

(1) Sharon Wangui, 18.

Sharon's world fell apart when her parents separated. She was only 10 years old.

"My mum was scared that my dad would kidnap me and so I was not allowed to go out."

She and her older brother lost their father, and their mother struggled to manage their school fees on her own.

"I could not understand why this was happening to my family."



Sharon had no idea who to talk to about what was happening. Her parents were Christians, but they left her feeling hurt and confused.

"My dad took a new wife soon after he and my mum separated, and went on to have 3 kids, all whom I have never met. I was used to my family, to being the youngest. It was strange to now have a step-mother and step-siblings."

Sharon wasn't allowed to see her father very much and when he came to visit their home, her mother did not want Sharon talking to him. She felt torn between her parents.

"I would sometimes cry myself to sleep wishing that everything would go back to normal. My dad and I would walk right past each other if we met on the streets. The situation was so bad that he tried to sue my mum! He even tried to set her up so that she would be arrested, just so that he could have me."

Then in her first year of high school, Sharon encountered a new kind of parent when a visiting preacher told her about the love of God.

"I decided to give my life to Christ after listening to his compelling message. I was seated with my friend and we were debating whether to go or not during the altar call. We decided to go and from then on, I have never turned back."

Sharon's parents got divorced not long after she became a Christian. Though she still wishes they could all be together, she believes the divorce was for the best. She feels lighter and less anxious than she did before.

On finishing high school, Sharon applied to the African Enterprise Foxfire program through her church in Molo, Kenya. She has already come to love her work there – the singing and dancing in schools, the counselling and meeting young people and telling them about Christ. She is growing spiritually and is gaining new skills, friends and experiences.

"God has been gracious all since that time with my parents' separation. He helped me perform well in my exams and I hope to go to university to pursue a degree in medicine after I complete the Foxfires program."

"I am blessed, privileged and happy to be here."

(2) Joshua Runji, 19.

In December 2007, when Mwai Kibaki was declared president of Kenya after country-wide elections, political turmoil broke out as supporters of the opposition began violently protesting. The protests escalated into ethnic violence across the country, neighbours turned against each other and everyone became afraid.

9 year old Joshua and his family were targets of the violence.

“We had to flee for our lives.”

His parents had a piece of land some distance away on which they had started building a house. It was incomplete but it was the only place they had to go.

“We fled in a hurry, so we left all our belongings in the old house and planned to go back the next day to get everything. But that night, someone burnt the house and everything inside.”

They were stuck without proper shelter or their possessions, afraid of being killed.

Joshua’s father was a pastor. A few years earlier, he had quit his well-paying job to follow his calling to lead a church.

“My dad did not have a steady income and my mother did not have a job. She was in school doing her diploma. We only had a small restaurant to survive on.”

But with the election violence, Joshua’s parents did not even have access to this.

Soon, people from their church came to the family seeking refuge from the violence.

“Our home began filling up with people from every tribe and walk of life, seeking refuge and help from their pastor, even though we could not even help ourselves.”

Sometimes, Joshua is not sure how they survived those years.

“God works in mysterious ways! Somehow, there was always enough food.”

Eventually, the people staying with them moved on to different locations, and Joshua’s family found safer accommodation. But life was still unstable.

“You would walk on the road and see dead bodies lying on the ground chopped into pieces. By the grace of God, we survived the violence.”

Joshua’s schooling suffered and he was made to repeat Grade 7.

“This pushed me to the edge and made me rebellious. I would skip school to hang out with friends and play football. My grades started becoming poor and when it was time for me to move to the next year, the school told me I had to re-do some of the classes again.”

Joshua didn’t tell his parents about this for some time and when they eventually found out, they were angry. After a big fight with his dad Joshua ran away from home and took to living



on the streets, looking for small jobs to earn his own money. But life was hard on his own and Joshua began to look back on his mistakes.

“Even at that young age I realized and felt that I was living a purposeless life and knew that I needed to go back home.”

His parents had been so worried and were overjoyed at his return.

“They put up a big party to celebrate my return!”, Joshua said.

Joshua returned to school, and became a Christian in his first year of high school.

“I have gradually grown in Christ since then. Back in my home church, I am in charge of the youth dance team. I also came up with an initiative where students leaving school are asked to give their school belongings (books, shoes, uniform, pens etc.) in exchange for a gift. These things are then given to students just going in to high school, students from needy families who cannot afford to buy such things.”

