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## Investing in Their Future

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## Investing in Their Future

BY SAM NGALA

While completing my graduate studies in business, I was preparing to serve God for one year and then start my own import and export business. I thought that working in finances was how God wanted me to serve Him as a faithful steward. Before I graduated, I asked God to show me where He wanted me to serve—preferably in a remote part of the world. I applied to serve as a teacher on the outer island of the Marshall Islands through Adventist Volunteer Services, and the Lord opened the door for me to go.

During my first year, I began to realize that the greatest investment I could ever do in my life was investing in the future of God's children. That is, I could teach them about God, His love, His grace, His mercy, and at the same time empowering them with godly, Christian, Adventist education. This would prepare them not only to be outstanding citizens of their country, but also God's kingdom.

As I was getting close to the end of my first year of service as a missionary, I decided to extend my service another year. I began to realize God had been calling me for a long time not only to serve Him through education as a teacher, but also as a pastor in the field of pastoral ministry. As I prayed more about it, I began to ask, "Lord, where would You want me to study more about You and prepare for pastoral ministry, and how would You like me to finance my education because I do not have the funds and resources needed?" As I fasted and prayed, I began to realize that if this takes place, it will not be because of who I am and what I can do, but because of who God is and what He can do.

I was still unsure whether I should go into medical ministry or pastoral ministry, but I began to realize I enjoyed



Sam Ngala

pastoral ministry more. I said, "Lord, I would like to study, but You know I do not have the funds. You have to come through for me." And as I was serving on Pohnpei, in Micronesia, God sent a husband and wife whose daughter was serving as a student missionary. During a conversation, I shared how I wanted to study in the United States. A few months later, the husband sent me an e-mail that said, "If you would like to study in the United States, I am interested

in loaning you money to start your first year."

I would still have to come up with the money for my room and board; but as a missionary, I didn't even have the funds to do this. All the savings I had went to help my brother who was studying in the Philippines.

A fellow missionary contacted a friend who was living in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and that is how I met Grace and Don Lloyd. God touched their hearts, and they decided to accept me into their house. God also provided a plane ticket through the school where I was serving.

When I arrived at Andrews University, I asked God to lead me to the church where He wanted me to serve, where I would grow the most, and where I would learn the most.



Don Starlin

From Left: Sam Ngala; Aung M. Latt, lay leader, Jacksonville, Florida; Saw Morrison, lay leader, St. Paul, Minnesota



Don Starlin

Youth attended the first Midwest Adventist Immigrant Youth Camp held in Albion, Indiana.

The Lord led me to the South Haven (Michigan) Church where He gave me the opportunity to work with the youth, the young adults and the rest of the church members.

One problem was that South Haven is about an hour from school—and I didn't have a car. There was a time when I had to walk to church on a snowy day here in Michigan. The Lord impressed me to literally walk by faith. After walking for half an hour with my hands getting a little bit frost-bitten, I said, "Lord, this is the farthest I can walk. You have to come through as You said You would come through." At that moment, a car driven by a man named Steve from South Bend, Indiana, stopped, and he gave me a ride. As I began to share with him how God had used him to answer my prayer, he began to share with me some of the pain he was going through. I was able to witness to him and share with him about God.

And that is how God began to impress me that even though I didn't have a car, He would take care of my needs for transportation. I now travel to Indianapolis as a church planter, nearly four hours away. God has taken care of my gas money through Adventist Southeast Asia Projects, where I now work part time. ASAP is an organization that spreads the gospel in Southeast Asia and works with the Adventist church here in North America as a catalyst to help immigrant and refugee pastors for their first few years until a local conference employs them.<sup>1</sup>

Last year, when I was visiting in Indianapolis, I came across many refugees. I also visited Grand Rapids and Lansing, Michigan, and I began to realize that there are large numbers of refugees and immigrants—from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan. These refugees and immigrants are people whom God has brought to this very nation, to our very doorstep, so that

we could reach out to them. But sadly, I realized that many of our churches and church members do not notice the refugees and immigrants. Some have gone to our Adventist churches and did not receive love and support, warmth and friendship. Many do not have transportation. Because they do not have transportation and the means to come to church, and because many of the church members did not ask them how they were doing or if they need any help, many of these Adventist refugees and immigrants are sadly no longer in church today.

As a church, there are many things we can do. When you see refugees and immigrants coming to your church do not just walk away—approach them. Introduce yourself. Ask them who they are. Ask them where they are from. Ask them how they are doing, show them you care for them. Many of these refugees and immigrants are about ready to give up their faith; and you don't know, you may be the very person God is calling to strengthen and encourage this church member, this brother or sister in your family.

By serving the refugees and immigrants, your faith will grow. By serving them, your horizons will grow. Why not bring the 10/40 Window<sup>2</sup> into your home? You can take the initiative to reach out through your church or family, today. God will richly bless your effort as He is blessing me.

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Sam Ngala looks forward to graduating from the Adventist Theological Seminary this coming May. He hopes to continue to plant churches and help advance the work among immigrants and refugees. He is also a member of the Asian Advisory Committee for Adventist Refugees and Immigrant Ministries of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

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1. For more information about ASAP and refugee ministry, go to [www.asapministries.org](http://www.asapministries.org).

2. The 10/40 Window refers to a rectangular region of the world which contains 60 percent of the world's population, largely untouched by the gospel. See [www.adventistmission.org/article.php?id=2](http://www.adventistmission.org/article.php?id=2).