



# youth & adult **MISSION**

**“I Need You”**

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**On the Cover:** Faith practiced self-harm and then tried to kill herself when she was bullied at school in Trinidad and Tobago. She believes God saved her life. Story, page 14.

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= stories of special interest to teens

# Dear Sabbath School Leader,

Andrew McChesney  
Editor



This quarter we feature the Inter-American Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in 42 countries and territories in the Caribbean Sea, Central America, and the northern part of South America. The region is home to 305 million people and 3.7 million Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 82 people.

The Inter-American Division has chosen six projects in Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, and Mexico to receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter. I had the privilege of visiting project sites in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Dominica and hearing mission stories there. You can find more information about those projects in the sidebar on this page and in the related mission stories published in this *Mission* quarterly. I also visited two sites of previous Thirteenth Sabbath projects in Costa Rica

and Trinidad and Tobago. In Costa Rica, your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2021 helped open a center of influence at Central America Adventist University that trains missionaries and provides life-skills seminars to at-risk children and youth in the community. In Trinidad and Tobago, I saw the rising structure of what will be the first university church at University of the Southern Caribbean, a 2018 Thirteenth Sabbath project. The university also received part of a 2021 offering to open a missionary training center. I heard first-hand accounts of God's life-transforming power while interviewing people on the campus, and you can find two of those stories on pages 12 and 14.

## Special Features

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer photos and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story. For photos of tourist sites and other scenes from the featured countries, try a free photo bank such as [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com) or [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com). You could show the photos on your computer or mobile device while you read the mission story, or you could print the photos to decorate your Sabbath School room or church bulletin board.

In addition, you can download a PDF of facts and activities from the Inter-American Division at [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024). Follow us at [facebook.com/missionquarterlies](https://facebook.com/missionquarterlies). You also can download the PDF version of the *Mission* magazine at [bit.ly/adultmission](https://bit.ly/adultmission), and *Mission Spotlight* videos at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](https://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

If you have found especially effective ways to share mission stories, please let me know at [mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org).

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!

## Opportunities

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will support six projects in the Inter-American Division:

- Center of influence for at-risk children, Buenaventura, Colombia
- Center of influence for at-risk children, Puerto Tejada, Colombia
- Center of influence for at-risk children, Limón province, Costa Rica
- Ebenezer Elementary School, Roseau, Dominica
- Center of influence to reach upper class, Xalapa, Mexico
- Center of influence to reach upper class, Oaxaca, Mexico

# Sabbath and Infidelity

DOMINICA | July 6

Ursula Leslie



*This week's mission story features Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School in Roseau, the capital of Dominica. The school, which opened in 1976, consistently ranks in the top 10 list of the 62 elementary schools on the island. But the school building is crowded with 160 children from kindergarten to fourth grade. Several blocks away, 40 fifth and sixth graders study in a makeshift classroom in another building. More parents want to send their children to the school, but there simply isn't room. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a new, larger school.*

*This is the story of two students.*

**S**uzanne did well in kindergarten at Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School. Her parents brought her back to the school for first grade, second grade, and third grade.

But when she was in the fourth grade, her father called the principal. He wasn't happy.

"I have a problem," he said.

The previous weekend, he had asked 9-year-old Suzanne to wash the dishes, but she had refused.

"I'm not washing dishes today because it is

the Sabbath," she said.

Father was taken aback, and he repeated his request in no uncertain terms.

But Suzanne refused again.

"I can wash the dishes after sunset," she said.

She explained that at school she had learned the fourth commandment, which says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter ..." (Exodus 20:8-10, NKJV). She saw herself as the daughter mentioned in God's law. She viewed the chore of washing dishes as work, and she wanted to keep the Sabbath by refraining from work.

Father wasn't pleased, and he called the principal on Monday morning to complain.

"I don't want two religions in my home," he told the principal. "I didn't send her to a Seventh-day Adventist school to make her an Adventist."

With that, he transferred her to another school.

Jack also entered Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School as a kindergartener. But he arrived in the middle of the school year. The teacher was teaching the Ten Commandments to the children when Jack showed up, and his attention was caught by the seventh commandment, which says, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).

"Some people live in the same house



together, and they are not married,” the teacher said. “This is not the way that it is supposed to be because God says the two should get married and become one flesh and live together. They should not live together when they are boyfriend and girlfriend. They should be married.”

Jack went home and said, “Mommy, are you married to Daddy?”

“No,” Mother said.

“Mommy, you’re living in sin,” Jack said. “Teacher says you should not live in sin. You should be married.”

Mother was shocked. She didn’t know what to say. She began to think about the decisions that she had made in her life. Then she had an idea. “Jack,” she said, “when Daddy comes home, tell him the same thing that you told me.”

When Father arrived home, Jack asked, “Daddy, are you married to Mommy?”

Father was surprised and said, “No, why do you ask?”

“In class today, Teacher said a man should not live with a woman without being married,” Jack said. “Daddy, you’re living in sin. You should be married.”

Father decided to have a heart-to-heart talk with Mother. Not long after that, the two were married.

Mother later related the story to the school principal. She said Jack’s words had led the couple to get married.

The principal, Ursula Leslie, said that the school has a mission to share the Bible with all children. What happens next is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Parents sometimes oppose the students’ decision when they choose to follow Christ all the way,” she said. “That is one of the challenges that we have. Some students want to be baptized, but parents just want them to learn good values and nothing more.”

But there also are heartwarming stories about parents who accept the Bible truths that their children bring home. Only eternity will reveal the results of the seeds planted in the hearts of children and their parents. 🌍

## Story Tips

- Show Dominica on the map. Then show Dominica’s capital, Roseau, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct an elementary school building.
- Watch a short YouTube video of principal Ursula Leslie: [bit.ly/Ursula-IAD](https://bit.ly/Ursula-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- In 1901, two Sabbath-keepers from Antigua took up residence in Dominica and raised up a small company of Sabbath-believers.
- The presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is felt throughout Dominica. There are 23 churches and five companies, three elementary schools (Ebenezer SDA Primary, Western District SDA Primary, and Temple SDA Primary), and two secondary schools (Dominica Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School and Arthur Walden SDA Academy).

Pray for Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, that seeds planted in the hearts of children and parents will bear fruit. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the school.

By Andrew McChesney

# God Does His Part



DOMINICA | July 13

Roderick

*This mission story is about Roderick, the architect of a new school on the Caribbean island nation of Dominica that will be constructed with assistance from this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. The story started in 1984.*

It was a big day when Roderick received a scholarship to study at a university in France.

He packed his bags, said good-bye to his single mother and two brothers, and moved halfway across the globe from his home on the Caribbean island nation of Dominica.

But as Roderick settled into his classes in France, he sensed that something wasn't quite right. Something was missing.

Trying to fill that hole, he went to church the next Sunday. But he wasn't satisfied. He returned to church the next Sunday, but he still wasn't satisfied. Then it struck him. Even though his mother had taught him to worship on Sunday, he was convinced in his

heart that the true Sabbath was on Saturday.

Before arriving in France, Roderick had loved reading the Bible. He hadn't read the Bible to know God. He and his high school friends had enjoyed debating the Bible, and he had read the Bible to win the debates. As he had read, he had been persuaded that God had set aside the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. But he had never acted on that knowledge.

Now in France, Roderick wondered if he could find anyone who kept the seventh-day Sabbath. He remembered that Seventh-day Adventists kept the Sabbath in Dominica, and he asked his classmates if Adventists also lived in France. A classmate introduced him to an Adventist from Dominica, and Roderick started going to church with the man. Only a month had passed since Roderick had arrived in France.

