

Informativo
Mundial das Missões
Divisão Inter-Europeia
1º trimestre de 2020



1º sábado

O milagre do Ano Novo

Era a véspera do Ano Novo e três senhoras decidiram orar pelos parentes não cristãos durante o maior feriado da Bulgária. As três, membros da igreja adventista de Sofia West, agendaram para orar às 23h30 e às 12h15 em suas respectivas casas, na capital da Bulgária.

No dia 31 de dezembro, no horário combinado, Maria Bachvarova deixou o esposo e filho celebrando o Ano Novo e foi para outro quarto, onde orou para que eles aceitassem Jesus. Então, lembrou-se do irmão mais novo, Nikolai. Ela convidou Nikolai, 66, para também participar das comemorações daquele dia, mas ele não foi.

Nikolai era gentil, dedicado, honesto, mas sofreu uma série de adversidades. Ele era um executivo muito bem-sucedido, mas entrou em falência e a esposa o abandonou. Quase sem dinheiro, trabalhava como segurança em um canteiro de obras. Maria orou em favor de Nikolai por 25 minutos e voltou para a festa familiar, permanecendo ali durante 20 minutos, e voltou a fim de orar pelo irmão. Nikolai não apareceu naquela noite, mas foi no dia seguinte com uma história a compartilhar.

Na noite anterior, ele foi escalado para vigiar o canteiro de obras. Porém, quando chegou, outro guarda lhe disse para voltar, explicando que estava esperando a esposa e um casal de amigos para comemorar o Ano Novo no local de trabalho. Então, Nikolai decidiu ir à casa da irmã e dirigiu-se para o ponto de bonde mais próximo. Eram 22hr30. Esperou duas horas, mas nenhum bonde apareceu. De repente, uma janela se abriu em um prédio novo de apartamentos, atrás do ponto do bonde, um casal apareceu e o convidou para cear em sua casa.

Nikolai entrou no apartamento bem mobiliado e sentou em uma poltrona confortável. Depois de uma deliciosa refeição, os anfitriões tocaram sua música preferida, a macedônica. Como executivo, desenvolveu um gosto por coisas boas e, naquele momento, usufruía de seu antigo modo de vida. O dia amanheceu, os donos da casa o acordaram e disseram que havia um taxi

esperando por ele. A passagem já estava paga. Quando se despediram, deram a ele uma cédula de 50 lev (cerca de 30 dólares). Maria estava chorando quando Nikolai terminou. “Deus cuidou de você a noite passada”, disse. Então foi a outro quarto e voltou com uma Bíblia e um livro adventista para apresentar o casal. “Agradeça a eles por mim”, disse ela.

Após alguns dias, Nikolai devolveu a Bíblia e o livro a Maria. “Que coisa estranha!”, disse ele. “Fui até o apartamento, ele não está terminado e ninguém vive lá!” O apartamento estava vago. Naquele momento, Maria entendeu que Deus enviou anjos para cuidar de seu irmão no dia de Ano Novo. Deus respondeu às orações dela em favor de Nikolai. Essa história aconteceu em 2012. Depois desse milagre, Nikolai começou a frequentar a igreja com a irmã nos cultos de sábado.

Deus ouve quando oramos pelos queridos descrentes. Assim como aconteceu com Maria e Nikolai, Ele pode responder de maneiras extraordinárias. Parte da oferta trimestral ajudará a construir a igreja frequentada por Maria, a igreja adventista de Sofia West. Assim, em vez de um prédio alugado, ela terá seu próprio estabelecimento.

<Boxe 1>

Armas e livros

Maria Bachvarova e a amiga decidiram vender livros de casa em casa em um novo prédio em Sofia. Elas começaram pelo térreo e continuaram subindo os andares, parando em todas as portas. Muitos não responderam. Outros fecharam a porta diante delas. No último andar, as colportoras saíram do elevador e viram seis portas. Enquanto pensavam, escolhendo em qual apartamento começar, todas as portas se abriram. Seis homens corpulentos vestidos em ternos pretos, camisas brancas e gravatas surgiram com armas na mão.

“Estamos oferecendo livros!”, Maria gaguejou. Os homens as empurraram de volta ao elevador. “Saiam”, um deles ordenou. No susto, Maria apertou o botão errado. Em vez de apertar o botão para descer, apertou para subir. Quando o elevador abriu, elas viram somente uma porta. Embora estivessem aterrorizadas, sentiram que precisaram ir ao apartamento da cobertura. Então, oraram e apertaram a campainha.

Uma mulher muito elegante atendeu à porta. “Quem vocês estão procurando?”, ela perguntou. “Nós temos alguns livros interessantes para mostrar a você”, Maria

disse. A mulher folheou a coleção *Conflito dos Séculos*, de Ellen White, e outros livros. Finalmente decidiu: “Vou comprar todos.” Depois, Maria descobriu que o andar em que foram recebidas por armas era propriedade do chefe da máfia. Aqueles homens eram seus guarda-costas. O homem foi assassinado pouco tempo depois. Maria nunca mais conseguiu entrar no prédio.

“Sou grata a Deus porque conseguimos apresentar os livros à senhora que morava na cobertura”, diz Maria.

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<Boxe 2>

Dicas da história

- Peça que os irmãos da igreja compartilhem os nomes de membros da família que ainda não conhecem a Cristo e incentive-os a orar por eles.
- Assista ao vídeo sobre Maria no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Maria-Bachvarova.
- Faça o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/new-years-miracle).
- Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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2º sábado

O milagre da igreja

O pastor Stoyan Petkov orou durante dois anos por uma nova igreja em Sofia, Bulgária. Sem que ele soubesse, enquanto orava, os líderes mundiais da Igreja, nos Estados Unidos, decidiram reservar uma parcela da oferta trimestral do primeiro trimestre de 2020 para a construção de um novo templo para sua congregação. Stoyan não soube que Deus respondeu às suas orações até que o projeto trimestral foi aprovado. Vejamos o que aconteceu.

Stoyan assumiu o pastorado da igreja adventista de Sofia West em 2015. Naquela época, a congregação se reunia em uma igreja evangélica. A localização da igreja era excelente, mas ele notou um problema. A igreja estava morta. As pessoas se reuniam aos sábados, mas era só isso. Não havia curso de culinária ou programas para as crianças durante a semana. Também não havia culto de oração. Stoyan pediu aos proprietários da igreja evangélica para alugar o prédio durante a semana, mas isso lhe foi negado sem explicação. Ele decidiu procurar um novo local por conta própria. Vasculhou na vizinhança, subindo e descendo ruas. Sem nada conseguir, ele criou um grupo de oração para levar esse assunto a Deus.

Os meses se passaram. Em março de 2017, Stoyan deixou de procurar um edifício para a igreja. Em vez disso, anunciou que a igreja realizaria um concerto de Páscoa. O problema é que não havia coral na igreja. Também não tinha um local para o concerto. Stoyan incumbiu aos jovens a organização do concerto e do coral. Os jovens formaram um coral e o pastor alugou um salão para 50 pessoas.

Entretanto, na véspera do concerto o proprietário recuou, dizendo que havia alugado para outra pessoa.

