

From our Unification Church Missionary in Bangui, Central African Republic

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January 1976



Sundays in Bangui are always very quiet. Nearly everyone stays at home and the usually busy streets are almost deserted.

This Sunday evening, Stefan and I went on his motorbike to visit a friend and ask him to a workshop next weekend. I met him in the English class that I'm teaching at the American Cultural Center, but this was the first time I'd visited his home. I was truly amazed when I learned that he and his brother had built the house completely themselves. It is very large, with thick walls of hard mud and a neatly thatched roof.

Our friend is working every day as a bookkeeper, but also is studying hard by a correspondence course to complete his "lycee" (high school) diploma. The education system here, based on the French system, is difficult for many students. They must study very hard for many years to qualify for the diploma. Some students have little food to eat; many have no electricity in their homes, so it's a common sight to see students doing their lessons under the street lamps along the main avenues.

We shared a soda with our friend and spoke a little in English, so he could practice, but conversed mostly in French. We still haven't mastered the native language of Sango, but are working on it. He generously gave us some handicrafts which his brother had made: a hollow gourd for water and a beautiful beaded necklace.

As we drove home through the quartiers I was thinking about how physically beautiful and bright Central Africa is, just like her five-colored flag: blue sky; yellow sun; white rain that keeps the land always green; and brilliant red flowers of "flamboyant" trees. Now the time has come for an equally beautiful spiritual garden to blossom in the hearts of the Central African people.