



THE BROTHERHOOD



April 5 | Told to *Mission* by Atiba Henry and members of the Brotherhood

Ask three young men to present this first-person report.

Atiba: I am Atiba. I live in Trinidad. Growing up I was playful and wild and prone to broken bones. My poor mother worried that I would not survive my childhood. She wished I would settle down and choose safer activities.

When I was 17, my cousins invited me to attend the Adventist church with them. I went and there I met some young men who caught my attention. They were different—friendly, helpful, and completely dedicated to God. I admired them. They called themselves the Brotherhood. They were purposeful about where they were going in life. They encouraged younger children to think about what God wanted to do in their lives. Watching these guys, I realized that I needed to be more serious about life. I wanted to be like the members of the Brotherhood.

Ian: I am Ian, Atiba's cousin, and a member of the Brotherhood. We are a group of teens and young adult males who have joined together to help our friends find real meaning in life through Christ.

I first came to church as a younger teen through a sports program. I went to youth camps and eventually started attending church. I saw a lot of myself in Atiba and wanted to help him make the right choices in life.

Atiba: I respected these guys and listened to their advice. I wanted to learn from them.

When I finished high school, however, I decided to join the military. I didn't ask anyone for advice, which was a mistake. Because I often had to work on Sabbaths, church attendance was irregular. I started slacking off, and sometimes I didn't go even when I had the day off. One day Ian told me that the church members missed me. Other Brotherhood members also visited me. I realized that I wasn't taking my religion seriously. They invited me to take part in other activities—sports, evangelistic meetings, social outings, and ministries—so I wouldn't lose touch with the church.

I missed being a part of the church family. I missed the spiritual food and

the outreach. But I had to work many Sabbaths. I began to wish I hadn't joined the military.

Kirt: Whenever we saw Atiba, we encouraged him. We knew his choice to join the military meant he couldn't attend church regularly, but we wanted to be sure that he didn't lose touch with God.

Watching these guys, I realized that I needed to be more serious about life. I wanted to be like the members of the Brotherhood.

Atiba: Then one Sabbath my cousin asked me to take him home from church. I did, and after I left the house, I was involved in a serious car crash. I woke up in the hospital three days later. I had several broken bones, including a fractured skull. My jaw was wired shut, and I could open only one eye. Doctors had not been sure whether I would survive, but I guess God had other plans. After several surgeries and three weeks in the hospital, I went home.

Kirt: When the Brotherhood met that Sabbath afternoon, Ian was missing.

Then we learned that Atiba had been in a serious accident. The planning meeting turned into a prayer meeting for Atiba. We prayed that day and every day until he was out of danger.

Atiba: When I went home, I still could not walk or talk because of my broken bones. I often wondered, *Why me?* I had plenty of time to think about where I was going in life, what I wanted to do with my life, and what part God would have in my life. I felt sorry for myself because of all the bad things that had happened to me.

But members of the Brotherhood visited me often and encouraged me to trust God, read the Bible, and pray. I had plenty of time to do that, and I couldn't do much else. As I prayed and studied God's Word, I realized that I needed to put God first in my life, no matter what happened.

As soon as I could get around on crutches, I went back to church. I'm reading my Bible and praying wherever I am—in bed, in the car, and on the streets. Life is precious; we never know what lies ahead, and we need to be serious about our relationship with God.

I joined Pathfinders and am working to become a Master Guide. I'm part of the Brotherhood now, and I'm mentoring younger boys as I was mentored. I see that what I do influences them, whether it's for good or bad. I want to be that positive influence the Brotherhood was to me. I tell them how I lived my life on the edge—and fell. They listen and are coming to church, making God the center of their lives.

God changed my life, but the Brotherhood played a strong part. They are my mentors, my friends, my brothers in Christ. God is good—all the time. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- The island of Trinidad lies within a few miles of the South American coastline.
- Roughly half of the 1.25 million people in Trinidad are of African descent; the other half is East Indian.
- Some 52,600 Adventists worship in 116 churches. This figure represents one Adventist for every 24 people. Adventists are the largest Protestant denomination on the island.