Stoyan caminhou pelas ruas em oração. Ao passar pelo shopping center viu vários salões vazios e considerou falar com o proprietário. Mas ele tinha pouco dinheiro e o proprietário não estava interessado em alugar para grupos religiosos. Entretanto, Stoyan entrou em contato com o proprietário e, para sua surpresa, alugou para que o concerto fosse realizado.

O concerto foi um grande sucesso. Depois, o dono apareceu na loja enquanto os membros limpavam o local. “Vocês são pessoas interessantes”, disse. “Eu esperava muito ruído e gritos, mas vocês são muito educados.” Ao saber que a congregação precisava de um local para alugar, ele sugeriu derrubar uma parede e transformar duas salas em um grande salão. Também ofereceu uma terceira loja em outro piso para que pudessem realizar programas para as crianças para a comunidade. O contrato de aluguel era mais barato do que poderiam conseguir para uma igreja fora da cidade.

Depois que a igreja de West Sofia mudou de local, a frequência dos membros e os programas comunitários cresceram rapidamente. O shopping center também viu mudanças. Novos inquilinos se mudaram e o centro, que já estava vazio, fervilhava. Foi um grande negócio para o proprietário. “Vocês trouxeram sorte. Muitas pessoas decidiram alugar minhas lojas vagas!”, ele exclamou. A igreja começou a realizar cursos sobre saúde, culinária e programas para crianças. Cinco pessoas foram batizadas no primeiro ano na nova locação.

“Há dois anos, isso era impensável”, Stoyan diz. “Antes eu só ia para igreja, pregava e voltava para casa. Deus abriu portas.” Mas a igreja precisa do seu próprio espaço. O pastor sabia que o aluguel não será sempre com o valor abaixo do mercado. Além disso, a igreja aumentou seus membros para 120, deixando pouco espaço para crescer no salão. Foi assim que Stoyan soube através dos líderes da igreja da Bulgária que sua igreja foi escolhida para receber parte das ofertas do primeiro trimestre de 2020. E ficou muito feliz!

Ao olhar para trás, ele diz que não existe coincidência. As bênçãos começaram a acontecer quando ele deixou de se preocupar em achar uma nova igreja e passou a se importar em espalhar o evangelho. “O Senhor proveu um novo local quando planejamos o concerto de Páscoa”, diz. “Naquele momento percebi que o Senhor proveria nossa própria igreja de acordo com Seu tempo. Era importante mudarmos para fazer o evangelismo.”

Muito obrigado pelas ofertas que ajudarão a construir uma nova igreja adventista de Sofia West na capital de Bulgária, Sofia.

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Dicas da história

- Pronúncia de Stoyan: <sto-IAN>
 - Assista ao vídeo sobre Stoyan no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Stoyan-Petkov.
 - Faça o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/miracle-church).
 - Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.
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3º Sábado

O olhar gentil

O professor aposentado, de 67 anos, chegou à academia de polícia nacional na Bulgária com três exemplares de *O Grande Conflito*, de Ellen White. Sua missão era entrar no campus fortemente vigiado e deixar o livro com o comandante da academia. Era uma semana agitada para Jivko Grushev quando ele apresentou *O Grande Conflito* aos líderes das universidades da capital da Bulgária, Sofia. Depois de deixar 100 livros, restara-lhe três livros na pasta.

Ele caminhou até o policial que vigiava os portões e, assim que chegou no portão da academia, uma limousine preta saiu. Jivko cumprimentou o policial e disse que desejava visitar o comandante. “O comandante não está aqui” foi a resposta. Ele havia saído na limousine. “Então gostaria de falar com a secretária dele”, Jivko disse. “O que você deseja falar com ela?”, perguntou o policial.

A pergunta foi inesperada, mas ele respondeu imediatamente: “Gostaria de discutir sobre certa doação.” O oficial tomou as informações pessoais de Jivko e acenou que entrasse no campus. Enquanto caminhava até o imenso prédio administrativo, ele se perguntou se o oficial anunciara sua visita. Na entrada do saguão, Jivko encontrou um pequeno portão e uma cabine de vidro para um guarda da polícia. O portão, no entanto, estava aberto e a cabine estava vazia. Vários policiais conversaram animadamente perto de uma escada de mármore cinza no saguão.

Jivko atravessou o portão e perguntou aos policiais a localização da secretária. “É naquela direção”, um policial respondeu, rudemente, apontando o portão e a saída. Ele cruzou o portão, mas permaneceu no prédio. “Senhor, estou aqui para mostrar Tua luz”, orou. “Por favor, intervenhas e me mostres onde devo ir.”

Os policiais retomaram a conversa entre eles. Naquele momento, um homem com cerca de trinta anos desceu a escada de mármore. Seus olhos encontraram os de Jivko e pareciam falar: “Espere um minuto.” O homem se aproximou dos policiais e falou algo com eles. Jivko não conseguia tirar os olhos do homem. Ele nunca vira um policial tão imponente e de aparência digna. O homem era esbelto e bonito. “O que será que ele está fazendo?”, Jivko se perguntava. O homem usava uniforme preto como os outros policiais, porém, aparentemente com mais qualidade. Não havia dragonas decorando os ombros.

Quando terminou de falar com os oficiais, o homem olhou para Jivko com o olhar amoroso como se dissesse: “pronto!” Então atravessou o portão, passou por ele e saiu do prédio. O oficial que o tratou rudemente correu para a cabine e uma oficial feminina o acompanhou. Os dois perguntaram em uníssono, “Você deseja visitar a secretária?” A oficial anotou algumas informações pessoais e o oficial se ofereceu para acompanhá-lo até a secretária. Ele subiu correndo as escadas de mármore como se estivesse sendo perseguido, pulando dois degraus ao mesmo tempo. Jivko se esforçou para acompanhar. No alto da escada, o oficial olhou para o chão enquanto Jivko entrava na sala e, em seguida, fechou a porta.

Ele se apresentou à secretária e mostrou os três livros. “Esses são presentes para o comandante e representantes”, disse. Ao deixar a academia pouco tempo depois, Jivko agradeceu alegremente a Deus por ajudá-lo a realizar uma missão aparentemente impossível. De repente, lembrou-se do policial elegante e de olhar afetuoso. O homem apareceu a tempo de resolver seu problema. Os livros nunca teriam sido entregues à secretária sem sua ajuda.

Jivko não tem dúvida de que o homem era um anjo enviado por Deus para poder compartilhar a mensagem de salvação. Ele se lembrou de como Hebreus 1:14 descreve os anjos, dizendo: “Os anjos não são, todos eles, espíritos

ministradores enviados para servir aqueles que não de herdar a salvação?” O encontro com o gentil estranho mudou a vida espiritual. Ele sempre pensa sobre aquele dia. “Deus é grande e deseja salvar as pessoas!”, diz. “Meu Amigo celestial é tão maravilhoso!”

Jivko é ancião na Igreja Adventista de Sofia West, que receberá parte da oferta do trimestre para construir o templo na capital da Bulgária. Muito obrigado por suas ofertas.

