Daniel A. Ngor

Age: 23
Region: Upper Nile

 I had eight sisters, three brothers, five stepsisters, and a stepbrother. My grandfather was the village chief. One night, when I was five, Arab soldiers attacked our village. I was frightened by the sound of the bullets. I didn't see them because it was night. I had no time to get shoes. I went into the forest. Nobody was with me. Some soldiers in the forest collected us and directed us to Ethiopia.

I traveled with about 200 people. I didn't know what happened to my parents and I tried to think, "Where are my parents?" I got to know some of the boys I traveled with. It was very hard because we were very thirsty. We were in the desert and there was no water.

I stayed in different parts of Africa like Boma, Khartoum, Kapoeta, Narus, and Lockochokio. I stayed in Panyido, which was a camp in Ethiopia, for four years. I lived in Kakuma, in Kenya, for nine years. The best thing about the camps was the education. Sometimes at the camps it would rain. The climate was very hot during the summer, but it was okay. In 1992, I worked for UNICEF as a nurse. I was thinking about being a doctor.

I was not afraid to come here because I knew people that lived here. I thought, "I am going to see how they live." In the U.S. the culture and life is different. At 10 pm on May 8, 2001 I arrived in the U.S. I was given an apartment for eight months.

My first job was working in airport security. The best thing about living here is that I can get an education. I pay my school fees and everything. I was born with a responsibility to guide and lead. I like to live here. I started to work for a Lutheran church because I wanted to help lead and change the community. Now, I go to Everest College where I study business and accounting. I want to work for the government. I want to be independent and I want to help the community, the nation, and the rest of the world.

Later on, I plan to return to Sudan because I want to help my people. We want to be free. That's why I'm here in the United States.