoyed with her Adventist friends. When she learned about an Adventist church an hour away, she took the bus to worship with fellow believers. During the week she visited people in her own town and invited them to attend church with her. But for most the church was too far away.

"Let's start a church in my town," she said to the pastor of the church she attended. "I've been talking to people and inviting them to church. They'd come here, but it's just too far for them to travel." The pastor notified the local conference office in the area.

Two Global Mission pioneers agreed to work in Itelvina's town. She worked with them to invite people to meetings and study the Bible with them. The resulting evangelistic meetings were well attended.

Ruberval

One of those who attended the meetings was Ruberval. He had first learned about Adventists from his employer. He had studied the Bible with his employer, but when he finished the work his employer had hired him for, Ruberval moved on and abandoned Bible studies.

Ruberval knew about the Sabbath but didn't keep it. He noticed that when he worked on Sabbath he often ran into problems that kept him from completing his work. But on Monday, he would return and could quickly resolve the problems. He was convicted that the Sabbath truly was God's holy day, but still he didn't surrender to God.

One day as he was working on an electrical tower, the tower collapsed, tossing Ruberval to the ground. "Lord, help me!" Ruberval prayed as he fell. In the hospital he had time to think about his life.

Mission Post

- The little town of Araganã [ah-rah-gwan-NUH] is located on a river in central Brazil. About 30 people attend the little Adventist congregation that worships in a member's open garage. The children meet for Sabbath School in a bedroom of the host family's home.
- Members have been saving money for several years to build a simple church, but still they have just enough to lay the foundation. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help them complete their church and make the Adventists more visible in their community.

He realized he was not living as he should.

Surrender and Blessing

Ruberval remembered an Adventist in town and called him. He told the man that he wanted to give his life to God. Adventist church members from Itelvina's group rallied around Ruberval and gave him hope as he made his way back to spiritual and physical health.

He attended the Adventist evangelistic meetings and eventually followed the Lord in baptism. The new believers formed a congregation and began meeting in a member's garage.

Most of the Adventists in the little town are retired or work as laborers, small shopkeepers, and fishers. They have few financial resources, but they want to build a simple church in which they can meet and bring their friends to learn about Jesus. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help make their dream of a church a reality. Thank you for helping to make it happen. 🌍



Preacher Boy

Marcos

Eleven-year-old Marcos sat in the small-group meeting with his mother and several other adults. *Everyone in church belongs to one of the small groups,* Marcos thought. *Why can't we kids have our own small group?* The more he thought about it, the more excited he got. *There is no reason we can't have a small group. We just have to form one!*

Marcos lives with his parents and four brothers and sisters in a small town in central Brazil. His church is small, and it shares a pastor with nine other congregations. The pastor can't meet the needs of everyone in the church and still minister to those who don't know Jesus. So he encourages members to lead church activities and share their faith with others. Marcos asked the pastor how to start a small group for kids his age.

"Just invite your friends to come and plan a program for them," the pastor said, smiling. He promised to get some materials to help Marcos get started. Soon the materials arrived. As Marcos

looked through them, excitement surged through him. *With God's help I can do this!* he thought.

Small Beginnings

Marcos planned the first meeting, which would be held in his parents' home. He invited the children from church and urged them to invite their friends from school and neighbors living nearby. On the day of the meeting, Marcos double-checked everything to be sure he was ready. Several kids had told him they would come. But would they?

At the sound of a knock at the door, Marcos hurried to answer it.

"Hi, I'm so glad you could come," he told the girl who entered the room. He gave her a piece of paper on which to write her prayer request while he answered another knock. Soon the room was buzzing with children eager to take part in their own meeting. Marcos welcomed them again and asked them to join him in prayer before the meeting officially began.

Fast Facts

- Two growing Adventist congregations in west-central Brazil have no churches in which to meet. The congregation in Araganã meets in a garage, and the congregation in Parana to the south meets in a funeral home.
- Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help this congregation and another in a similar town farther south to build a church that will reach out to reach the people in the town with God's last-day message.