Roderick didn't tell his mother or brothers that he was going to the Seventh-day Adventist church. But he wondered what they would think. Would his mother be upset? Would his two brothers think less of him? He didn't have long to wait.

Two months after he started worshipping on Sabbath, a letter arrived in the mail from his mother.

Roderick opened the envelope and pulled out the letter. His mother had written that she and Roderick's two brothers were taking Bible studies with Adventists back in Dominica.

Roderick couldn't believe his eyes. Could



it be that he and his family were following a similar path to God even though they were living a world apart?

He wrote back, “I’m going to a Seventh-day Adventist church every Sabbath.”

His mother and brothers were so surprised when they received his letter.

Two months later, Roderick’s mother and brothers gave their hearts to Jesus in baptism in Dominica. Two months after that, Roderick was baptized in France.

Roderick had been living in France for only nine months, and his life had completely changed. In that same time period, the lives of his mother and brothers had also completely changed back in Dominica. As the apostle Paul said, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV).

When Roderick returned to Dominica for his first vacation the next year, he worshipped with his mother and brothers at the Seventh-day Adventist church on Sabbath. The family praised God for how He was working in their lives.

“We recognized that God was leading me in France at the same time that He was leading my family in Dominica,” Roderick said. “It was amazing to see God’s hands at work. I never told my family that I was going to church on Sabbath, but it turned out that we all were searching for God’s will. God works in mysterious ways.” 🌐

Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on September 28 to help Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School move into a much-needed larger building in Dominica. Roderick is the building’s architect, and he provided his services free of charge. He is looking forward to seeing how God will bless the project. “Our timing is not God’s timing,” he said. “All God requires from us is faithfulness. When we are faithful and obedient, God does His part.”

## Story Tips

- Show Dominica on the map. Then show France, where Roderick studied, and Dominica’s capital, Roseau, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a new elementary school building.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Roderick: [bit.ly/Roderick-IAD](https://bit.ly/Roderick-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.” The Thirteenth Sabbath project illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults,” and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, visit: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- The indigenous population of what is now Dominica called the island Wai’tu kubuli, which means “tall is her body.”
- Britain established a small colony in Dominica in 1805 and used it as part of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade until 1833, when Britain abolished the slave trade. Dominica remained a semi-independent colony until 1978, when the Commonwealth of Dominica was granted independence as a republic.
- Dominica’s name is pronounced with emphasis on the third syllable: daa-muh-NEE-kuh.

By Andrew McChesney

# Struggle Over Faith

DOMINICA | July 20

Zarrah



**T**wenty-one-year-old Zarrah has considered herself a Seventh-day Adventist for as long as she can remember. She did not grow up in an Adventist home. She did not go to an Adventist school. But her babysitter was an Adventist and started taking her to church when she was 3.

Zarrah loved going to church with the babysitter, whom she called Auntie Freda.

At church, she learned Bible stories and memorized Bible verses.

When she came home, she recited the Bible verses to her mother.

Mother didn't know any Bible verses by heart, and she was impressed to hear the little girl repeating the Bible.

She encouraged Zarrah to keep going to the Adventist church.

But when Zarrah reached school age, Mother enrolled the girl in an elementary school operated by her own church. That was when trouble broke out.

Zarrah immediately balked at a school rule requiring children to recite a prayer to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The school principal was surprised. But when Mother explained that Zarrah went to the Adventist church, the principal didn't

insist that she recite the prayer. The principal even told the teachers not to trouble Zarrah over her beliefs.

Four years passed.

But then a new teacher scolded Zarrah when she saw that all the children except for her were reciting the prayer at a school event.

"Why aren't you doing it?" she asked the 8-year-old girl.

"I'm a Seventh-day Adventist," the girl said.

The teacher didn't care about the reason.

"The school rule is that you should recite the prayer," she said. "You have to abide by the school rules."

Zarrah started to cry.

When she got home, she told Mother about what had happened.

Then Mother became upset. She called the principal and, the next day, came to school to talk to her.

Now it was the principal's turn to become upset. She spoke sternly with the teacher.

The teacher stopped scolding Zarrah, but she found other ways to make her life difficult. If Zarrah raised her hand to answer a question in class, the teacher refused to acknowledge it. The teacher wouldn't call on Zarrah even if her hand





was the only one that was raised.

Zarrah felt very uncomfortable going to school and seeing the teacher.

She told Mother what was happening, and Mother decided to transfer her to an Adventist school.

But when Mother called Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, she learned that there was no room for any new students. Mother refused to take no for an answer. She explained the situation to the principal, and Zarrah was accepted as a new student.

Even though Zarrah didn't have any friends when she arrived at the school, she was happy. She could worship as she believed.

A year passed, and Zarrah gave her heart to Jesus in baptism at the school. Then her mother and older sister were also baptized.

Today, Zarrah is a teacher at the Adventist school.

“One of my goals is to help children who struggle in situations similar to mine,” she said.

At home, she also follows the example of Aunt Freda. She takes a 7-year-old neighbor girl to church every Sabbath, and the girl returns home to tell her mother everything that she has learned. The mother is impressed and wants her daughter to keep going to church with Zarrah.

Zarrah said that her experience is evidence of God's faithfulness.

“My testimony is that when you stand up for God, He will stand up for you,” she said. “Also, it is important that you know Jesus for yourself. No matter how small you are, if you are called by God, don't decline that call. Put Jesus first.” 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School move to a new, larger building in Dominica's capital, Roseau. The school, which was full when Zarrah's mother wanted to enroll her, remains crowded and in need of a larger facility. Thank you for planning a generous offering to help make that possible.

## Story Tips

- Show Dominica on the map. Then show Dominica's capital, Roseau, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct an elementary school.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Zarrah: [bit.ly/Zarrah-IAD](https://bit.ly/Zarrah-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
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## Fast Facts

- Dominica is home to the largest indigenous population in the East Caribbean. Around 3,000 Kalinago (called "Caribs" by colonists) make Dominica their home.
- Dominica's national symbol is the critically endangered sisserou parrot (*Amazona imperialis*), and it appears on the national flag. In 2019, it was estimated there were only about 50 mature individuals left in the wild.
- For many years the Dominican economy was dependent on banana exports, but recently the government has begun promoting the country as an ecotourism destination.
- Cricket is a popular sport on Dominica, and the island competes in test cricket as part of the West Indies cricket team.

# Jerry the Time Capsule

DOMINICA | July 27

Antonia



On the first day of school, Teacher Antonia stood before her third-grade class with a cookie box wrapped in festive white, pink, black, and gray wrapping paper.

The children watched curiously as the teacher passed out yellow and green pieces of paper.

"This is a time capsule," Antonia said, pointing to the box.

Motioning to the papers, she added, "On your paper, write your name and something that you would like to pray about this school term."

She said the papers would be placed in the box, and the box would be sealed. At the end of the year, the class would throw a party to open the box to see how God had answered their prayers.

The children excitedly wrote down their prayer requests at Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School.

Antonia said she also would put a prayer request in the box.

"This is serious for me," she said. "I believe God can change my life."

After the time capsule was sealed, a boy's hand shot up.

"Can we name the time capsule?" he asked, excitedly.

When the teacher nodded her head, he exclaimed, "Jerry, the time capsule!"

All the children burst into applause and cheered.

Then the boy prayed over the box.

"Thank You for Jerry," he said.

The time capsule was a teaching tool that Antonia had heard about from a teacher from another Adventist school just a few days before the opening of the new school year in Dominica. She liked the idea of incorporating a spiritual lesson into the social activities that usually marked the first day of school at Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School.

As the weeks and months passed, children took turns holding Jerry and praying.