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Dicas da história

- Pronúncia de Jivko: <DJIV-ko>
- Assista ao vídeo sobre Jivko no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Jivko-Grushev.
- Faça o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/stranger-with-eyes).
- Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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4º sábado

Trens, caminhões e sábado

Pela primeira vez, o garoto de dez anos ouvia maravilhado o sermão na igreja adventista do sétimo dia. O pregador contou a história de um carteiro que pegou uma carta direcionada ao Papai Noel. Um menininho havia escrito a carta pedindo um trem de brinquedo. O carteiro não tinha filhos e decidiu comprar um trem para o garoto. O menino ficou encantando com o presente! O jovem Rosen Nakov ouviu a história e também ficou maravilhado. Ele morava na cidade de Sofia, capital da Bulgária, e também desejava ganhar um trem. A história lhe tocou o coração e ele voltou à igreja nos sábados seguintes. Fez amizade rapidamente com os irmãos da igreja e, acima de tudo, firmou amizade com Jesus.

Depois de concluir o Ensino Médio, Rosen precisou se alistar ao serviço militar no então país comunista. Mas ele tinha duas opções: alistar como

soldado por dois anos ou trabalhar em uma fábrica durante cinco anos. Ele escolheu a fábrica, para evitar qualquer problema com a observância do sábado. Aproximadamente dez adventistas trabalhavam em uma gigantesca fábrica de caminhões em Sofia, e Rosen decidiu trabalhar lá como alternativa ao serviço militar. Ao visitar a fábrica, ele conheceu um adventista que convidou para se juntar a ele no departamento que instalava os motores nos caminhões.

Rosen foi ao escritório da fábrica para se candidatar à função. Um gerente, entretanto, olhou o currículo, viu que ele tinha experiência como mecânico de automóveis, e perguntou: “Por que você se candidatou para o trabalho de instalar motores? Você poderia consertar os motores dos caminhões na garagem.” Imediatamente Rosen perguntou se o cargo dava folga aos sábados. “Sim”, o gerente respondeu. “O trabalho seria de segunda a sexta.”

Ele enviou Rosen ao Departamento de Recursos Humanos para terminar a documentação. Entretanto, quando Rosen apresentou seus documentos, o gerente desse departamento disse: “Por que você se candidatou para consertar o motor dos caminhões? Você deveria trabalhar na pequena loja de motores na garagem.”

No primeiro dia de trabalho, ele descobriu que teria seis colegas na pequena loja. Durante o almoço, na lanchonete da empresa, um colega perguntou: “Conte para nós, quem é seu conhecido no alto escalão?” “O que você quer dizer?”, Rosen perguntou. “Você deve ter um amigo de alto nível na alta gerencia para conseguir esse emprego”, disse outro colega. Então, ele descobriu que a loja era um dos cargos mais requisitados para trabalhar. Muitos funcionários se envolviam em trabalhos árduos e sujos. Mas o trabalho na loja era relativamente leve e limpo. Seus colegas de trabalho conseguiram a posição porque tinham amigos na administração.

Não demorou para Rosen perceber que, ao honrar a Deus guardando o sábado, Deus o honrou com um cargo cobiçado. Do outro lado da mesa da lanchonete, um colega pressionou Rosen para responder. “Quem é seu amigo?” Rosen apontou para o alto e disse: “Meu Amigo está lá em cima.” A partir daquele dia, todos da loja e da garagem sabiam que ele era adventista. Muitos procuravam sua ajuda quando souberam que era especialista em mecânica. Ele era o único adventista na garagem.

“Muitos adventistas trabalhavam na fabrica, mas ninguém trabalhava na garagem”, ele disse em uma entrevista. “Aparentemente, Deus precisa de mim naquele lugar.” Rosen, que agora tem 48, não sabe se algum colega aceitou Jesus através de sua influência, mas sabe que Deus tem um plano. “Assim como Deus usou a história do trem para tocar meu coração quando eu era um garoto, talvez ele desejou que eu trabalhasse na garagem para tocar o coração de alguém”, diz. “O bom Senhor sabe como tocar o coração de cada pessoa.”

Parte da oferta do trimestre ajudará a construir uma igreja para a congregação da Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia em Sofia West, na cidade natal de Rosen, Sofia, Bulgária. Muito agradecemos pelas ofertas.

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Dicas da história

- Assistir ao vídeo sobre Rosen no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Rosen-Nakov.
- Fazer o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/trains-trucks-sabbath).
- Fazer o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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5º Sábado

Apedrejamento na Sicília

O pai de Salvina Mazza, 13 anos, a levou em um passeio de bicicleta, por 43 quilômetros na ilha italiana da Sicília. Mas não foi um passeio divertido. “Um parente que mora no vilarejo de Rosolini pediu ajuda para entender a Bíblia”, e o pai disse para ela antes de sair: “Venha e ouça para aprender como falar de Jesus.” Ele não tinha carro, por isso, viajaram de bicicleta até uma cidade próxima da montanha de Ragusa. Ali, eles se encontraram com um amigo, Giovanni Giallanza, o primeiro adventista em Ragusa. Giovanni havia apresentado o pai de Salvina à igreja adventista, depois de conhecer irmãos adventistas na Bélgica.

Após algum tempo, os dois homens e a garota chegaram à casa da família em Rosolini. Curiosos, os vizinhos apareceram nas portas e janelas de suas casas. “Quem são estes estranhos?”, perguntou alguém. “O que estão fazendo aqui?”, outro quis saber. Os vizinhos seguiram os visitantes à casa da família. Em pouco tempo a casa estava lotada. O homem que convidou os convidados fez uma pergunta bíblica. O pai de Salvina abriu a Bíblia e mostrou a resposta. O homem fez outra pergunta e, novamente, ele respondeu à luz da Bíblia.

Duas mulheres não pareciam felizes com as respostas e saíram da casa. Após vinte minutos, dois homens bem vestidos, com pastas na mão, cruzaram a porta. Depois de ouvirem o que o visitante falava, um falou para o outro: “Não há nada acontecendo aqui. Eles só estão evangelizando.” Então saíram. Eles eram policiais enviados pelas duas mulheres que ficaram contrariadas. Passadas três horas, a reunião terminou e o pai de Salvina se despediu das pessoas. “Se vocês quiserem estudar mais, me contem que eu retornarei”, ele disse. Salvina, o pai e o amigo saíram da casa e começaram o trajeto de volta a Ragusa. Para sua surpresa, a estrada estava obstruída por uma fila com centenas de pessoas.

“Pai, tem alguma festa religiosa acontecendo?”, Salvina perguntou. “Sim”, ele disse, “é um grande festival contra nós!” Havia um tom de urgência em sua voz. “Vamos pedalar mais rápido para conseguir atravessar a multidão”, disse. Assim fizeram. A multidão começou a gritar. “Não precisamos desse tipo de igreja!”, alguém disse. “Não queremos protestantes aqui!”, outro disse. As pessoas pegaram pedras e lançaram em direção aos ciclistas. “Não reajam”, o pai disse. “Só não parem de pedalar.” Salvina pedalou o mais rápido que pôde.

Depois de alcançar uma distância segura da multidão, o pai parou para ver se alguém havia se machucado. Todos estavam bem e inclinaram a cabeça em oração. “Senhor, muito obrigado por nos proteger. A multidão atirou pedras, mas ninguém se machucou.” Ninguém os convidou para voltarem a Rosolini. O pai de Salvina, que se chamava Carmelo Mazza, enfrentou muitas adversidades por compartilhar a fé. Ele rodou em sua bicicleta por toda a Sicília, trabalhando como fotógrafo, depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial. Mas não desanimou diante da multidão que queria apedrejá-lo nem por outras dificuldades. Em 1952, ele e Giovanni inauguraram a primeira igreja adventista

em Ragusa. Eles também construíram igrejas em Mazzarrone, Modica e Vitória.