Joshua came to know about African Enterprise’s Foxfire program through his church. His father supported the idea and Joshua saw that it was an opportunity for him to grow. The Foxfire program has helped him in learning to read and study the Bible consistently.

“I have seen God work in amazing ways already and will continue serving Him through the Foxfire program and the rest of my life.”

He is delighted and honoured to have such an opportunity.

(3) Catherine Nyawira, 21.

Throughout her childhood, Catherine had to cope with some significant obstacles.

At 6 years old, she was diagnosed with diabetes, which brought fainting fits and subsequent teasing from her classmates.

“My mother told me that when I was eight, I had a fit and started convulsing on the floor. There was foam coming out of my mouth and my body went stiff – it looked like I was dead. My mother was shocked and convinced that I had died and she ran out of the house. But she heard a small voice telling her to go back, that her child was still alive. On coming back to the house, she found me seated and looking okay.”



Catherine’s parents were Christians and taught her about Jesus, she went to church regularly and enjoyed Sunday school.

“I gave my life to Christ at a teen camp that I attended. I thought life was going to be good because now I had received Christ, and I had also learnt how to control my sugar levels.”

But this wasn’t to last. A year later, her dad, who had begun to develop a political voice and was vying for a position in local government, started receiving death threats.

“My dad was a very good and vocal man. He ignored the threat and went on with his business as usual. One day when I was at school, someone went to our house and got into my dad’s car. One of my brothers saw this and ran inside the house to alert my father. My dad came running to see what was happening and the person in the car sped towards his and knocked him against a tree. He died instantly.”

Catherine was devastated. She had been very close to her dad. When she later heard that a local pastor had been involved in the incident, her faith crumbled.

“I could not understand how a man who claimed to be of God could do such a thing.”

Catherine failed her exams that year and had to repeat grade 7. As her family could no longer afford her education, she was sent to live with an uncle who paid for her schooling.

“I would cry so much asking God why this was happening to me. I felt like He hated me. Not only was I diabetic, now my father who I loved so much had passed away.”

In desperation, she took an overdose of diabetes pills.

“I decided to end my life. I locked myself in my room and refused to eat anything whatsoever. The evening came and there was totally nothing I could feel, nothing at all. I had expected that I would die.”

Amazed that God had allowed her to live even when she had taken enough pills to kill her, Catherine felt that there must be a reason her life had been preserved.

“I then told God that I would live to serve Him for the rest of my life.”

She rededicated her life to Christ, this time for good.

“God has been so faithful to me during this walk. My diabetes is now almost non-existent and he has helped me and my family pay for all my school,” she said.

Catherine has dedicated herself to serving Christ. She became a Christian Union leader in high school and was appointed a youth leader and youth group treasurer at her church

In 2014, her church pastor suggested she try out for the African Enterprise Foxfires program, but Catherine’s mother and uncle initially opposed the idea, telling her to focus on her education first. So, Catherine enrolled in a year-long diploma course and all through her studies, had an unquenchable desire to serve God. As soon as she completed the diploma she applied for the Foxfire program and is now pursuing her passion to serve God.

“I love God for He has been a father and a friend to me. He has been so faithful. I choose to serve Him for the rest of my life.”

(4) Jones Wanjala, 18.

Born in Eldoret, Kenya, to Christian parents who brought him up to know Christ, Jones said he initially took his faith for granted.

“I always assumed I had salvation, because I thought it would be automatic.”

As a child he found being a Christian easy and even prayed to ask Jesus into his heart when he was 10 years old. But when he reached high school, everything changed.

“In high school, I faced a lot of shake-ups. Peer pressure and adolescence made me backslide and I forgot about Christian principles like prayer, studying the word of God and generally just doing well according to God’s will.”

Jones said that, through his rebellion, God was merciful and gently brought him back.

“God made me realize, through His Holy Spirit, that I was living in sin and I gave my life to Christ again. This time, it was for good.”

Jones and his family now live in Kakamega and they all experienced the powerful Kakamega Mission that AE conducted there in 2016. With the help of his pastor, Jones applied to be an AE Foxfire and has started on a new adventure with Christ this year.

“The program has helped build my self-esteem and courage to face people and speak boldly about God. I have developed a passion for young people, to lead them in the right direction concerning the things of God.”



(5) Lydia Shikuku, 18.

Lydia's father is a pastor and is devoted to Christ. He taught all of his six children about the love of God.

When she was 7, Lydia approached her father with a question:

"I wanted to know more about this Christ who was always being preached about."