"Help us to achieve our goals," one prayed.

"Make our wishes come true," prayed another.



When guests like the school principal, pastors, and church leaders visited the classroom, the children asked them to hold the box and pray for their requests.

Halfway through the school year, a little girl waved her hand in the air.

“Miss! Miss! I have something to say,” she said.

She said God had answered her prayer request. She had written on her piece of paper that she wanted to read better, and now she could.

Then a number of little hands shot up. Children spoke about praying for high grades and achieving them.

Two children said they had been able to spend time with their fathers, who lived on other islands.

A girl said she had prayed for a baby brother or sister, and an aunt who had a baby had moved to a house close to her home.

When the children’s praises ended, Antonia bowed her head and offered a prayer of thanksgiving. She quoted from Mark 9:23.

“As Jesus said, ‘All things are possible to him who believes,’” she said. 🌐

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Primary School expand in a new and larger building. The school, which opened in 1976, consistently ranks in the top 10 list of the 62 elementary schools in Dominica. But the school building is crowded with 160 children from kindergarten to fourth grade. Several blocks away, another 40 fifth and sixth graders study in a makeshift classroom in a separate building. More parents want to send their children to the school, but there simply isn’t room. Thank you for planning a generous offering on September 28.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Show Dominica on the map. Then show Dominica’s capital, Roseau, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct an elementary school.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Antonia: [bit.ly/Teacher-Antonia](https://bit.ly/Teacher-Antonia).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
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## Fast Facts

- Dominica is located in what is referred to as the hurricane region and is especially vulnerable to hurricanes.
- Dominica is the last major stronghold of the critically endangered Lesser Antillean iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*).
- Dominica has only four amphibians, and one of the largest in the world, called the mountain chicken, is only found in Dominica and Montserrat.
- The Boiling Lake is a flooded fumarole in a volcanic crater on the island of Dominica. It is 200–250 feet (60–75 m) across and is the second-largest hot lake in the world.
- The vast majority of Dominicans are of African descent.

# Carjacked!

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO | August 3



Beverly

**A**s Beverly got out of her car at about 11:30 at night, someone pushed her back in. He pushed her across the driver's seat and into the passenger's seat. At the same time, someone got into the back seat and put a gun to Beverly's neck.

"Now we're going for a ride," said the man in the driver's seat.

He backed the car out of Beverly's yard on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, and the trio rode in silence.

Then Beverly spoke up.

"Are you going to kill me?" she said.

"If you don't see us, you won't be killed," the driver said.

Beverly had seen that the driver was wearing a hoodie. She didn't look at him again.

"Do you know how long we have been following you?" the driver asked.

Beverly didn't answer. Two and a half hours had passed since she had left the University of the Southern Caribbean, the Seventh-day Adventist institution where she worked and simultaneously was studying for a master's degree in psychology. She had driven a university friend home, and the two had stopped to eat on the way. After dropping off her friend, she drove to her own house.

"Who was that girl you dropped off?" the driver said.

"A classmate," Beverly said.

"We have been following you for a long time," the driver said.

The man in the backseat pulled Beverly's hand behind the seat and tried to twist off her wedding ring.

"Leave it," the driver said.

The man released Beverly's hand.

The driver asked Beverly if she had heard about a recent series of murders on the island. He said that a friend had been killed, and he planned to use Beverly's car to get revenge.

"Can you let me out of the car?"

Beverly asked.

"No, you're going with us," he said.

But a moment later he seemed to change his mind.

"Do you have someone we could call?" he said.

"My husband."

"Call him and see if he will pick you up."

Somehow, the man in the backseat had gotten hold of Beverly's purse. He opened it, took out Beverly's cellphone, and handed it to her.

Beverly called her husband, but no one answered.

The man in the backseat snatched back the cellphone and expressed doubt that she had called her husband. "She doesn't even have this number saved on speed dial," he said.

The night-time drive continued.



## Story Tips

- Show Trinidad and Tobago on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Beverly: [bit.ly/Beverly-IAD](https://bit.ly/Beverly-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).

“I’m feeling scared,” Beverly said. “Can I play a CD?”

But when she pressed play, there was no CD in the player. She couldn’t understand why. That morning, she had listened to Christian music as she had driven to the university. She had sung along to the song, “Jesus, take the wheel.”

Now Beverly wondered if the disc might have fallen to the floor. She felt down with a hand and found a disc. “It’s here on the floor,” she said. “Let me put it in.”

A song began to play. It was not the disc that Beverly wanted. She didn’t know where this disc had come from. Someone sang, “Jehovah, I trust in You.”

The man in the back groaned.

The driver was all business. He said, “We’re going to change your license plate, and tomorrow the police will find your car.”

He wanted to let Beverly go. But Beverly didn’t want to be dropped off penniless in the dark. “I don’t have any money,” she said. “How will I get home?”

The driver told his partner to give Beverly some money.

“How much? \$20?” the partner said.

“I have \$1,000 in my purse in the back,” Beverly said.

That day, she had withdrawn her savings from the bank and was taking it home to make a major purchase. She was sure that the man in the backseat had found the money, and she wanted the driver to know about it.

“Give her \$100,” the driver said.

Beverly received the money, the car stopped, and she was ordered out. Then she crossed the road and hailed a taxi, which took her home.

To this day, Beverly does not know why God allowed the terrible ordeal. But as she has looked back on what happened, it seems like God was trying to get her attention, saying, “Trust Me with your life.”

For one thing, the morning before the carjacking, she had sung, “Jesus, take the wheel.” But then she had spent the whole

day as she had spent many other days, seeking to control all the details of her life without God’s help.

This also was the third time that she had lost a car. The first time, her car was stolen in front of her house. The second time, her car was destroyed in an accident.

It seemed more than a coincidence that, riding home in the taxi after the carjacking, a song had played on the taxi’s speakers with the words, “How many times must I pass you through the same things to show you how much I love you?”

The police never found Beverly’s car. But she is not complaining. She said the carjacking was a turning point in her life. Now she has decided to trust God in all areas of her life. “Many people whose cars are stolen are killed,” she said. “I don’t know why I’m alive. As Christians, we need to trust God in every circumstance.” 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Trinidad and at the University of the Southern Caribbean, which received part of a 2018 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to build a university church. The university, where Beverly works today, also received part of a 2021 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to open a center of influence to train missionaries. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings that help teach people to trust God in Trinidad and around the world.

By Andrew McChesney

# “I Need You”

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO | August 10



## Faith

At home alone at night, 11-year-old Faith stopped sewing the button back onto the shirt of her school uniform. She picked up a pair of sharp scissors and slowly cut her arms until blood came out. Her head grew light, and she thought she was going to faint.

Faith's life started going into a downward spiral a few months earlier when Mother underwent an emergency operation. As Mother recovered in the hospital, the girl was left at home alone for six months on the Caribbean island of Trinidad.

Usually, older siblings or neighbors step in to help in such a situation. But Faith didn't have any brothers or sisters. The neighbors didn't know that she was at home alone, and she didn't think to tell them.

Her father, who lived elsewhere and wasn't involved in her life, visited once or twice a week.

"How are you doing?" he asked every time.

"I'm fine," Faith always replied.

Sometimes he gave her money, and then he left. Faith didn't tell him about her life. She didn't think that he would understand.

On her own, Faith learned to cook rice and beans. When they ran out, she lived on bread, butter, and cheese that she bought

with Father's money and the meager funds that Mother had left at home. She taught herself to sew so she could repair her clothes.