Hoje Salvina está com 85 anos de idade, porém se lembra muito bem do passeio de bicicleta. “Foi um grande milagre do qual nunca me esquecerei”, ela diz. Mesmo depois do ataque, ela não teve medo de falar de Jesus. Sempre tratou os vizinhos com paciência e amor quando a desprezam por ser adventista. Ela compartilhava a fé na escola mesmo que os colegas de classe e o padre zombassem. Até hoje ela fala com entusiasmo sobre suas convicções.

“Eu amo compartilhar o evangelho”, ela diz. Parte da oferta trimestral de 2016 ajudou a construir uma igreja em Ragusa. Os membros se reuniam em salas alugadas desde que a igreja foi estabelecida com a participação do pai de Salvina, em 1952. Eles são gratos por terem um local próprio para adorar a Deus. Muito obrigado por tornar isso possível através das ofertas.

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Dicas da história

- Assistir ao vídeo sobre Salvina no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Salvina-Mazza.
- Fazer um *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou no banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/Stoned-in-Sicily).
- Fazer um *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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6º Sábado

Do vilarejo ao palácio

O pai de Vincenzo Mazza explodiu de raiva quando ele, um rapaz de dezesseis anos, voltou para o vilarejo na ilha italiana da Sicília e anunciou que havia sido batizado na igreja adventista. A raiva aumentou ainda mais quando o adolescente falou que planejava tornar-se pastor. “Se você for, não precisa voltar”, disse o pai, um veterano da Segunda Guerra Mundial que criou cinco filhos. Mal sabiam que, um dia, Vincenzo seria o líder da Igreja Adventista na Itália e estudaria a Bíblia com o presidente daquele país.

As ameaças do pai não desencorajaram o garoto, que foi batizado durante uma visita prolongada com o irmão mais velho, recém-batizado na igreja adventista, em outra cidade. Vincenzo viajou para o Seminário Adventista, Villa Aurora, em Florença. Ao chegar, soube que não poderia se matricular sem dinheiro e não havia trabalho disponível. Desapontado, ele caminhou pelo pequeno jardim no território do seminário. Ele não queria voltar para Sicília porque o pai exigiria que renunciasse à fé para viver em casa. Ele orou desesperadamente.

De repente, algo pareceu sussurrar: “Olhe dentro do bolso da camisa!” Vincenzo colocou a mão no bolso e encontrou uma folha de papel com o endereço de uma família alemã que havia conhecido, por acaso, em uma visita a Florença. A família o convidou para visitá-los em Karlsruhe, Alemanha. Ele se lembrou de que a igreja adventista tinha um seminário na Alemanha, na cidade de Darmstadt. Contou o dinheiro que tinha e percebeu que havia o suficiente para comprar uma passagem de trem para Karlsruhe, cerca de 100 quilômetros ao sul de Darmstadt.

Vincenzo esperou o trem até Karlsruhe, ficou uma noite na casa daqueles amigos e lhes contou o desejo de estudar no seminário. A família comprou uma passagem de trem para Darmstadt. O adolescente chegou sem dinheiro, sem saber falar alemão e sem saber o endereço do seminário. Ele caminhou por várias horas procurando o seminário. Quando chegou a uma floresta, continuou caminhando e logo se perdeu. O sol estava se pondo e ele estava com frio e

medo. Incerto quando ao que deveria fazer, caiu em prantos e orou a Deus pedindo ajuda.

“Ei jovem!” uma voz disse, fazendo-lhe dar um pulo. “O que você está procurando?” Vincenzo não ouviu ninguém se aproximar e olhou com surpresa a um homem baixinho e de cabelos grisalhos. O mais impressionante é que o senhor falava em alemão, mas ele entendia tudo o que dizia. “Estou procurando o Seminário Adventista”, Vincenzo respondeu em italiano. “Eu direi como chegar lá”, disse o senhor no idioma alemão, e lhe deu instruções detalhadas. Vincenzo se afastou. Após alguns passos ele se virou para agradecer o gentil desconhecido. Ele havia ido.

Vincenzo chegou ao seminário e explicou sua situação aos professores. Eles o matricularam e providenciaram um trabalho. Tempos mais tarde, tornou-se pastor de igrejas na Alemanha e Itália. Serviu como líder da Igreja Adventista na Itália de 1995 até sua jubilação em 2000. Apesar do que o pai havia dito, ele manteve o contato regular com o pai que, depois de muito tempo, implorou perdão a Vincenzo. “Fui um pai autoritário”, disse durante uma visita de Vincenzo, esposa e dois filhos a Sicília em um verão. “Reconheço isso e estou triste pelo que fiz a meus filhos.”

Como líder da Igreja Adventista na Itália, Vincenzo escreveu uma carta de agradecimento ao presidente italiano Oscar Luigi Scalfaro pelas observações de apoio aos protestantes. A carta foi escrita em 1997. Pouco dias após receber a carta, o presidente Scalfaro convidou Vincenzo para visitar o palácio presidencial. Após a primeira visita, eles se tornaram bons amigos. O presidente o convidou várias vezes e sempre pedia: “Pastor Mazza, por favor, leia a Bíblia comigo! Por favor, gostaria de uma oração.”

Em 1998, essa amizade estreitou-se quando o presidente aceitou o convite de Vincenzo para assistir à inauguração de um retiro adventista em Forlì. A presença do presidente transformou esse evento em notícia nacional. Pessoas de toda a Itália que nunca ouvira sobre os adventistas foram apresentadas à igreja e à verdade do sábado.

Hoje, Vincenzo está com 70 anos e está em uma fase avançada de Parkinson. Mas ele cultiva seu ministério no coração postando pequenos sermões em sua página do *Facebook*. Não se esqueça de que parte da oferta

do trimestre ajudará a reformar o prédio principal da Universidade de Marienhohe em Darmstadt, Alemanha. Muito agradecemos.

<Boxe>

Dicas da história

- Pronúncia de Vincenzo : <vihh-CHEN-zoh>.
- Assista ao vídeo sobre o filho de Vincenzo, Andreas, no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Andreas-Mazza.
- Faça o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/Village-to-Palace).
- Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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7º Sábado

Desafiando o sábado

Vincenzo Gallina, especialista em TI alemão, não compreendia o que estava acontecendo. A uma crise global parecia seguir outra: 9 de setembro, turbulência financeira na Europa, Criméia e crise migratória. Algo estava errado. Vincenzo se questionava se era o fim do mundo. Ele lutava para entender as decisões aparentemente incoerentes dos políticos, procurou respostas nos vídeos do *YouTube* e retornou à igreja de sua infância. Ele não havia frequentado somente os cultos dominicais, como também os cultos aos sábados e quartas-feiras. Os líderes da igreja ficaram tão impressionados com seu interesse em religião, que tentaram convencê-lo a se tornar pastor. Vincenzo não aceitou. Seu único objetivo era encontrar respostas aos eventos globais e viver uma vida santificada.