The children sang several songs, repeating them so that the new children could learn them. Then he held up a box of balloons and invited each child to take one. "Blow it up big," he said. Then he gave each child something to use to pop the balloons. "Try to pop someone else's balloon, but be careful and don't let anyone pop yours," he said. Chaos ruled as the children jumped up to pop another child's balloon while keeping theirs out of reach.

When the activity ended, Marcos explained that the balloons represented us, and the sharp objects were obstacles that we encounter in our lives. "God helps protect us from obstacles in our lives so that we can grow stronger every day," he said.

The first meeting was a success, and children thanked Marcos for inviting them. Many of the original children still come to the small-group meetings. Marcos makes sure that everyone has a chance to lead out in a whole meeting or a single activity so they can learn leadership skills.

Kid Preacher

Because Marcos' church rarely gets to enjoy a sermon by the pastor, the elders ask members to preach most weeks. After seeing Marcos speak at the children's Week of Prayer, the elders often ask him to preach in church. Marcos feels called to become a pastor and welcomes the opportunity to serve his church by speaking and leading worship services. He often is invited to other churches to preach. And when he goes, he invites others to go with him and help by presenting parts of the worship service.

Marcos has a special burden for his father, who doesn't attend church regularly. He comes when Marcos preaches, and that makes the boy glad. But he prays that his dad will come to love and serve Jesus. "We must stay faithful in Christ," Marcos says. "Everyone has difficulties in their lives—sickness, sadness, challenges. We need everyone to know that the church family around the world loves and supports them. We must pray for one another."

Prayers and Hope

The little church that Marcos attends meets in an open garage. The members are working and saving and praying to build a more permanent place of worship. So far they have enough to build the foundation of a church.

They have just learned that the world church will help them fulfill their dream to have a church where they can invite people to worship God, a place that will draw people to Jesus. They are a vibrant group of believers determined to spread God's good news. Won't you support them in their effort with your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on December 22? 🌍



Finding Hope

Iani

Iani's [ee-AH-nee] feet pounded against the packed dirt as she ran. Her lungs burned for air, but she kept running toward home, her mother, and safety.

Iani was 15. Her mother and younger brother and sister were ill. Mother couldn't work, so Iani had taken a job in a factory working for less than minimum wage to help buy food. At first the manager had seemed friendly. But then he had tried to molest her. She had broken from his grasp and fled.

Suddenly she saw the man's car coming toward her. She stopped, terrified, and picked up several stones to throw at him if he tried to get near her. Then her mother got out of the man's car and hurried toward Iani before the man could say anything. "Your boss came to the house and said you'd run away. What happened?"

Iani told her mother the man had tried to molest her, but she had fled. Mother took Iani to file a police report, but the police did nothing. Iani's family moved

to escape the man and the memories that haunted her.

From Despair to Hope

Iani sank into despair and experienced violent outbursts of anger. She had once attended church, but she no longer knew how to call on God. Counseling helped her to deal with the traumas she had suffered and the people in her life who had betrayed her—her absent father, her abusive stepfather, a jealous teacher, and the boss who had tried to molest her. Little by little she dealt with the bitterness that filled her heart.

Then one Saturday afternoon some members of the local Adventist church visited Iani's family. They sang, read the Bible, and talked. Iani's mother had been an Adventist and had taken the children to church when Iani was younger. But their frequent moves and lack of money for clothes and bus fare had made church attendance difficult. Eventually Iani's mother had stopped trying to attend church, and the family's faith fell by the wayside.

Now, hearing the joy in these teenagers' voices as they sang and shared God's Word, Iani's mother wanted to return to

Fast Facts

- West Central Brazil Union lies in the heart of Brazil. The nation's capital city, Brasilia, lies within this region of Brazil. But most of the state is rural with few economic opportunities.
- More than 104,000 Adventists live in West Central Brazil Union, or one Adventist for every 133 people.

God. Iani had nothing but the worn jeans she was wearing. But her mother insisted that they would visit the church, so Iani borrowed a dress and helped her brother and sister get ready to go.

Mission Caleb

Some members of the church invited Iani to join them on a mission trip that they called Mission Caleb. Iani had never heard of Mission Caleb, so some girls explained that it was a short-term mission project. Groups from throughout Brazil spent three weeks working in an assigned town. There they worked in the community and helped the local church members coordinate evangelistic meetings and visit former members.