During the day, she attended an all-girls' school. She had been the target of bullying before, but the problem grew worse after Mother's hospitalization. The girls taunted Faith about her weight, looks, and intelligence. At first, Faith responded kindly, hoping that they would become friends. But nothing seemed to change. Her self-esteem evaporated, and she began to hate herself.

Once, she was able to visit Mother when someone gave her a car ride to the hospital, located 30 minutes away. Mother looked so frail, pale, and lifeless. When Faith saw her, she burst into tears. She wanted to tell Mother about the bullying, but she couldn't.

At school, the bullying escalated. One day, a girl said, "You should kill yourself. Then everybody would be happy."

Faith believed it. She thought she deserved to be insulted. She thought that she didn't deserve love, friends, or anything nice. She began to harm herself. She starved herself. She grew long nails and scratched her body until she bled. Then she turned to razor blades, knives, and scissors. She wanted to feel something, anything. Her grades dropped from B's to F's.

Then came the night that she decided to commit suicide with the scissors.

As she grew dizzy, she heard a voice in her head. It was Mother's voice. She hadn't heard the voice in a long time.

"I need you," the voice said. "I need you



more than anyone else, even if no one else needs you.”

At that moment, Faith decided not to kill herself. She would live for Mother. She forced herself to get up and bandage her arms.

The next day, the teacher noticed the bandages and spoke with Faith privately.

“Are you OK?” she asked.

Faith started to cry and scream. Everything that had built up inside over all those months came out. The teacher began to cry.

“Have you been eating?” she asked.

“No, I’ve been starving myself.”

“Are you sleeping?”

“No, I can’t sleep without my mother.”

From that day, the teacher took Faith under her wing. Under her watchful eye, the bullying subsided and finally stopped.

Then Mother came home. It was a wonderful day! Faith told Mother everything. As she listened, Mother began to cry. Claspng Faith’s hand, she said, “Will you please promise that you will never ever hurt yourself again in any way? Promise that you will not try to take yourself away from me. I need you and love you.”

Faith, through tears, said, “I promise.”

Due to her poor grades, Faith had to repeat the same grade the next year. She was upset, but Mother said it was for the best. And it was. She left her old classmates behind and was surrounded by new classmates who loved and respected her. She made many good friends.

Mother started going to church, and she invited Faith to join her. Neither had gone to church for years. Faith wasn’t interested at first because she thought it would be boring. But she went and enjoyed the singing and the choir. So, she kept going and hasn’t stopped. Both she and Mother have given their hearts to Jesus in baptism.

Looking back, she believes God saved her life by sending her the voice of her mother in her hour of need. “I can’t explain it,” she said. “I was home alone, and I know that I heard my mother’s voice from inside my thoughts. I guess she was the person who I needed the most at the time. It must have been the Holy

## Story Tips

- Show Trinidad and Tobago on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Faith: [bit.ly/Faith-IAD](https://bit.ly/Faith-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).

## Mission Post

- The first specific positive response to Adventist teachings in Trinidad came through a copy of Ellen White’s book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, which was purchased by a minister from another island and eventually came into the possession of an individual who became one of the first Sabbath-keepers on the island.

Spirit. He knew what I needed.”

To young people who also face bullying, she said, “If I could have a time machine and I could go back to the age of 11 years old, I would tell myself, ‘You’re going to be OK. Everything is going to be just fine. You’re going to meet a lot of really nice people who are going to love you and appreciate you just as you are. All you have to do is put God first and you will be OK.’” 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Trinidad and the missional challenges there. Part of a 2018 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering went to build a church at the University of the Southern Caribbean, which is located near Faith’s home. Adventist Mission met with Faith to hear her story at the university. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter that will help bring hope to young people in the Inter-American Division.

By Andrew McChesney

# “Come Back to God”



COLOMBIA | August 17

## Wilinton

When the song ended, Wilinton recited his favorite Bible verse. It was John 3:16.

That day marked the beginning of a new friendship.

Over the next three years, Jaime kept visiting Wilinton and telling him, “Please, come back to God.”

Wilinton always had the same reply. “Yes,” he said. “Don’t worry. I will.” But he didn’t.

Jaime offered Bible studies, but Wilinton wasn’t interested. He liked Jaime, but he didn’t want to spend time with God.

Still, he defended the seventh-day Sabbath to his wife and two sons, who went to church on Sundays.

“You don’t need to go to that church,” he said. “It’s a waste of time. If you want to spend your time wisely, you should go to a Seventh-day Adventist church.”

As Wilinton kept drinking without a steady income, he sank deeply into debt.

One evening, Jamie arrived at Wilinton’s house with an Adventist pastor and several other church members. The front door was open, and they entered the house before Wilinton knew it.

The pastor gave a five-minute sermon, but Wilinton didn’t hear the pastor speaking. He felt like he was hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. The sermon touched his heart.

Then Jamie invited him to evangelistic meetings that had just begun at the Adventist church.

“Your mother asked me to tell you, ‘Come to God,’” he said.

After the visitors left, Wilinton decided to

**W**ilinton drank alcohol for the first time after church one Sabbath in Bogotá, Colombia. He was 14, and he gave in to pressure from friends.

After the first drink, he drank nearly every day for the next 24 years.

Wilinton moved out of his parents’ house when he was 17. Then he moved in with his girlfriend and lived with her for 21 years. They had two sons. He drank at every opportunity. Because of his drinking, he couldn’t hold down a job.

One day, a friend of his father came to his house and found him drunk.

“Wilinton, I know your father,” said the friend, whose name was Jaime. “You can return to God.”

“Are you an Adventist?” Wilinton asked, his speech slurred.

“Yes, I’m an Adventist,” Jaime said.

“If you are an Adventist, sing to me Hymn No. 500,” Wilinton said. The hymn was “Far Beyond the Sun.”

Jaime sang the hymn, and Wilinton wept.





## Story Tips

- Show Colombia on the map. Then show Bogotá, where Wilinton lives, and the cities of Buenaventura and Puerto Tejada, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open centers of influence for at-risk children.
- Pronounce Wilinton as: WILL-ing-ton.
- Pronounce Jaime as: hi-MEE.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Wilinton: [bit.ly/Wilinton-IAD](http://bit.ly/Wilinton-IAD).
- Read more about Wilinton next week.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](http://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives." The evangelistic meetings illustrate Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities, across the 10/40 Window, among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions," and the Thirteenth Sabbath projects illustrate Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, visit: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

stay at home with his family.

Then his 12-year-old son came up to him.

"Father, you told me that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the true church," he said. "Please take me to that church."

The words broke Wilinton's heart. He decided to take his family to the evangelistic meetings at the Adventist church.

That evening's presentation surprised Wilinton. He thought that it was about him. He thought, "How does this pastor know so much about me?" Then he began to weep. He thought about his alcoholism and his debts. His life of sin weighed heavily on him.

When the pastor made an altar call, Wilinton said to himself, "I can't go to the front. When I leave, I'm going to go to the bar to drink."

He decided not to go forward.

But before he realized it, he was standing at the front with 17 other people.

He prayed silently, "God, I can't be here. You know that I'm going to drink tonight."

After the meeting, he went to the bar. As he drank, he reflected on the sermon. He felt something inside him was different.

Three weeks passed, and he kept drinking. Every time he drank, he sensed that the Holy Spirit was saying, "I will help you to stop drinking if you make a firm decision to quit."

On the fourth week, he told himself, "I can't keep doing this. I have to make a decision, either for God or for alcohol."

At the end of the week, on Saturday night, he chose God. He prayed, "God, I don't want to drink anymore." In the morning, he prayed again, saying, "God, help me today, one day at a time, to stop drinking."