Her father took the time to gently tell his young daughter about how Jesus came down for sinners so we could be saved. At the age of seven, Lydia gained an honest, precious, personal relationship with her Saviour.



"Right there, I gave my life wholly to Christ and I have never turned back. From then I had an understanding that I was accountable for my own mistakes. Before, I always thought that if I did something wrong, my dad would have to pray for me because he was a pastor. Now I knew that I should be the one to pray to Jesus!"

One year after giving her life to Christ in 2007, post-election violence broke out in Kenya. Political and ethnic tension rocked the country and ethnic violence broke out everywhere. Neighbours turned against each other, and everyone was affected.

"It was really bad and we lost almost everything we had. We had to start from scratch."

But she also remembers the faithfulness of God.

"He totally helped us out of our situation and set us back on our feet again. In any challenge, He has always fought for us."

Lydia is now one of this year's Foxfires and she is grateful for the opportunity to grow in her faith and gain a more intimate relationship with God through the experience.

"I truly thank God for giving me an opportunity to be in this program and all that I pray is for God to use me," she says.

(6) Elizabeth Mumo, 19.

Elizabeth and her family moved towns three times before she was 10 years old. They were a Christian family and her father was a pastor. But, when she was 8, her parents split up.

She was distraught.

“My mum, my siblings and I had to relocate to upcountry where we stayed for two years. I was so used to my parents being together and I did not see the separation coming. I was very hurt but I did not talk about my feelings to anyone. I hid them even from my mum, close as we are.”



Then Lydia's older sister got sick and they moved again to Nairobi for treatment. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

In Nairobi, the family had to start over.

“We had nothing to our name because my dad had been the sole bread-winner before my parents separated. So we had to move in to a popular slum in Nairobi known as Kibera, where we could start over.”

Lydia's mother took any odd jobs she could find to provide for the children and pay for their schooling.

“What makes me very angry is the fact that my dad did not provide for even half of our school fees. He wasn't supporting us in any way and he still doesn't. My mum would do everything just to make sure we lived well. I thank God so much for her!”

Lydia's first year of high school was difficult; she attended a boarding school away from home and missed her mother. She also struggled with the male teachers and students because she had developed a negative attitude towards men after what her father had done.

“I always felt like all men were just like him.”

But in her second year there, Lydia's physics teacher introduced her to Christ and led her to salvation.

“Together with people from his church, they would come to school on weekends and they would teach the word of God. I got saved during one of those meetings.”

She joined the praise and worship team at school and slowly came out of her shell. After a few years, their family was able to move out of the slum and establish themselves in a better neighbourhood.

“I haven't totally forgiven my father,” Lydia admits. “I am still bitter for him not being there and I have always felt that he is not the same man that he was before my parents separated. However, I have God's love and He is patient with me; patiently teaching and helping me to forgive him.”

Lydia's sister was an AE Foxfire in 2012. Now, Lydia joins the latest cohort of young men and women serving God through AE.

"I used to hear her talk about it and the kind of activities they would take part in and I knew I also wanted to be part of it."

Already, she feels she has grown spiritually, morally and emotionally through the program, learning to control her anger and enjoying studying the word of God. Lydia has a growing passion for working with young people and counselling them and is excited for what the year ahead will bring.

(7) Opara Victoria, 20.

Opara remembers a life-changing conversation with her father when she was just 7 years old:

"I gave my life to Christ through my dad who sat with me one day and had a deep conversation with him concerning salvation. Before this, I thought being saved meant going to church every Sunday. After talking to my father, I came to understand that salvation was much more than that."

Her father was a Bishop in Kakamega, and Opara was raised in the knowledge and reality of God's loving presence.

"I am glad I made this decision at a tender age because my life has never been the same since. God has always favoured me and my family. Even during any sort of challenges I have faced, Jehovah has always come to my rescue. I do not regret it one bit!"

Opara realizes that her knowledge of Christ has kept her strong.

"If it was not for this salvation, I don't know where I would be. I would probably have given in to peer pressure and become reckless like many of my peers. But God preserved me and has given me this chance to serve Him."

She joined the AE Foxfires at the start of 2017, bringing enthusiasm and dedication to the program.

"Ever since joining the Foxfire program, my character has been built up," she says. "I have gained great confidence in myself and also in other people. My attitude towards people has changed a lot because we get to interact with different age groups and different types of people. My prayer-life has also really grown."

Her excitement for salvation and the Gospel is undimmed and growing with each day!