Nessa busca, ele abraçou três princípios importantes e os cultivou no coração: seguir a verdade não importa onde levasse; ser honesto com outros e especialmente consigo mesmo; e agir de modo coerente. Ler a Bíblia, entretanto, o deixou frustrado. Ele não entendia o que lia. Certa noite, ele orou desesperadamente pedindo que Deus enviasse alguém explicar a Bíblia. “Deus, me perdoe por não entender Sua Palavra”, orou. Em suas pesquisas no

YouTube, ele encontrou o sermão de um evangelista adventista. Ao assistir ao vídeo, algo aclarou em sua mente. Ele gostou que o evangelista usava a Bíblia para corroborar com tudo que ele dizia.

Em pouco tempo, ele via cinco sermões por dia, sua mente absorvia esse novo conhecimento como uma esponja. Convenceu-se de que o sétimo dia era o dia sagrado e começou a frequentar uma igreja adventista da cidade, Colônia, aos sábados. Ele queria adorar o Deus Criador. Queria provar o equívoco do mal que diz ser impossível guardar os mandamentos de Deus. Ele queria ser honesto e seguir a verdade não importa onde quer que isso levasse.

O fato de que ainda morasse com os pais dificultou sua decisão em favor de uma vida santa. Seus pais não oravam antes das refeições e assistiam à TV aos sábados. Dúvidas surgiram em sua mente sobre a importância de guardar o sábado. Ele ponderou as palavras de Jesus em Marcos 2:27, E então Ihes disse: "O sábado foi feito por causa do homem, e não o homem por causa do sábado." Lembrou-se da fala de Paulo: "Porque vocês não estão debaixo da lei, mas debaixo da graça" (Rom 6:14), e deixou de guardar o sábado.

Em uma noite de sexta-feira, após o pôr do sol, Vincenzo estava trabalhando no computador quando ouviu uma voz: "Você não está guardando um dos Meus mandamentos." Então, lembrou-se de seu princípio de ser honesto com os outros e consigo mesmo. "Sim, não estou guardando o sábado", Vincenzo disse. "Mas é realmente importante?" E voltou às suas atividades. "Você não está guardando a lei", a voz insistia. "O que você está fazendo não é correto." Ele questionou: "Mas é realmente tão importante guardar esse dia?" Tomando sua Bíblia, argumentou: "Jesus não disse que o homem é feito para o sábado? Não estamos mais debaixo da lei?"

A voz não desistiu de falar. Finalmente, Vincenzo orou pedindo orientação. Ajoelhou-se e, com a Bíblia nas mãos, pediu a Deus uma resposta clara. "Você deseja que eu guarde o sábado? Esse dia é importante? Eu preciso de ajuda para tomar essa decisão." Ele pensou que precisava criar uma oportunidade para Deus responder. Olhando a Bíblia em sua mão, decidiu abrir aleatoriamente e aceitar qualquer resposta que Deus lhe desse. Vincenzo fechou os olhos e abriu a Bíblia. Ao olhar a Bíblia leu Isaías 58:13, 14: "Se você vigiar seus pés para não profanar o sábado e para não fazer o que bem quiser em meu santo dia; se você chamar delícia o sábado e honroso o santo dia do Senhor, e se

honrá-lo, deixando de seguir seu próprio caminho, de fazer o que bem quiser e de falar futilidades, então você terá no Senhor a sua alegria.”

Vincenzo começou a chorar. Ele não podia continuar trabalhando após uma resposta como essa. Desligou o computador e abriu a Bíblia. Desde então, Vincenzo não tem mais dúvida sobre a observância do sábado. Voltou a frequentar a igreja aos sábados e, agora aos 29 anos, ele é membro fiel da igreja adventista.

Parte da oferta do trimestre ajudará a reformar o prédio central da Marienhöhe Academy em Darmstadt, Alemanha. Muito obrigado por sua generosa oferta.

<Boxe>

Dicas da história

- Pronúncia de Vincenzo: <vihN-CHEHN-zoh>.
- Assistir ao vídeo sobre Vincenzo no *YouTube*: <http://bit.ly/Vincenzo-Gallina>.
- Fazer o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/Challenging-the-Sabbath).
- Fazer o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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8º Sábado

O missionário ateu

Nada deixava Jan Haugg mais entusiasmado que proteger o meio ambiente. Aos 18 anos, enquanto ainda cursava o Ensino Médio, ele se uniu a um partido político alemão que lutava contra os problemas globais do meio ambiente. Na universidade, ele convidava os amigos para assistir a filmes sobre o meio ambiente e tentava um estilo de vida mais sustentável por meio da escolha de alimentos, viagens, produtos de limpeza e higiene. Nos apartamentos que dividia com amigos apagava as luzes, para o grande aborrecimento dos colegas.

Ele era um missionário, porém sem Jesus. Sua religião era salvar o ambiente. Como estudante de negócios internacionais, Jan conseguiu um estágio em um Banco ecologicamente correto e decidiu cumprir uma exigência de trabalho internacional na capital da Noruega, Oslo. Mas ele teve dificuldade de encontrar um local acessível para morar. Então, lembrou-se de uma família que havia conhecido há dois anos, quando desejava aprender a ser mais autossuficiente, e precisou passar um verão em uma fazenda norueguesa. Ele enviou um e-mail à família e, vários dias depois, responderam que haviam encontrado um local em Oslo.

Logo após chegar a Oslo, Jan percebeu que estava cercado de adventistas. Seu novo colega, David Mikkelsen, era adventista e vivia em um quartinho em uma casa da igreja destinada a estudantes adventistas. Jan era um ateu obstinado da antiga Alemanha oriental, que tem a maior concentração de ateus do mundo. Mais de 60% da população alemã oriental se identificam como ateia. Embora feliz por haver encontrado um local para ficar, Jan pensou: “Eles tentarão me converter, mas não conseguirão. Sei no que eu creio.” Durante três meses, nada aconteceu. Jan gostou dos alunos adventistas. Eles eram gentis, mesmo quando ele violava as regras sobre não beber bebidas alcóolicas. Eles ganharam sua confiança, ajudando-o no que fosse necessário.

Certo dia, Jan foi convidado por 50 jovens adventistas para uma viagem de navio ao sul da Noruega. Jan gostou do passeio e ficou muito feliz ao perceber

que os jovens tinham interesse em proteger o meio ambiente. Então, um dos líderes dos jovens, Joakim Hjortland, convidou Jan para estudar a Bíblia com ele. Jan não estava interessado, mas não quis ofendê-lo, e tentou dar uma boa desculpa. “Hoje estou sem tempo”, disse. “Talvez, amanhã.” Na manhã seguinte, Joakim disse. “Ei, lembra-se do que conversamos ontem? Que tal estudar a Bíblia?” Jan tentou dar outra desculpa. “Não posso estudar a Bíblia porque não tenho uma”, disse. Depois, ele percebeu que foi a desculpa mais esfarrapada que deu. Ele estava cercado com pessoas que tinham Bíblias. Em instantes, ele estaria segurando uma Bíblia.

Para acreditar na Bíblia, uma pessoa precisa, em primeiro lugar, acreditar que era a Palavra de Deus. Jan não acreditava em Deus. Joakim abriu a Bíblia em Daniel 2. Ele ficou impressionado ao ouvir as profecias de Daniel sobre ascensão e queda dos reinos da Babilônia, Medo-Pérsia, Grécia e Roma. Viu que a Europa atual estava fragmentada como demonstrada nos pés da estátua de ferro e barro. Percebeu que a Bíblia continha informações sobrenaturais e comprou um exemplar para um estudo adicional. Em Oslo, os amigos adventistas o ajudaram a encontrar respostas bíblicas às perguntas sobre a origem do pecado, porque Deus não destruiu Satanás, e como o relato bíblico da criação seria mais verossímil que a Evolução. Até que chegou o dia que decidiu entregar o coração a Deus.