Someone offered to pay Iani's expenses. She decided that she could meet some new people and see a new place. She agreed to go.

The church members traveled to a distant town in northern Brazil. They were given some training, and Iani was assigned to give Bible studies. Iani didn't know much about the Bible, so she had to study the lesson every day before presenting the topic to the people she was visiting. It was intense, but she felt fulfilled.

Every day Iani studied the Bible with people, and every night the youth listened to an evangelist speak on a different Bible topic. Iani could feel her fear and anger melt away, replaced by hope for the future and love for God. She learned how to forgive the people who had hurt her, and by the end of the mission trip, Iani felt like a completely different person. She decided to be baptized.

New Life, New Hope

Iani returned home with a new vision for her future. She wanted to study at Central Brazil Academy, the Adventist boarding school an hour from her home. Her family had no money, so Iani worked as a literature evangelist to receive a partial scholarship to study. Church members helped pay her remaining tuition, and others donated school supplies.

At Central Brazil Academy Iani rediscovered the joy she had once felt in studying. Her teachers and friends taught her to place her trust entirely in Jesus. "The time I've spent at Central Brazil Academy has been the best of my life," Iani says. "God has turned my life around. He has given my family and me hope and a future. I feel His presence every day and want to serve Him all my life. I thank this school for making such a difference in my life."

Offering Appeal

Central Brazil Academy has been God's hand in changing many students' lives forever. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a church for the students, staff, and believers in the community around Central Brazil Academy. Your offering will help the school continue to make eternal differences in countless lives. 🌍

God's Last-minute Answer

BRAZIL | December 8

Jamyson



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

My name is Jamyson [JAY-mih-sohn]. I was not the best Christian young person. I had been losing interest in the church for some time. Life at home with my stepfather was difficult. In spite of my mother's efforts to keep me in church, I was spending a lot of time with my non-Adventist friends and adopting their not-so-great lifestyle. Life was losing its meaning.

Walking and Working With God

But then I went on a spiritual retreat sponsored by our local church. There I was challenged to think about my life and my relationship with God. Before the retreat ended I surrendered my life totally to God.

At the retreat I heard about Mission Caleb, a program sponsored by the Adventist Church in Brazil. It brings high school and college students together to work in a specific area to build up the church there. Volunteers find ways to help people in the community as well as to visit people and give Bible studies to those who are interested.

So I made the big decision and signed up to give up a month of my summer vacation to be a part of Mission Caleb. I was excited about traveling to another part of this big country, but I also wanted to get closer to God. I was eager for Mission Caleb to begin.

Then just a week before we were to leave, our project had to be canceled. I was disappointed. I thought about it and realized that there must be some other way I could give my vacation to God. I asked God to help me figure something out. That same afternoon a friend called and asked if I would like to go colporteur—selling Adventist books and materials door to door—for a month. I was sure this was

God's answer to my prayer, so I agreed. I packed my things, and the next day I traveled to the town where I would work.

Earning and Learning

My faith in God was strengthened during my month of selling Christian books and literature. I felt God's presence many times as I knocked on doors. I learned to rely on prayer and spent lots of time with God. I loved it! I knew that I wanted to colporteur during my summer vacation.

I had been attending a public school, but God planted another dream in my heart—to attend the Adventist school, Central Brazil Academy. I realized that I could earn part of my tuition working as a colporteur.

I worked hard and was able to earn enough for my first semester's expenses at the Adventist school. I loved studying in an Adventist environment, where the students worshipped and prayed together.

During the next vacation I sold literature again to earn my school fees. I worked hard and prayed a lot, but I ended vacation far short of what I needed. I knew that my mom couldn't help me with my school bill, so I asked God to show me His will.

I returned to school with no assurance that I would be able to pay my bills. I continued studying, and I worked on campus to help pay my bill. But I soon realized that I wouldn't be able to earn enough. I talked to my pastor and teachers about finding a sponsor, and I prayed. But nothing changed.

Victory in Defeat

Finally I admitted defeat. I packed my things and planned to catch the bus home on Sunday. I would sell literature to earn money and return the next year.