To his surprise, he didn't drink all that day. It was his first day of victory since he started drinking at the age of 14. He thought with surprise, "I thought that I would never stop drinking, but God has helped me."

When Jaime heard the news, he was delighted. Wilinton was coming back to God. 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Colombia and missional challenges

there. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open two centers of influence to help children who are at risk of alcohol and drug abuse in Colombia. The centers of influence will be in the cities of Buenaventura and Puerto Tejada. Thank you for planning a generous offering on September 28.

By Andrew McChesney

# In Paul's Footsteps



COLOMBIA | August 24

## Wilinton

“I have an idea,” he said.

“I also have an idea,” Jaime said. “Tell me your idea first.”

“I think that God is telling me to be a light in those bars where there is only darkness,” Wilinton said.

“Wow!” Jaime exclaimed. “That’s the same idea that I had.”

It seemed like more than a coincidence. The two men agreed that the Holy Spirit must be calling Wilinton to help alcoholics.

Over the next week, Wilinton invited people in bars to come to his house to study the Bible. Eleven people showed up for the first Bible study on Sabbath afternoon.

As the weeks passed, the group grew too large to meet in his home. Wilinton rented a larger house. When the group grew too large for that house, they moved to a hall. People were baptized, and the group kept growing.

Finally, Wilinton decided that the group needed to own its own place. He looked for a building to buy, but city property was expensive. As he prayed, he felt impressed to visit a bar that he had frequented from the age of 16. It seemed improbable, but if he could buy the bar, it could be remodeled into a meeting hall.

He prayed, “God, do You really want me to work for you in a bar?”

Wilinton sought out the bar owner and learned that the building was up for sale.

The owner immediately recognized Wilinton, and he was shocked to see him sober.

“Is that really you?” he asked.

**W**ilinton’s life began to change after he stopped drinking in Bogotá, Colombia.

He got a job, he began paying off his debts, and he married his common-law wife.

Then Wilinton, his wife, and their 12-year-old son decided to give their hearts to God in baptism.

A day before Wilinton’s baptism, a Seventh-day Adventist friend predicted that God had big plans for him. “You are going to be the next apostle Paul,” said the friend, Jaime. “You are going to help many people.”

It didn’t take long for Wilinton to realize that God was calling him to help alcoholics.

A month after his baptism, as he was walking to church on a Sabbath morning, he sensed a voice say, “Stop right here.”

He stopped. Looking up, he saw a city street lined with bars where he used to drink.

The voice said, “You are going to help all these people. You drank, and now you are going to help others who drink. I’ll give you opportunities, and I’ll help you not to relapse.”

At church, Wilinton sought out Jaime.



“Yes, it’s me,” Wilinton said.  
 “Do you remember how you used to come here to drink all the time?” he said.

“Yes, I remember.”

The owner shook his head in disbelief. “I know you,” he said. “I can’t believe that you have a new life.”

He named the price for the building.

Wilinton didn’t have that kind of money. He told other church members about the building, but they also didn’t have the funds.

Wilinton wasn’t discouraged. “The plans of God are perfect,” he told them. “Don’t worry. This building will be ours.”

He and the other church members started to pray and raise funds. A year later, they bought the bar and turned it into an Adventist church and center of influence.

Today, 50 people worship in the church every Sabbath. During the week, the center of influence offers life-skills classes and a program to stop drinking.

Wilinton, who is a church elder and deputy director of the center of influence, said that, through his small group, more than 15 former alcoholics have given their hearts to Jesus and been baptized. In addition, 85 people have been baptized through the new church and center of influence over the past three years.

“Now I am working for Jesus and seeking the missing,” Wilinton said. “I have decided to be like Paul, always sharing the gospel and asking God for His power to lead people to Him.”

He added, “God’s plans are perfect, and they never change.” 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Colombia and missional challenges there. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open two centers of influence to help children who are at risk of alcohol and drug abuse in Colombia. The centers of influence will be in the cities of Buenaventura and Puerto Tejada. Thank you for planning a generous offering on September 28.

## Story Tips

- Show Colombia on the map. Then show Bogotá, where Wilinton lives, and the cities of Buenaventura and Puerto Tejada, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open centers of influence for at-risk children.
- Pronounce Wilinton as: WILL-ing-ton.
- Pronounce Jaime as: hi-MEE.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Wilinton: [bit.ly/Wilinton-IAD](https://bit.ly/Wilinton-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples,” and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.” The Thirteenth Sabbath projects illustrate Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults,” and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- The 1980s and 1990s were a period of brutal political violence in Colombia. In some places, church members and pastors were kidnapped, tortured, or forced to flee their homes.

# Bar Bought With Prayer



COLOMBIA | August 31

Adriana

**A**driana was adept at planting churches in Colombia. The 35-year-old wife and mother planted six churches over 15 years, and she was ready to help plant church No. 7 in a poor neighborhood in the south of Colombia's sprawling capital, Bogotá.

But no one seemed to be able to find an affordable building in a prime location.

The seed for the church was planted when Wilinton, a former alcoholic in the neighborhood, gave his heart to Jesus and started a small Bible-study group in his home. The group outgrew his home and moved several times. Now 50 people were worshipping together every Sabbath, and it was time for them to have a church building of their own.

Adriana belonged to another church that wanted to help Wilinton's congregation plant the church. She looked at five buildings and found nothing.

Then Wilinton suggested a bar that he had frequented before he got baptized. The bar

was right in the middle of the neighborhood, and it was up for sale. But the asking price was too high.

Adriana met with the bar owner. She explained that church members wanted to buy the building but didn't have the funds.

"Could you please wait for a year while we raise the money?" she asked.

The owner didn't want to wait, and he shook his head.

Adriana begged him to reconsider, but he refused. However, he added, "If your plan is from God, this building will be yours."

Adriana and other church members prayed to God for help, and they started raising money.

Then a potential buyer came to take a look at the building. He liked what he saw, and he agreed to buy it.

Church members wondered if they would lose the building. They prayed for God's will to be done.

The potential buyer left and never



returned with the money for the building.

The building remained up for sale.

Then another buyer visited the building and offered to buy it. It looked like the sale would go through. Church members again prayed for God's will to be done, and the buyer didn't return with the money.

The bar owner couldn't understand why his building wasn't selling. He reduced the price. Then he reduced it again. But still, he couldn't find a buyer.

Adriana was convinced that God had a plan to turn the bar into a church and center of influence. The center of influence would teach life skills to people in the community and help those who were struggling with alcoholism.

Adriana visited the bar owner again.

"You won't sell this building," she said, boldly. "You will sell it to us because it will be a place that will help the community and glorify God."

A year passed, and church members had gathered enough money to buy the building at the lower asking price. A church leader visited the owner to finalize the sale.

The owner expressed relief that he could finally sell the building.

"I haven't been able to sell this building because those Adventists have been praying to buy it," he said.

Two weeks later, the building was sold to the Adventist Church. The final, reduced price was half the market value of similar buildings in the neighborhood.

Today, Adriana praises God for the new church and center of influence.

"We all prayed for this place," she said.

"When God has a plan, no one can change it." 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Colombia and missional challenges there. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open two centers of influence to help children who are at risk of alcohol and drug abuse in Colombia. Thank you for planning a generous offering on September 28.

## Story Tips

- Show Colombia on the map. Then show Bogotá, where Adriana lives, and the cities of Buenaventura and Puerto Tejada, where the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open centers of influence for at-risk children.
- Pronounce Wilinton as: WILL-ing-ton.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Adriana: [bit.ly/Adriana-IAD](https://bit.ly/Adriana-IAD).
- Know that you can read more about Wilinton last week.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, "To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives." The Thirteenth Sabbath projects illustrate Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Fact

- Colombia has the second-highest level of biodiversity in the world. Only Brazil, which is eight times the size of Colombia, has greater biodiversity.