“Eu nunca quis me tornar cristão, mas o peso das evidências foi muito pesado”, diz. “Deus deve existir. E se Ele existe e é quem diz ser, então, não haveria consequência mais lógica a não ser segui-Lo. Quem quer participar do time que já perdeu a batalha? Isso seria uma estupidez. Quero fazer parte do time vencedor.”

Hoje, Jan tem 30 anos e estuda teologia no Seminário Bogenhofen, Áustria. Depois da formatura, ele espera compartilhar o evangelho com os ateus da Alemanha Oriental e com os ativistas ambientais: “Quero ministrar especialmente às pessoas dos movimentos ecologistas que desejam salvar o mundo com seus próprios esforços. “Se simplesmente colocassem Jesus em evidencia, seus esforços seriam canalizados para a direção correta. Eles são missionários, mas sem Jesus. Seu trabalho não conduz à vida eterna.”

Parte da oferta do trimestre ajudara a reformar o prédio central da Marienhöhe Academy em Darmstadt, Alemanha. Somos gratos pelas generosas ofertas.

<Boxe>

Dicas da história

- Pronúncia de Jan: <YAN>.
- Assistir ao vídeo sobre Jan no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Jan-Haugg.
- Fazer o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/Atheist-Missionary).
- Fazer o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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9º Sábado

A oração no banheiro

Foi um primeiro ano muito difícil na faculdade adventista na Espanha. Dante Marvin Herrman usou suas últimas economias para pagar a mensalidade anual de aproximadamente cinco mil euros. No período de aulas ele trabalhou para ganhar essa quantia a fim de sustentar a esposa e dois filhos. Agora, ele enfrentava um longo verão longe de casa, trabalhando na colportagem para pagar o segundo ano de estudos.

Dante não se importava com o trabalho duro, mas não havia se matriculado no Centro Universitário Adventista de Sagunto para vender livros. Ele queria passar o verão viajando pelas igrejas, contando quem ele era, um alemão tatuado, que havia abandonado as drogas nas Ilhas Canárias para se tornar adventista. Dante precisava conversar com Deus sobre seus problemas financeiros. Portanto, escolheu um lugar bem tranquilo, o banheiro do apartamento, e fechou a porta. Ajoelhado, desabafou com Deus.

“Papai, o primeiro ano terminou. Recebi as melhores notas da sala e sinto que Tu me chamaste para cá”, disse. Ele sempre se dirigia a Deus como “Papai” nas orações pessoais. “Papai, sei que Tu provês bolsas para alguns

alunos. Por favor, não quero trabalhar como colportor com o objetivo de ganhar dinheiro. Quero falar de Jesus. Preciso de liberdade para pregar. Não tenho dinheiro depois de usar minhas economias. Papai, por favor, me ajude.”

Dante fez uma pausa e sentiu algo como uma voz massa e delicada responder em sua mente. “De quanto você precisa?” “Deixe-me ver”, ele respondeu. “Tenho cinco anos de faculdade e o valor é de dez mil euros por ano. Preciso de 50 mil euros.” “Tudo bem Dante”, a voz disse. “Você crê que posso lhe dar essa quantia?” “Você sabe que eu não acredito”, Dante respondeu. “Porém, sou grato porque me que podes ajudar a crer e agradeço pela doação de 50 mil euros.” Passados dez minutos, Dante recebeu exatamente a quantia de que necessitava.

Após orar, ele saiu do banheiro e foi até o quarto de visitas para ver a mãe, que o visitava. “Oi”, ele disse enquanto entrava no quarto. “Saiba que eu te amo?” A mãe estava sentada imóvel na cama e seu rosto estava branco como uma folha de papel. Ela estava com um celular na mão. “O que aconteceu?”, Dante perguntou preocupado. “Aconteceu algo maravilhoso”, ela disse. “O que foi?”, ele insistiu. “Você sabe que, por dez anos, tentei vender minha casa da Alemanha. Bem, recebi uma mensagem no *WhatsApp* de um homem que quer comprar a casa e ofereceu 50 mil euros a mais do que eu pedi.”

Dante não sabia o que fazer. Ele não achava certo deixar escapar. “Esse é meu dinheiro. Orei por ele.” “Espere”, ele disse em voz alta. “Espere um momento. Preciso ir ao banheiro.” Ali, trancou a porta e ajoelhou-se. “Papai, se eu tivesse pedido 100 mil euros, Você teria me dado?”, perguntou. “Dante. Você pediu 50.000 euros e eu lhe dei a quantia pedida”, foi a resposta. “Sim, mas se eu tivesse pedido 100 mil teria me dado essa benção?” “Sim, poderia ter abençoado com 100 mil euros. Mas você pediu 50 mil euros, por isso dei justamente essa quantia.”

“Posso mudar de ideia?” “Não, não pode,” a voz disse. “Você precisa aprender a pensar alto. Você pensa muito pequeno. Você está pensando somente no momento, mas Eu quero lhe dar mais. Quero que você creia em Mim. Quero que creia que lhe darei o que precisar.” “Tudo bem”, Dante disse. “Mas quem dirá a minha mãe que ela vai precisar dar esse dinheiro?” “Você crê que posso fazer isso?” “Sim, eu creio, eu creio!”, Dante exclamou. Ele voltou ao quarto de visitas, onde a mãe continuava sentada na cama. “Dante, quer saber

de uma coisa?”, ela disse enquanto ele entrava no quarto. “Acho que seria melhor se eu lhe desse essa quantia extra para você pagar seus estudos.”

Dante, que tem 36 anos e está concluindo o segundo ano, crê que Deus guia aqueles que caminham em obediência e fé. “Quando Deus respondeu à minha oração, percebi que caminhar com Deus é ter fé”, diz. “Deus não revelará necessariamente todo o seu futuro. Ele só pede para confiar Nele.”

Parte da oferta do trimestre ajudará o Centro Universitário Adventista de Sagunto a expandir seu campo com um novo edifício para o seminário, permitindo que mais alunos como Dante possam estudar para servir a Deus.

<Boxe>

Dicas da história

- Assistir ao vídeo sobre Dante no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Dante-Herrmann.
- Fazer o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou base de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/Dante-photos).
- Fazer o *download* das fotos dos projetos trimestrais: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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10º Sábado

O sonho de dez anos

Somente três crianças adventistas frequentavam a escola de ensino fundamental na capital da Romênia, Bucareste. Todas estavam no oitavo ano e eram colegas de Laurentiu Stefan Druga. Certo dia, as crianças o convidaram para a igreja, onde ele se apaixonou por Jesus e foi batizado. Logo, um desejo de ser pastor brotou no coração. Entretanto, a escola adventista de Bucareste, só tinha 20 vagas. Laurentiu precisava ser aprovado em um exame de admissão. No dia do exame, ele entrou na sala de aula e sentou-se diante de uma grande mesa. Ele pegou a folha de papel à sua frente e respondeu o exame, ficando em 21º lugar.