On Saturday night I was visiting friends'

Mission Post

- Central Brazil Academy is located an hour west of the capital city of Brazil. More than 400 students study here, many of whom live in the dormitories.
- A sizeable portion of these students are from non-Adventist homes, and the school baptizes 30 to 35 students each year.
- See students from Central Brazil Academy in action. Watch the Adventist Mission DVD.

rooms to tell them goodbye when a man I had met the day before found me. "Do you really want to leave?" he asked. I told him I wanted to stay but didn't have the money.

"I will pay your tuition through the end of the school year," he said. I was speechless. That night God showed me He was in control. He did not part the Red Sea until Moses held out his rod. God didn't meet my need until my time was up. But He is always faithful.

Growing up I heard many stories about God's faithfulness. Now I have my own story to tell. But this is just the beginning. God hasn't revealed the rest of my story yet.

Appeal

God is using Central Brazil Academy to lead many young people to Christ and train us for His service. We need a church in which to worship as a community. Right now we meet in lecture halls, dormitory chapels, and even outdoors. Thank you for helping us with your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to build a church to honor Him. 🌐



A New Home

Carlos

The music thumped while couples danced around the house, laughing and drinking. Nine-year-old Carlos glanced at his mom and grabbed a beer. She laughed and kept dancing.

Carlos began helping himself to alcohol more and more often. His parents either didn't notice or didn't care, and before long Carlos relied on alcohol to get through his day. Sometimes he even took it to school in a soda.

A New Experience

An Adventist woman invited Carlos to attend the church's Pathfinder Club meetings. "Sure," he shrugged.

He stepped into the church activity room and was surrounded by happy children his age. He listened as they sang and watched as they practiced marching and studied nature. They invited him to join them on camping trips, and he eagerly accepted. When the Pathfinders studied healthful living, Carlos realized the damage his alcohol addiction was causing. It wasn't

easy, but he stopped drinking.

His parents had separated, and neither paid much attention to his interest in Pathfinders. They were just glad he'd found something he loved. When he decided to be baptized, he wondered if either parent would come to witness the moment. They didn't.

Trouble at Home

But when Carlos' new life impacted his parents, trouble started. Carlos was working after school selling frozen treats to help his mother with bills. But when he wouldn't work on Sabbath, she didn't understand. He explained that he would work other days, but not on Sabbath. Eventually she agreed.

But other issues arose that brought strife between them, and eventually his mother told him to leave the house. *God, what can I do?* Carlos wondered. He felt helpless and wondered if he would end up on the streets.

Carlos asked his grandparents to let him live with them. He worked during the day and studied at night. But they, too, didn't understand his religious convictions, and they accused him of carousing when he returned home from classes late. One night as Carlos returned to their home

after 11:00, his grandfather met him at the door.

“Where have you been?” he demanded angrily.

“I’ve been at school,” Carlos explained. But his grandfather didn’t believe him and ordered him to leave their house. As Carlos packed his few belongings, he wondered where he would go.

A New Future

A church member heard his story and offered to let him live with her family. Carlos gratefully accepted. One day as the two sat talking, Carlos shared his dream to attend an Adventist school to finish high school.

“Maybe there’s a way,” she said. Carlos gratefully smiled. Later the woman talked to the pastor, who agreed to try to help Carlos get a scholarship to attend Central Brazil Academy. When Carlos learned that the academy had accepted him, he felt joy he had never known. People cared

about him; people wanted him to succeed.


Carlos is attending Central Brazil Academy. “I see changes in my life,” he says, smiling. “I am growing spiritually as well as intellectually and physically here. I get a lot of support from the teachers, the boys dean, and my classmates. They encourage me when I am tempted; they talk with me and pray with me when I need help. They strengthen my faith.

“I may not have a biological family, but I have a faith family at my school. They are helping me see beyond my past and understand that God has dreams for me that I could never have imagined. God holds the whole world in His hands—including me!”

Central Brazil Academy

Central Brazil Academy serves more than 400 students. Almost 300 are boarding students, and half of these are from non-Adventist homes. The school takes seriously the mission God has given them to reach these students while they’re studying at the school.