# More Than “Hello”



COSTA RICA | September 7

Harlin

**H**arlin recognized Flor as they passed on the street. As a former police officer, Harlin knew that Flor was willing to sell anything for money to buy drugs and alcohol.

Flor also recognized Harlin. The two women lived only a block apart in a town in Costa Rica. They had exchanged greetings over the years, but never anything more.

On this day, Harlin felt a desire to say more than a simple “hello.”

“How are you?” she asked. “How’s your life?”

“Everything is bad,” Flor replied, glumly.

Harlin looked closely at the woman.

“Do you have anything to eat?” she asked.

Flor lowered her head and began to cry.

Harlin was walking to the store, and she decided to buy food for Flor.

On the way back home after the store, she stopped at Flor’s house and left a bag of rice, a bag of beans, and two pieces of chicken.

The next day, Harlin saw her church pastor outside a bank.

“I have a little food here,” the pastor said, motioning to a bag filled with rice, beans, oil, flour, and other items. “Do you know someone who needs it?”

“Yes,” Harlin said. “I have a neighbor who has nothing to eat.”

“Take this, and give it to her,” he said.

Harlin invited the pastor to go with her.

“Come with me, and you will see where she lives,” she said.

The two went to Flor’s house and gave her the food.

Flor was very grateful.

As they spoke, Harlin asked if she would like to study the Bible. Flor indicated that she would.

The next day, Harlin arrived for the Bible study with a man and three women from her church. Flor’s house was too dilapidated to meet inside, so they sat in her small front yard.

After that, the group met once a week to sing and study the Bible. Flor liked to sing, and she especially liked a song with the words, “Give me a new heart.”

Flor’s heart began to change. She stopped insulting and hitting family members and



neighbors who upset her. Her profanity-filled speech grew pure.

Two months into the Bible studies, Costa Rica's rainy season began, and the group could no longer meet in Flor's yard without getting wet.

Flor missed the weekly gatherings, and she sought out the company of church members at the Seventh-day Adventist church on Sabbath.

No one invited her to the church. She came on her own.

Two more months passed, and the church pastor asked Flor if she would like to give her heart to Jesus in baptism.

She liked the question. "Yes," she said. "No one has ever asked me if I wanted to be baptized."

A short time later, Flor sank under the waters of repentance.

Flor had a well-known reputation in town. Everyone knew her life. Townspeople had seen how it was changing, and they were amazed to see her joyfully walking home after her baptism. Person after person stopped to hug and congratulate her.

Flor was so happy! She hadn't received a hug in years.

Several months after her baptism, Flor remains a faithful Seventh-day Adventist in Costa Rica.

"I give God thanks for my new life," she said. "I'm grateful for everything that the church members do for me."

Harlin credits the Holy Spirit for the transformation in Flor's life.

She also believes that it was the Holy Spirit who prompted her to say more than "hello" on the day that Flor had no food.

"God is great," Harlin said. "There is nothing so difficult that He cannot do." 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Costa Rica and missional challenges there. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence that will share the love of Jesus with children who are at risk

## Story Tips

- Show Costa Rica on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Harlin: [bit.ly/Harlin-IAD](https://bit.ly/Harlin-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
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## Mission Post

- Costa Rica's first Adventist congregations mainly formed along the Caribbean coast, and many small congregations grew near train stops along the railroad.
- In 1928, the Costa Rica-Nicaragua Mission was established with four churches and 152 members.

of being ensnared in a life of drugs and alcohol. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on September 28.

By Andrew McChesney

# Real Treasure

COSTA RICA | September 14

Jahiquel



Jahiquel was a poor boy living in a poor family in Costa Rica. Growing up, he didn't have much of anything. But when he was 16, he started wearing a thick gold chain around his neck and gold rings on his fingers.

The neighborhood gang got suspicious. The gang leader, nicknamed "The Devil," thought Jahiquel might be dealing drugs without his consent. He instructed a gang member to contact Jahiquel via social media and ask, "Is your chain made of real gold?"

Jahiquel was proud that he owned real gold jewelry, and he sent a one-word reply, "Yes." He knew that the message had come from a gang member. He had once belonged to the gang, but he had left it to join a different gang. Now, instead of selling drugs, he was robbing homes and kidnapping people for ransom. He had bought his gold jewelry with ill-gotten gains from the gang.

Several hours later, at 7 o'clock that evening, Jahiquel saw the gang member speeding toward him on a motorcycle. Jahiquel was standing outside his grandmother's house, where he had just arrived to spend the night. He had walked over from his mother's house, where he

stayed during the day.

Sitting behind the gang member on the motorcycle was the gang member's brother. With horror, Jahiquel saw the brother raise a 9mm handgun and begin firing. He recognized the gun. He had sold it to the brother several months earlier.

In rapid succession, eight bullets pierced Jahiquel's body: two in his legs and five in his chest and stomach. He fell to the ground, terrified. He was too scared to scream or move. Thoughts filled his mind. He remembered, as a boy, being taught by a Seventh-day Adventist aunt to pray and read the Bible. He realized that he had made a mistake by participating in gangs. He prayed, "God, forgive me."

Time seemed to stand still. Then he heard the motorcycle race away. A car passed by but didn't stop. Grandmother came out of the house and bent down over Jahiquel.

A second car came by and stopped. Two people got out, placed Jahiquel inside, and took him to the hospital.

Jahiquel woke up the next day at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He was hooked up to a machine that helped him breathe. He had 23





stitches down the middle of his stomach. He learned that he had nearly died. Adventists from his aunt's church had been praying for his survival for hours. Now he was alive, and it was a miracle.

From that day, he decided to live for Jesus.

Three years later, Jahiquel is studying to become a barber. He shares his story with other young people, encouraging them to find meaning in life through God and not gangs. He urges them to fill their minds with good things and to stay close to God.

In his own life, he regrets filling his mind with garbage as a teen, and he trusts that God will fill it with good things as he spends time with the Bible. After all, the apostle Paul said, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2, NKJV).

"I want to think about good things, and I don't want to remember the past," Jahiquel said. "Now I read the Bible every morning and every night. I wake up early to pray. It's a process. I know that with God's help, I can go far."

The two brothers who attacked him were never brought to justice because he didn't reveal their identities to the police. He still lives in the same neighborhood, and he understands that turning them in would endanger him, his mother, and his grandmother.

As for his gold jewelry, he lost it all on the day of the attack. He doesn't know who took it, but he doesn't mind. He has found that real treasure can't be worn. Real treasure is who he has in his heart. 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Costa Rica and missional challenges there. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence to share the love of Jesus with children who, like Jahiquel, are at risk of being influenced by drugs and gangs in Costa Rica. Thank you for planning a generous

## Story Tips

- Show Costa Rica on the map.
- Pronounce Jahiquel as JAY-kel.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Jahiquel: [bit.ly/Jahiquel-IAD](http://bit.ly/Jahiquel-IAD).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](http://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that the Thirteenth Sabbath project to open a center of influence for troubled children in Costa Rica seeks to fulfill the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- Frank and Cora Hutchins were the first Adventist workers on the coast of the Central American Caribbean in the late 19th and early 20th century. Frank worked as a dentist, colporteur, and pastor. At that time, the most effective means of transportation through the region was by boat. Frank rented a boat for his trips around the Central American countries until he was able to buy a missionary schooner, which was named the Herald.
- An estimated 52 percent of Costa Ricans are Catholic, 25 percent are Protestant, 17 percent are of no religion, and 6 percent are "other."

offering on September 28.