“Não há problema”, ele disse aos pais. “Vou tentar no próximo ano.”
Porém, naquele ano, ele descuidou da vida espiritual. Quando chegou a época

do exame, ele entrou na mesma sala de aula e sentou à mesma mesa. Ele olhou para o papel da prova. Mas, algo parecia errado. Ele sabia que sua vida não estava correta e sua mente deu um branco. Abruptamente, ele se levantou e saiu da sala.

Vários anos se passaram. Laurentiu mudou para a Espanha e começou a trabalhar na construção civil. Casou-se e se afastou de Deus. Aos 23 anos, encontrou um tio adventista, que também trabalhava na Espanha. Então, lembrou-se de seu primeiro amor por Deus e do seu desejo de se tornar pastor. Ele e a esposa decidiram ser batizados no mesmo dia. Antes desse grande dia, Laurentiu começou a planejar sua nova vida. “Senhor”, ele orou. “Qual é o Seu plano para mim?” No dia seguinte, orou novamente, “Deus, qual é Seu plano para minha vida?”

Duas noites depois do batismo, Laurentiu teve um sonho. Nele, ele entrava em uma sala de aula, sentava-se à grande mesa e olhava para uma folha de papel. Amedrontado, percebeu que estava em uma prova de matemática e não havia estudado no ano anterior. Sua mente sofreu um bloqueio. O medo se transformou em pânico e o coração batia freneticamente. Naquele momento, ele acordou. Eram três horas da manhã. “Foi apenas um sonho”, procurou tranquilizar-se. Voltou a dormir e teve um segundo sonho. Dessa vez, ele estava em pé, conversando e sorrindo no púlpito de sua igreja em Madri. As pessoas o ouviam com muito interesse. A paz encheu o coração. Ele sentiu a presença de Deus.

Amanheceu, e Laurentiu ignorou os sonhos. Naquela noite, como sempre fazia, orou: “Deus, qual é Seu plano para minha vida?” Em seu sono, sonhou que entrava em uma sala de aula e sentava diante de uma grande mesa. Dessa vez, ele estava fazendo uma prova de língua romena. Ele não estudava havia um ano e sua mente novamente bloqueou. Ele ficou em pânico. Entretanto, no momento seguinte estava sentado à outra mesa. Agora ele estava feliz e sorrindo enquanto falava para um grupo de pessoas que o ouviam com interesse. Feliz, ele sentiu a presença de Deus.

Sonhos similares ocorreram quase todas as noites. A sala de aula sempre era a mesma, mas os exames eram variados. Ele nunca estava preparado para a avaliação e sentia-se infeliz. Então a cena mudava para uma igreja, outra mesa ou uma multidão. Ele estava ensinando e percebeu a presença de Deus. Após

três meses de sonhos, Laurentiu se perguntou se Deus desejava que tornasse pastor. “Mas como? Não posso abandonar meu emprego. Sou casado e tenho uma família para sustentar.”

Os sonhos continuaram. Um ano se passou. Então dois, três, quatro anos. Ele contou aos pais e vários amigos o sonho, mas eles descartaram, dizendo que era obra de seu subconsciente. Eventualmente, ele se acostumou com os sonhos. Enquanto dormia, esperava a parte do sonho que o preocupava para, em seguida, aproveitar a agradável segunda parte. Quase toda noite, Laurentiu continuou orando: “Deus, qual é Seu plano para minha vida?”

Após dez anos, Laurentiu falou sobre seus sonhos para a esposa. Certa noite, ele e a esposa assistiram a uma conferência de jovens com cerca de 250 pessoas. O pregador parecia ler seus pensamentos. Toda vez que Laurentiu levantava uma objeção em sua mente sobre se tornar pastor, o palestrante parecia responder da plataforma. A esposa de Laurentiu o cutucou. “Você tem que ir ao seminário”, disse ela.

Três meses depois, Laurentiu, a esposa e o filho de nove anos se mudaram para o Centro Universitário Adventista de Sagunto, localizado há 380km a leste de Madri. A partir daquele dia, os sonhos pararam. Laurentiu está no segundo ano de seminário. “Cada aula e cada momento que vivo com os professores representa a segunda parte do sonho”, ele diz. “Não sinto falta da segunda parte do sonho. A segunda parte é a realidade da minha vida diária.”

Parte da oferta do trimestre ajudará a construir um edifício para o Seminário onde Laurentius estuda, no Centro Universitário Adventista de Sagunto.

<Boxe>

Dicas da história

- Pronúncia de Laurentiu: <lau-REN-tee-oo>
- Ler a história sobre quando Laurentiu tinha dez anos de idade no Informativo Mundial dos Menores.
- Assistir ao vídeo sobre Laurentiu no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Laurentiu-Druga.
- Fazer o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/same-dream-years).

- Fazer o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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11º Sábado

A grande decisão

O que você faz quando precisa tomar uma decisão? Paula Cristina Ghibut tinha uma grande decisão para fazer. Ela estava com 14 anos e perto de terminar o oitavo ano na Romênia. Ela precisava decidir onde estudar no Ensino Médio. Paula queria ser professora do ensino fundamental. Ela podia estudar na escola pública mais próxima que oferecia o curso de magistério para alunos do ensino médio. Mas, frequentou a escola adventista desde o jardim da infância, que só oferecia o curso de exatas.

Paula orou e leu a Bíblia em sua casa no vilarejo de Targu Mures na região centro-norte da Romênia. Ela conversou com os pais e leu as passagens da escritora pioneira da Igreja Adventista, Ellen White. Enquanto lia, descobriu um conselho que parecia sugerir que as crianças adventistas deveriam estudar em escolas não adventistas para ser uma luz no mundo.

No livro *Conselhos aos Pais, Professores e Estudantes*, de Ellen White, ela leu: “Os seguidores de Cristo devem separar-se do mundo em princípios e em interesses; não se devem, porém, isolar do mundo” (p. 323). No livro *O Grande Conflito*, ela descobriu que, no século 18, os valdenses costumavam usar sua influência cristã para transformar escolas inteiras. Ela pensou que essa seria uma boa oportunidade de falar de Jesus, enquanto se preparava para ser uma professora. Mas, primeiro ela precisava ser aprovada no exame de admissão. Então orou: “Senhor, se for Tua vontade que estude na escola pública, ajude-me a passar no exame.”

A concorrência para 150 vagas na escola era forte. Quatro alunos para cada vaga. Paula ficou em sétimo lugar. Mas Paula não sentiu paz. Era difícil sair da escola adventista. Ela sabia que os professores da escola pública não oravam e os alunos não cantavam sobre Jesus. Duas semanas antes das

aulas começarem, Paula sonhou que estava na escola pública. Os professores eram orgulhosos, frios e a culpavam pelos erros de seus colegas. Paula ficou magoada com as acusações falsas. No final do dia, enquanto preparava para voltar para casa, ouviu uma voz: “Vá embora e não volte nunca mais!” Paula virou-se para ver que estava gritando, mas não viu ninguém.

Ao acordar pela manhã, tentou entender o significado do sonho. Ela não sabia se era um sonho enviado por Deus, porque sabia que o Inimigo também poderia causar sonhos. “Deus, se esse sonho foi enviado pelo Senhor, por favor confirme de outra maneira”, ela orou. Paula pediu conselho aos pais. Eles lhe disseram que precisava decidir por si. Então ela orou e jejuou por vários dias. Também leu a Bíblia e livros de Ellen White, e ficou impressionada ao ver que tudo o que ela lia indicava que deveria ir para a escola adventista.