The school has an active mission-outreach program that involves youth from across the region. Students from the school may spend several weeks each summer working in an unentered or under-entered region in Brazil, and others train to spend 10 months in mission service somewhere in the country.

But the heart of any Adventist school is its church, and Central Brazil Academy lacks a church. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a church to bring the students and community together in Christ and train future leaders for service. 

Mission Post

- Central Brazil Academy has a strong mission-outreach program, and students are encouraged to take part in one or more ministries, whether in their neighborhood or elsewhere in Brazil.
- Every student on campus is expected to attend regular worship services. But the school has no church. Students hold smaller worship services in various buildings—and under trees—on campus.
- Part of this Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help this school build a church to serve the students and faculty of this academy, and the community that surrounds it.

The Hardest Place

CENTENNIAL | December 29

Ferdinand and Ana Stahl



You're wasting your time," the European told Ferdinand Stahl [stall]. "Those Indians are too stupid to learn. They're drunk and worse than beasts." Ferdinand fought the anger that welled up inside him. He had heard similar words ever since the Europeans learned that the Stahls had come to South America to work among the Indians.

"No!" Ferdinand said when he and his wife, Ana, were finally alone. "These people *can* learn if they're given a chance!"

The Indians, once noble people, were mistreated by Europeans and beaten by police. They contracted disease while working in dangerous gold mines, but they had little access to medical care. God had called the Stahls to "the hardest place" to work for Him, and Ferdinand was determined to lift these people out of their filth and poverty and introduce them to Jesus.

The couple opened a medical clinic to treat the Indians and invited them to learn about God. Sometimes hundreds gathered on Sabbaths to hear Ferdinand explain God's plan of salvation. The Indians rejoiced to hear the gospel presented in such a simple way.

Opposition

But some Europeans weren't happy that the Indians were discovering freedom in Christ. One Sabbath a local priest arrived at the meeting. The day's lesson was on the Sabbath, and Ferdinand prayed for guidance. Before long the priest's face darkened with anger. He shouted, "It's a lie! The Sabbath is old and doesn't serve us any longer."

An old Indian arose and said, "Mr. Priest, you tell us that the Sabbath is old, that it doesn't serve us anymore. Well, God made the sun and moon, and they're old and they still serve us. How is the Sabbath different?"

The priest, unable to answer, stalked away. Later as Ferdinand thought of what had happened, he said, "And the Europeans said these people can't learn!"

Frogs and Typhoid

One morning the chief of a nearby village rode to the clinic and asked Stahl. "Please come and help my people. They are dying of a terrible disease."

Fernando gathered as much medicine as he could carry and rode with the chief to

his village. After treating dozens of people, Ferdinand asked the chief where the villagers got their drinking water. The chief took him to a murky, scum-covered stream.

“I need some men and shovels to dig out this spring,” Ferdinand said. The chief found some able-bodied men who removed the scum and dug out the muck. They removed hundreds of disease-carrying toads. Ferdinand built stone sides around the spring and installed pipes so the people had a safe source of water. Soon the typhoid epidemic ended.

The Saving Hand of God

When the Stahls began building a mission station, local religious leaders threatened them and sent a crowd of drunken Indians to harass the workers. Some of the workers wanted to fight the crowd, for although they were outnumbered, they were sober and could win. But Ferdinand recalled Jesus’ command to love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. He urged his workers to dodge the stones and ignore the crowd. Eventually the crowd broke up.

But when the Stahls returned to the

mission after buying supplies the next day, they found the building site in shambles and their equipment gone. A mob had come and stolen everything of value. They tried to force the workers to kneel before a priest. Those who refused were bound and forced to walk 20 miles to the nearest city, where they were imprisoned.

Ferdinand appealed to the judge—and reminded the man that he too would one day be judged by God. Eventually the men were released. As a result of this incident, the Peruvian congress passed a bill granting religious liberty for all religious denominations.

A Fruitful Ministry

While ministering in one village, the Stahls saw masses of Indians led by local religious leaders converge on the town intent on killing the missionaries. The couple and their helpers took refuge in a meager hut. Outside the religious leaders incited the mob to set fire to the hut. Suddenly the missionaries heard shouts of fear and the sound of people running. When silence fell, Fernando peeked outside, unsure of what he would find. “What happened?” he asked a woman outside.