By Andrew McChesney

# Praying for Three



COSTA RICA | September 21

Stephanie

**W**hen Stephanie and her future husband started talking about having a family in their native Costa Rica, they realized that they shared something in common. They both wanted to have two biological children and to adopt a third child.

Five years after their wedding, however, the couple didn't have any children. So, they decided to adopt a baby.

Costa Rica's adoption agency informed them that it wouldn't be easy. They would have to wait in a long line, and there was no guarantee that they would receive a baby. The child offered for adoption might be a teen.

A few months later, Stephanie got pregnant with a girl. Three years later, she gave birth to a boy. Nine years passed, and she and her husband remembered their desire to adopt a child. But who? When? Where? And how?

"No problem, I'll pray," Stephanie told her husband. "I'll ask God to make the child come to us instead of us searching for the child."

Stephanie prayed. Then she forgot about it. One Sabbath, Stephanie offered Bible

studies to a visitor who had showed up for the first time at church that day.

The woman agreed, saying, "Come to my house. I'm the mother of 10."

It turned out that the woman was a caregiver at an orphanage. The orphanage consisted of 15 houses with 10 children in each house. A caregiver oversaw each house.

Stephanie went to the orphanage and gave Bible studies to the caregiver and her 10 children. The caregiver gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized.

The orphanage director, seeing that the Bible studies had a positive impact on the caregiver and her work, asked Stephanie to give Bible studies in the other 14 houses at the orphanage. Stephanie took the request to the board of her church, and the church sent church members to each of the 14 houses. Stephanie was assigned to House No. 7.

Eleven-year-old Michelle lived in House No. 7.

From the first day, Michelle caught Stephanie's attention. She carried Stephanie's bag. She was attentive, and she participated in the Bible studies. The woman and the girl formed a close bond.

With permission from the orphanage, Stephanie took Michelle to evangelistic meetings, and she got baptized. Then the girl began to ask, "Why don't you adopt me?"

Stephanie thought, "Why don't I adopt



her?” At home, she told her husband about the request. The couple wondered if Michelle might be the child whom they had prayed to adopt. They asked God for confirmation.

Then Stephanie remembered an experience that had taken place three or four years earlier, long before she had met Michelle. She had invited a woman to share her personal testimony in church. The woman had been visiting various churches to tell her story about going prison, losing her six children to social services, and becoming an Adventist after listening to Adventist radio in prison. The woman had never made it to Stephanie’s church, and Stephanie had lost touch with her.

Now Stephanie wondered what had happened to the woman. She looked on social media and saw that the woman had left the Adventist church. As she scrolled down the woman’s timeline, she saw a photo of Michelle with the words, “My baby.”

Stephanie was shocked. The woman was the mother of Michelle at the orphanage.

A few days later, Stephanie saw Michelle at a birthday party at House No. 7. During the party, Michelle asked if she could borrow Stephanie’s phone, saying, “Do you want to see my mother?” When Stephanie nodded, the girl found a photo of her mother online and showed it to Stephanie. It was the woman whom Stephanie had invited to speak at her church.

For Stephanie, it was all the confirmation that she needed. She was convinced that God had sent Michelle to her family to adopt.

Stephanie spoke with the orphanage director about adoption. She assured the director that she had not known that her social-media friend was Michelle’s mother when she had first come to the orphanage. The director assured Stephanie that there would be no problem if she never contacted the mother again.

In a short time, Michelle moved into her new home. She was 12. It would take four more years for her to be officially adopted, but that didn’t matter. She was at home.

## Story Tips

- Show Costa Rica on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Michelle: [bit.ly/IAD-Michelle](http://bit.ly/IAD-Michelle).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](http://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Costa Rica means “Rich Coast” in Spanish.
- On December 1, 1948, Costa Rica abolished its army. The budget previously used for the military is now dedicated to providing health care services and education.

Today, Stephanie couldn’t be happier. Her dream has come true. She has two biological children and an adopted daughter. 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Costa Rica and missional challenges there. Next Sabbath’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence where Jesus’ love can be shared with at-risk children, including orphans.

By Andrew McChesney

# A Visitor and a Dream

13<sup>th</sup> SABBATH | September 28



Erickson

*Erickson has a story that few people have heard. He told part of the story to his mother. He told the whole story to his wife. His three young daughters have never heard the story. His late father never heard the story.*

*Erickson, who is a pastor and Seventh-day Adventist leader in Costa Rica, has been reluctant to share his story over fears that people wouldn't believe him. But after hearing a number of incredible testimonies as he helped Adventist Mission collect stories for this Mission quarterly in Costa Rica, he told his story to Adventist Mission. So, this Sabbath, you will be among the first to hear his whole story. The story changed his life. The story caused him to become a Seventh-day Adventist.*

**T**here were only two schools in the town where Erickson grew up in Guatemala: a public school and an Adventist school.

Father sent Erickson to public school for first grade, but the boy didn't see his teacher for the entire year. The teacher was in training, the school principal explained. The principal sometimes came to the first-grade

classroom to hand out assignments. But no one taught reading, math, or spelling to the children that year. Fortunately, Erickson had learned those subjects in kindergarten, so he was able to complete the occasional homework assignments. But many of his classmates failed first grade.

Father was disgusted with the public school system after that year, and he moved his son to the Adventist school for second grade. That was where he learned about God.

Before going to sleep at night, Erickson knelt beside his bed to pray.

"God, help me to make good decisions in my life," he prayed. "Help me in school. Help my family and especially my father."

The family was poor. Father worked as a bus driver far from home, and Erickson only saw him a few times every year. Despite their poverty, Father always managed to find funds to pay for Erickson's education at the Adventist school.

As Erickson prayed at night, he wished that he could see Father more often.

"Protect the bus and Mother so she can earn some money for our needs," he prayed. "Amen."

One night, when Erickson was 11 or 12, he prayed and then stretched out on his bed in the dark room. His eyes were open, but he



couldn't see anything in the dark.

Suddenly, a bright but soft light appeared on the ceiling above his head. It was not the light bulb; Erickson had turned it off before praying. The light lit the room. Erickson wasn't scared. He felt peaceful and relaxed.

Suddenly, a glowing being darted from the light to the floor. Erickson saw arms, legs, a body, and a head. But he couldn't see eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, or any other facial features. The head was surrounded by a soft glow. The being knelt in the same place where the boy had just prayed beside the bed. He put his hands together and bowed his head.

Erickson watched, wondering what would happen next.

Erickson's prayers usually lasted five or 10 minutes, but this prayer ended much more quickly. The being prayed for 60 to 90 seconds. Then he stood up and put one hand on Erickson's head and the other on his chest. Joy filled Erickson's heart. He imagined that he was seeing Jesus.

The being didn't say anything. After touching the boy's head and chest for a few seconds, he rose back up to the soft light, still shining on the ceiling. Then the light went out, and the bedroom plunged back into darkness.

Peace and calm flooded over Erickson. He sensed only goodness in the room. He quickly fell asleep.

The next day, Erickson told Mother about the experience. He felt closer to Jesus than ever before.

But that wasn't the end of the story.

Several months later, Erickson had a dream about the Sabbath. He had attended a church on Sunday since he was a small child, and he continued to go to make his father happy. But after he had enrolled in the Adventist school, he also had started to go to the Adventist church on Sabbath.

In the dream, Erickson was standing in his father's church during a worship service. Suddenly, statues of saints that lined the walls of the church began to move. Their arms moved, and their legs moved.

