

# A Watered Garden

BY ELIZA MOFFAT



“What do you have growing here?” a friend asked as she curiously eyed the little shoots of green stretching above the dark soil of my freshly watered garden.

I paused. I had always wanted a flower garden, so a few weeks before, my friends Vincent and Grace had helped me haul large sacks of manure to prepare a little space in front of my house for the flowers. Vincent and I carefully drew out the rows and planted the little seeds according to the package directions. We waited eagerly, wondering if my American seeds would grow in the Central African soil. While some sprouts looked similar to the depictions on the packaging, others looked a little different. They weren’t weeds, but . . .

“I’m not sure,” I told my friend. “I think these are zinnias. Maybe that one is a marigold?”

“It looks like a tomato,” she observed.

It did look like a tomato plant. However, I hadn’t planted tomatoes, but marigolds.

Time confirmed her suspicion. A few of my imported flowers sprouted and blossomed, but most seeds never germinated. On the other hand, my volunteer tomato plant thrived. I watered it faithfully, building a little moat around it to keep the water close to the roots. Yet months passed, and I still saw nothing but leaves. I wondered if it would actually produce fruit.

About a year before, I had been in the throes of culture shock, struggling daily against loneliness and despondency. During that time, God had spoken to me through Isaiah 51:3, “For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.” In the months that followed, I could see God answering my prayers and fulfilling His promise by bringing several local friends into my life, one of whom was Vincent.

Vincent is one of the students in the after-school program I taught. He had set himself apart through his deep, probing Bible questions and had started working for me after we helped him replace his belongings after a hut fire. When Vincent came to work, he would often stick around for more Bible study and food for his often-empty stomach. He would ask questions about biblical topics and then compare my responses to what others told him. On other days, he would help me understand the life, culture and practices of his people.

While I appreciated Vincent's happy disposition, cultural insights, and biblical questions, I sometimes wondered if our time together would actually make a lasting impact on his life. Would he make the biblical principles his own? Or would he be satisfied with a theoretical knowledge of the Word?

As the hot season approached, my close, daily inspection of the tomato plant revealed flowers and . . . a tiny green tomato! I excitedly took pictures and called everyone who visited me to behold the most beautiful tomato on Earth. I continued watering faithfully and watched other green tomatoes develop on my ever-growing plant. I found sticks and strategically posted them around the plant to support the heavy-laden branches. And still, week after week, the tomatoes were all very green.

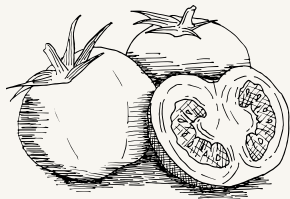
I wasn't sure what to do. Would the tomatoes stay green forever? Some may laugh, but I brought my concern to God in prayer. After all, I couldn't make green tomatoes red, but God could.

Finally the real heat came.

This tomato plant apparently needed the heat to redden those tomatoes, and we picked that first precious tomato a full two months after I first spotted the little yellow blossom. I still remember the day my friends Livy, Vincent, Adam, and I cut that tomato into quarters, sprinkled a little salt on top, and enjoyed it with our dinner.

I found another reason for rejoicing that same hot season when Vincent shared with me that he had decided to get baptized. I can see the fruits of righteousness developing in his young life, and it thrills my heart. At the time of this writing, he has not yet had the opportunity to follow through on his decision for baptism, but he continues to read his Bible regularly and discuss it with his friends. I trust that the God who turns green tomatoes red will finish the work He has begun in his young life. Please continue to pray that Vincent will persevere in his new walk of faith.

*Eliza Moffat served as a short-term missionary with Adventist Frontier Missions from 2022-2024. This story has been shared with permission of Adventist Frontier Missions.*



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# World Church Prayer Requests

DECEMBER 6 — 12, 2024

- **Kenya:** Pray for the KUSDA December evangelistic campaign across ten sites in Kenya from December 22nd to January 5th, 2025. Pray that God will prepare His children to receive His good news of love and salvation.
- **Eastern Europe:** Pray that God will hold back the four winds a little longer, bring peace to the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, and that He will hold back the escalation of war and conflict into other nations and countries.
- **Philippines:** Pray for Paper Love, a handmade card ministry created to encourage those in high-stress or underappreciated professions and remind them that God is still present in their lives. Pray that God will provide the supplies needed; that He will renew the creativity, energy, and commitment of those involved; and that each recipient will feel God's love and presence through the simple but meaningful cards.
- **Namibia:** Pray for the Ongwediva SDA Church as they begin the process of nominating church workers for 2025. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give clear discernment to the nominating committee and will go ahead to prepare the hearts of those being called.
- **Kenya:** Pray for the young people from the Harmony SDA Church and 330 other churches who will be conducting evangelistic series in many centers across Kakamega, Vihiga, and Bungoma counties December 8-21, 2024. Pray that the Lord will bring souls to the church as the young people sacrifice to make an impact in the Lord's vineyard.
- **United States:** Pray for God's Closet Ministry at the Volunteer Park SDA Church. Pray that the church members and local businesses will donate children's clothes to share with those in need and that the ministry will be a powerful witness to the community.