“Can’t you see the army of Indians coming to defend you?” the woman asked. Ferdinand and Ana could see no one, but they knew that an army of angels had rescued them from certain death.

The Stahls continued to minister to the people of the Peru 29 years. Their work led to the baptism of more than 2,000 Indians and the establishment of dozens of schools dedicated to teaching the people some had called “ignorant, lazy beasts.” 🌍

Mission Post

- Ferdinand (Fernando) and Ana Stahl served among the Aymara and Quechua Indians of Lake Titicaca, people who Europeans considered too stupid to learn, too lazy to work, and unworthy of the missionaries’ time.
- After 29 years of mission service the Stahls returned to their homeland in America. The family’s pioneering work resulted in thousands coming to Christ and inspired an entire generation of young people to serve God around the world.

Adapted from *Determined to Love*, by Kay D. Rizzo (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988).

Thirteenth Sabbath Program

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| ➤ | Congregational Song | “Christ for the World,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , no. 370 |
| ➤ | Welcome | |
| | Scripture | (See below) |
| ➤ | Prayer | |
| ➤ | Program | “Small Groups, Big Growth” |
| ➤ | Offering | Ask kindergarten and primary children to sing one or more of the songs they have learned this quarter as the offering is taken. |
| ➤ | Closing Song | “Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , no. 358 |
| ➤ | Closing Prayer | |

Participants: Two (or more) speakers and several volunteers seated in the audience. Choose participants who will practice their parts and present them clearly. While participants do not have to memorize their parts, they should be familiar enough with the content that they can present the material with confidence.

If the program will follow the Sabbath School lesson study, ask several members to slip out of their class and sit alone in the sanctuary or stand in the foyer or outside the church. If the program precedes the Sabbath School lesson study, urge members to sit with their class members in groups in the sanctuary except for those you’ve chosen to sit or stand apart.

Speaker 1: The South American Division is growing rapidly and currently has a membership of more than 2 million people. The secret to this rapid growth is small groups.

Churches in South America encourage members to become part of a small group that meets outside of regular church hours,

usually in someone’s home. The group studies the Bible together, shares prayer requests, and invites friends to join them. Small groups help strengthen believers while they enlarge the circle of friends. When the group grows to more than a certain number, they divide and continue to grow.

Speaker 2: Let's experience the joy of inviting someone to join our small groups. Your Sabbath School class—or the group you're sitting closest to—is your small group. Look around and find someone who is not a part of a small group. Get up and find someone to invite to join you. Convince them that your group wouldn't be complete without them. *[Allow two minutes to complete this activity.]*

Speaker 1: How did you feel when someone accepted your invitation to join you? Imagine each member inviting someone to join your small group this coming week. Soon there wouldn't be room to contain everyone. Would you stop growing so that everyone fits? Or would you divide into two or three groups that meet at different times and locations so everyone can take part and be fed spiritually? That's how small groups in South America grow the church—by inviting, nurturing, and dividing.

Hundreds of small groups in South America are growing into churches. Let's visit one and see what it's like.

Speaker 2: Araganã [ah-rah-gwah-nao] is a small town in central Brazil. Most of the people who live there work as manual laborers or fish the nearby river to provide for their families. It's not easy.

Two years ago only one Adventist woman, Itelvina [ee-tehl-VEE-nah], lived in the town. Because there was no church in town, she rode the bus 16 miles [26 kilometers] to attend a church. When the local mission realized Itelvina was the only Adventist in town and had been sharing her faith with her neighbors, they held evangelistic meetings. A group of about 15 believers began meeting in a

small rented hall. But with little income, the group found it difficult to pay the rent. Eventually they decided to worship in a member's garage. The group continues to grow through small group meetings.

They now have land on which to build a simple church and enough funds to lay the foundation. They're excited about reaching more people for Christ, but they don't have the money to build the church. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a church for the believers in Araganã.

Speaker 2: Two Adventist academies, one in central Brazil and one in northern Peru, share a common problem. While their school enrollment continues to grow, they have no church in which to worship. Students must meet in small groups in dormitory chapels, in lecture halls, and even under a grove of trees. A church will help these schools train the young people while they provide a place of worship for academy staff and the community. Part of today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide churches for these campuses.

