

September/24



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Stories From Africa

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From Persecutor to "Paul" - by GOE William Wol Adewun

In the city of Warrap, South Sudan, Manut, a staunch follower of his family's traditional idol worship, was furious when three of his sons denounced the family shrines and embraced the Adventist message. He warned them that if they continued attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he would disown them and expel them from his house. Despite his threats, his sons remained steadfast in their faith.

Manut's anger led to severe persecution of his sons. He beat them daily, even striking his youngest son on the head, and relentlessly hunted them from one church to another every Sabbath. Despite this harsh treatment, his sons did not waver in their faith and all three were baptized. This act of faith only intensified Manut's persecution.

As the situation worsened, the sons sought refuge with other Seventh-day Adventist members. They would occasionally return home to help their mother with chores but always left before their father returned. Their mother sympathized with their faith but feared openly professing it due to Manut's threats.

In December 2019, a Bible Conference for the youth was held at Warrap Central SDA Church. His sons prayed fervently for their father to attend the conference.

They invited him, saying, "We invite you to come to the conference and see for yourself what has taken your sons from you." Initially, Manut refused but later decided to attend, curious about what had caused the rift between him and his sons.

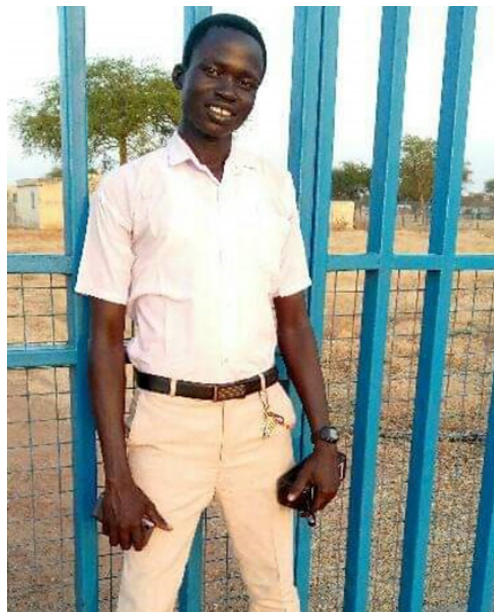
On the first day of the conference, Manut sat at a distance, his face filled with anger. However, as the presentation progressed, he began to smile and moved closer to the congregation. By the second day, he was sitting among the attendees, enjoying the presentations. On the third day, he raised his hand and asked to speak. He confessed, "I have now realized that I have sinned against God and my children. I can't imagine how I mistreated my

children because of this message. My question is, If I believe, will God accept me since I have sinned against Him?" The Gospel Outreach Evangelist, assured him that if he truly believed, God would accept and forgive him!

Manut joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church and was baptized nine months later. His wife, who had been afraid to join due to persecution, also joined, along with the rest of their children. The entire family became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Manut established a small group that met every Sabbath under a tree near his home to share the word of God. Some of his neighbors joined, and others were in the process of joining. Manut passionately preached and shared the good news with everyone he met. He adopted the name "Paul," likening himself to the apostle who transformed from a persecutor to a promoter of the gospel. "God is amazing, merciful, and compassionate. He wants to save everyone by His grace. Let us pray for those who persecute God's children unknowingly to believe, just as my sons prayed for me," Manut said.

This story of transformation and faith continues to inspire many in the community, demonstrating the power of prayer and the grace of God



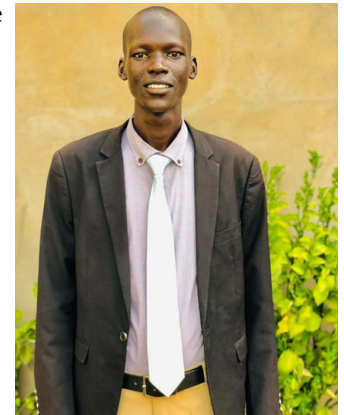
Simon, an assistant to the pastor of a Pentecostal church, was deeply moved when he encountered a Bible verse about the seventh-day Sabbath being holy. This verse, found in Matthew 24:20, states, "Pray that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath." Simon pondered this and continued his Bible studies. One day, during a church service, the pastor attempted to explain this verse, but Simon was not convinced by his interpretation. Simon questioned why Jesus emphasized the Sabbath, causing confusion among the congregation as the pastor struggled to provide a satisfactory explanation.

Despite their confusion, Simon and others continued attending church services every Sunday. This continued until a Gospel Outreach Evangelist from the Adventist church visited their village, Anyuop-jang. The missionary conducted a two-week evangelistic series and established a small group of Seventh-day Adventist believers who met every Sabbath for Bible study and fellowship. Simon and 15 others decided to join this group. After several months of

Bible study, they were baptized by Pastor William and officially joined the Adventist church.

Simon's journey inspired many Pentecostal church members in Anyuop-jang. As a result, a significant number of Pentecostal Christians began joining the Adventist church. Now, over 30 Seventh-day Adventists gather every Sabbath to worship, despite some opposition from Pentecostal church leaders. Simon remains a beacon of hope and inspiration, encouraging others to explore their faith.

Let's continue to pray for the Anyuop-jang Seventh-day Adventist Small Group to grow by God's grace. "We believe it will become a larger church community," Simon said.



Prayer for a Stolen Bike- by GOE Madit Deng Yel



Last week on Sunday, May 22, 2023, I experienced a surprising turn of events. After enjoying a meal at a restaurant, I stepped out to wash my hands, only to find my bike missing from where I had parked it. Despite the shock, I chose not to panic. I believed that everything happens for a reason and trusted that God had a plan.

Walking home, I reflected on how essential that bike was to my daily life. I couldn't help but feel a mix of regret and hope. Once home, I went to my secret room and knelt in prayer. "Oh Father," I prayed, "You know how important that bike is to me. Please, I need it back. You know where it is. Please bring it back in Jesus' name, Amen."

Remarkably, I didn't search for the bike myself. I believed that only God could bring it back to me. I informed my church members and we prayed together, especially on Friday and through the Sabbath. We decided that Sunday would be the day to search for it, though I still felt that God would reveal it to me in His time.

On Sunday, at one o'clock, my phone rang. It was a friend who had found my bike at Sok-Jou market, though it had been painted white. I could hardly believe it. I rushed to the market and immediately recognized my bike. I was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, reflecting on the power of prayer and faith.

The encounter with the thief was unexpected. Despite his

initial resistance, we parted ways peacefully. I forgave him and even offered some life advice. He shared his name and village, but for his safety, those details remain confidential. I told him how God had answered my prayers.

This experience strengthened my faith and hope. I encourage you to trust in God, no matter the challenges you face. As it says in 1 John 5:14-15 (KJV), "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us: And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him."

Remember, God can turn any situation around for your blessing. My bike, once missing and in disrepair, was returned to me better than before. Hallelujah, glory to God. We share God's victories, not Satan's embarrassments!

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