## Story Tips

- Show Costa Rica and Guatemala on the map.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: [bit.ly/iad-2024](https://bit.ly/iad-2024).
- Know that the Thirteenth Sabbath project to open a center of influence for troubled children in Costa Rica seeks to fulfill the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Before 13th Sabbath

- Remind everyone that their mission offerings are gifts to spread God's Word around the world and that one-fourth of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help six projects in the Inter-American Division. The projects are listed on page 3 and on the back cover.
- 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. Alternatively, children and adults can act out the story.
- Before or after the story, use a map to show the countries in the Inter-American Division — Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, and Mexico — that will receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. You can download a mission map with the projects on Facebook at [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).

Laughing, they chased the terrified boy around the church. Erickson could see other worshippers in the church, but they acted like nothing was out of the normal.

Abruptly, Erickson saw a familiar bright but soft light at the door of the church. It was the same light that he had seen in his bedroom several months earlier.

Erickson felt relieved. He sensed Jesus was near and that help was on the way.

Then the being who had prayed in Erickson's room emerged from the light at the church door. He took the boy by the hand and led him out of the church. Again, the boy could see arms, legs, a body, and a head, but he couldn't make out the facial features.

Once outside, the being stood between Erickson and the church. He didn't say a single word. Instead, he pointed a finger toward the church and then shook it, cautioning the boy not to worship there anymore.

The next morning, Erickson didn't tell Mother about the dream. He was afraid that she would tell Father. Father wanted him to become a priest, and he was afraid of Father's reaction.

But after the dream, Erickson never worshipped again on Sunday. He sensed that Jesus was guiding him on a path of righteousness, and he wanted to follow Him. Father, who only went to church on Christmas and Easter, never asked the boy to go back to his church.

About a year after the dream, Erickson decided to give his heart to Jesus and get baptized. He was 13 when he joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Today, Erickson Bala is a pastor and church leader who oversees mission outreach in his homeland of Costa Rica. He decided to break his silence about his past as

## Fast Facts

- Nearly 90 percent of the butterfly species of Central America can be found in Costa Rica. The country is home to about 18 percent of the world's butterflies.
- In 2012, the Costa Rican government gave special recognition to Calypso music as part of the country's cultural and historical identity.
- Rice and beans are included in nearly every Costa Rican meal, especially breakfast. The national dish of Costa Rica is gallo pinto, which means "spotted rooster," and consists of rice and beans stir-fried together in a pan to create a speckled appearance.

a reminder this Thirteenth Sabbath that God is active in mission in the Inter-American Division, which includes Costa Rica and Guatemala. He especially wants people to know that God is actively seeking the hearts of children and young people, including those who will be impacted by today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Part of the offering will help open a center of influence to share Jesus' love with at-risk children in Costa Rica. Other Thirteenth Sabbath projects include two centers of influence to reach at-risk children in Colombia, two centers of influence to reach upper-class people in Mexico, and the construction of a large elementary school in Dominica. Thank you for your generous offering today.

By Andrew McChesney

## Future 13th Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering next quarter will support three projects in the North American Division:

- Center of influence for Alaska Natives, Bethel, Alaska, U.S.A.
- Urban life center and church plant, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.
- Mission outreach for 2025 General Conference Session, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.

# Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free *Mission Spotlight* video, featuring video reports from around the Inter-American Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](http://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

## Online Information

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

Colombia: government website	<a href="http://www.gov.co">www.gov.co</a>
Smartraveller	<a href="http://bit.ly/SmartTrav_Colombia">bit.ly/SmartTrav_Colombia</a>
Colombia Travel	<a href="http://bit.ly/ColTrav">bit.ly/ColTrav</a>
Costa Rica: government website	<a href="http://bit.ly/CR_Embassy">bit.ly/CR_Embassy</a>
US News & World Report	<a href="http://bit.ly/USNWR_CR">bit.ly/USNWR_CR</a>
Rough Guide	<a href="http://bit.ly/RG_CostaRica">bit.ly/RG_CostaRica</a>
Dominica: government website	<a href="http://bit.ly/DominicaGov">bit.ly/DominicaGov</a>
Discover Dominica	<a href="http://bit.ly/Discover_Dominica">bit.ly/Discover_Dominica</a>
National Geographic	<a href="http://bit.ly/NatGeo_Dominica">bit.ly/NatGeo_Dominica</a>
Trinidad: government website	<a href="http://bit.ly/TrinidadGovt">bit.ly/TrinidadGovt</a>
Lonely Planet	<a href="http://bit.ly/LP_Trinidad">bit.ly/LP_Trinidad</a>
Visit Trinidad	<a href="http://bit.ly/Visit_Trinidad">bit.ly/Visit_Trinidad</a>

## Seventh-day Adventist

Inter-American Division	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA-IAD">bit.ly/SDA-IAD</a>
Caribbean Union Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/IAD_CUC">bit.ly/IAD_CUC</a>
North Colombian Union Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA_NCUC">bit.ly/SDA_NCUC</a>
South Caribbean Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA_SCC">bit.ly/SDA_SCC</a>
South-Central Costa Rica Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/IAD_SCCRC">bit.ly/IAD_SCCRC</a>
University of the Southern Caribbean (Trinidad)	<a href="http://bit.ly/IAD_USC">bit.ly/IAD_USC</a>

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Determine a goal for your class's weekly mission offering. Multiply it by 14, allowing a double goal for the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will be collected on September 28. Remind church members that their regular weekly mission offerings help the missionary work of the world church, and that one-quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in the Inter-American Division. On September 21, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage church members to double or triple their normal mission giving on the upcoming Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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AMsda.org/A2431

# youth & adult MISSION

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**Mission** (ISSN 0190-4108) is produced and copyrighted © 2024 by the Office of Adventist Mission, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.

Printed in U.S.A.

Third Quarter 2024

Volume 113, Number 3

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## INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

UNION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
División	1	0	140	0
Atlantic Caribbean	85	5	33,130	516,000
Belize	102	36	487,744	431,000
Caribbean	636	93	248,616	3,873,000
Central Mexican	255	158	89,061	47,847,462
Chiapas Mexican	1,433	1,837	278,276	6,383,667
Cuban	348	152	38,303	11,175,000
Dominican	949	518	339,165	10,594,000
Dutch Caribbean	39	5	10,119	282,000
East Venezuela	572	178	181,799	13,100,269
El Salvador	808	195	193,002	6,526,000
French Antilles-Guiana	151	22	30,183	1,074,000
Guatemala	1,054	259	200,227	18,441,000
Haitian	656	558	488,581	11,541,000
Honduras	476	230	79,174	9,444,000
Inter-Oceanic Mexican	1,846	1,428	209,912	22,111,301
Jamaica	699	32	329,718	2,816,000
North Colombian	1,039	537	136,319	23,072,374
North Mexican	726	384	135,804	45,668,962
Panama	391	236	97,309	4,375,000
Puerto Rican	312	8	33,412	2,828,000
South Central American	546	319	75,416	11,822,000
South Colombian	774	323	159,517	27,869,626
Southeast Mexican	613	609	85,544	6,748,608
West Venezuela	683	286	172,983	15,965,731
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>15,194</b>	<b>8,408</b>	<b>3,694,454</b>	<b>304,506,000</b>

## PROJECTS

- Center of influence to reach upper class, Xalapa, Mexico
- Center of influence to reach upper class, Oaxaca, Mexico
- Center of influence for troubled children, Limón province, Costa Rica
- Center of influence for troubled children, Buenaventura, Colombia
- Center of influence for troubled children, Puerto Tejada, Colombia
- Ebenezer Elementary School, Roseau, Dominica