Speaker 1: Children are the heart of the church in both Brazil and Peru. They have their own small groups. But the children of Peru lack materials they can use to lead their small groups. Children around the world are giving today to help the children of Peru learn to lead their own small groups.

Speaker 2: Our offering today can help grow the church in central Brazil and northern Peru. Let's give in thankfulness to God for every heart that turns to Him.

[Offering]

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects



Next quarter the South Pacific Division will be featured. Special projects include clinics in isolated regions of Papua New Guinea, audio Bible devices (MP3 players) for the nonliterate people of the islands of the

South Pacific, and 15,000 Bibles and Bible study guides for children of the islands who have no Sabbath School lessons or Bibles.

Second quarter's focus will be on the East-Central Africa Division.

Leader's Resources

For more information on the cultures and history of central Brazil and northern Peru, visit your local library or a travel agency.

Online Information. The Adventist Mission website contains additional material that can add flavor to your mission presentation. Look for words and songs in Spanish, the official language of Peru, and Portuguese, the official language of Brazil. Look for recipes and other activities from these countries as well. Go to www.AdventistMission.org. Click on “Resources” and “Children’s Activities” in the pop-up menu. Click on “fourth quarter” and select the activity you want.

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Ask your Sabbath School council to set a quarterly mission offering goal (set the goal a little higher than last quarter and divide it by 14, one part for each of the 12 regular Sabbaths this quarter and two parts for Thirteenth Sabbath). (Note that Thirteenth Sabbath falls on December 22 this year, but the quarter ends on December 29.) Chart the weekly progress toward the quarter’s goal on the goal device.

To focus attention on the projects, download the cover photo or one of the photos of a church plant that will benefit from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering from the Adventist Mission website (at www.AdventistMission.org, “Resources” and “Mission Quarterlies”) and mount it on poster board. Every week that your goal is met (or your cumulative goal is met), add a simple church to the poster.

Remind members that the ongoing work of the world church depends on Sabbath School mission giving every week of the year and that one fourth of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the featured projects in the South American Division.

On the Sabbath before Thirteenth Sabbath is celebrated, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving for their Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School. This immediate feedback will encourage members to continue their mission giving.

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Website: www.AdventistMission.org

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SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION



| UNION | CHURCHES | COMPANIES | MEMBERSHIP | POPULATION |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Argentina | 521 | 329 | 108,714 | 40,500,000 |
| Bolivia | 315 | 602 | 76,099 | 10,088,000 |
| Central Brazil | 978 | 688 | 215,677 | 47,355,000 |
| Chile | 616 | 311 | 118,425 | 17,268,000 |
| Ecuador | 194 | 337 | 43,726 | 14,666,000 |
| North Brazil | 1,228 | 1,018 | 176,435 | 13,353,000 |
| North Peru | 1,018 | 1,579 | 226,993 | 12,389,000 |
| Northeast Brazil | 1,493 | 2,316 | 339,427 | 51,091,000 |
| Northwest Brazil | 718 | 540 | 116,401 | 5,546,000 |
| Paraguay | 60 | 52 | 12,578 | 6,568,000 |
| South Brazil | 858 | 977 | 172,139 | 26,863,000 |
| South Peru | 975 | 1,459 | 184,682 | 17,011,000 |
| Southeast Brazil | 1,060 | 1,017 | 164,895 | 38,348,000 |
| Uruguay | 50 | 27 | 7,447 | 3,369,000 |
| West Central Brazil | 526 | 640 | 103,125 | 14,100,000 |
| TOTALS | 10,610 | 11,892 | 2,066,763 | 318,515,000 |

- PROJECTS**
- ① Brazil: churches for existing congregations in west-central Brazil
 - ② Brazil: church for Central Brazil Adventist Academy
 - ③ Northern Peru: churches for existing congregations
 - ④ Classrooms for an Adventist high school in Chiclayo, Peru
 - ⑤ CHILDREN'S PROJECT: training material for children who lead small groups in northern Peru.