Em *Conselhos para Pais, Professores e Estudantes*, leu: “Confiar as crianças a professores orgulhosos e destituídos de amor, é mau. Nossas escolas da igreja são ordenadas por Deus a fim de preparar as crianças para essa grande obra” (p. 175, 176). Ela pensou: “Eu queria estudar para ser professora na escola pública, mas na escola adventista posso ser treinada ainda melhor, embora a ênfase seja nas ciências exatas.” Também leu no livro *Orientação da Criança*: “Planejando acerca da educação dos filhos, fora do lar, os pais devem compenetrar-se de que não mais é coisa livre de perigo enviá-los às escolas públicas, e cumpre que se esforcem para os enviar às escolas onde obtenham educação baseada em fundamentos bíblicos” (p. 304).

Paula decidiu continuar na Escola Adventista. Ela aprendeu algumas lições importantes sobre entender a vontade de Deus. Orou, pediu conselho aos pais, leu a Bíblia e os livros de Ellen White. Então, tomou uma decisão, e tem certeza de que foi a melhor. Durante o Ensino Médio, entregou o coração a Jesus e foi batizada aos 16 anos. Agora ela tem 18 anos e se formará em breve. Ela percebeu terá muito tempo para aprender a ser professora na universidade.

“Minha caminhada com Deus tem sido um processo”, ela disse. “Nunca usei drogas e depois tive história miraculosa de conversão. Em vez disso, Deus me conduziu passo a passo. Quero incentivar os jovens a ter um relacionamento crescente com Cristo. Em cada passo da vida precisamos reconhecê-Lo e deixar que Ele atue em nossa vida.”

Há três anos, parte da oferta do trimestre ajudou uma igreja a realizar um programa de evangelismo com os jovens na Romênia. Agradecemos por suas ofertas missionárias.

<Boxe>

Dicas da história

- Assista ao vídeo sobre Paula no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Paula-Ghibut.
- Faça o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/making-big-decision).
- Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

<fim boxe>

12º Sábado

Encontro com Deus na prisão

Elena é uma garota introvertida de 20 anos, que vive na Romênia e gosta muito de ler testemunhos pessoais. Na primeira vez em que conheceu um pastor adventista, ele perguntou: “Que tipo de livros você gosta de ler?” Ela mencionou o título do último livro que havia lido, um testemunho pessoal escrito por um autor cristão. Após uma semana, o pastor trouxe vários livros com testemunhos pessoais. Entusiasmada por esse tipo de leitura, Elena deseja, algum dia, escrever seu testemunho pessoal. Se pudesse fazer isso a partir de hoje, ela iniciaria com os momentos felizes da infância, gostaria de descrever como provocava continuamente os bisavós, fazendo com que eles ficassem chateados com a neta. Ela só tinha quatro ou cinco anos de idade e achava divertido provocá-los.

Nesse seu testemunho, elaalaria do primeiro dia de aula. Foi um dia feliz. A bisavó a levou para a escola e depois ajudou com a tarefa escolar. Na verdade, os bisavós a amavam muito. Ela viveu com eles até ser presa. Sua história também contaria os momentos felizes na prisão. Ela descreveria as pessoas boas que conheceu, como o pastor adventista que visita o local uma semana para ensinar jovens condenados sobre a vida e sobre Deus. O pastor chegava acompanhado de três universitários adventistas e eles mostravam

apresentações educacionais em PowerPoint. Ela abandonou a escola no oitavo ano, por isso tudo que eles mostravam era novo e interessante. Depois, oravam e conversavam.

Em seu testemunho, Elena contaria sobre o pior momento da vida. Foi um período de nove meses desde sua detenção aos 17 anos e a chegada à prisão para cumprir uma sentença de doze anos. Ela estava muito sozinha. Nenhum familiar a visitou e ninguém contratou um advogado para representá-la. A bisavó morreu vários meses antes de sua prisão e o bisavô estava idoso e enfermo. Durante os longos meses de detenção, ela nunca ouviu uma palavra gentil.

Mas, tudo mudou quando chegou à prisão. Alguns guardas eram bons, especialmente a mulher designada para ajudá-la a reconstruir a vida. Ela também gostou do programa adventista do ministério das prisões. Por meio desse programa semanal, ela conheceu pessoas maravilhosas e começou a se aproximar delas. Pensava que nunca confiaria em alguém, mas os adventistas eram gentis e lhe ensinaram a ser prestativa e a confiar em Deus. Isso era importante para Elena. Ela está presa por três anos e sete meses, e estará qualificada para receber liberdade condicional em dois anos. Seu comportamento era muito importante para conseguir a condicional. Ela precisava mostrar que era independente e útil para a sociedade.

Caso ela viesse a escrever o testemunho, admitiria que experimentou uma vida de tristeza em 20 anos. Era muito difícil falar sobre isso. A família passava por dificuldades financeiras. Eles não estavam presentes quando deveriam estar. Muitas coisas violentas aconteceram na vida dela. Coisas que fugiam do seu controle. Talvez porque Elena era uma pessoa fechada e introvertida. Se a bisavó não tivesse falecido, Elena não seria presa. Porém, coisas muito ruins aconteceram depois ela faleceu, e Elena cometeu um assassinato.

Após sair da prisão, ela gostaria de formar uma família e fazer algo importante na vida. Mas, por enquanto, ela é simplesmente uma moça introvertida de 20 anos que gosta de ler testemunhos pessoais.

Há três anos, parte da oferta do trimestre ajudou um programa evangelístico para os jovens da Romênia. Nós estamos muito agradecidos por essas ofertas especiais.

<Boxe>

Dica da história

- Peça a uma jovem para compartilhar este testemunho durante a Escola Sabatina.
- O Informativo Mundial não identificou Elena pelo nome completo por questões de privacidade. Pela mesma razão, não foram disponibilizados fotos ou vídeos.
- Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do décimo terceiro sábado no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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13º Sábado

<Box 1>

Programa do Décimo Terceiro Sábado

Hino Inicial	“Bem-vindo o sábado”, <i>Hinário Adventista</i> , nº 532
Boas-vindas	Coordenador ou professor de Escola Sabatina
Oração	
História	“Ciganos descobrem o sábado”
Ofertas	
Hino Final	“Havemos de Colher”, <i>Hinário Adventista</i> , nº 312
Oração	

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Ciganos descobrem o sábado

Os dois mil habitantes de um assentamento cigano na Eslováquia se consideravam cristãos. Mas ninguém frequentava a igreja nem lia a Bíblia. Depois da independência da Eslováquia em 1993, vários missionários começaram a visitar o assentamento Rakúsy. Primeiramente, um casal que pregava na rua principal todos os domingos. As pessoas se aproximavam para ouvir, mas não entendiam muito porque não liam a Bíblia. Um morador, Peter Mizigar, estava mais interessado em se apresentar com sua banda do que em ouvir a pregação. Ele tocava baixo em casamentos e funerais. Normalmente,

os membros da banda, incluindo seu irmão mais novo, Pavol, gastava o que ganhavam em álcool. Mas ele nunca bebia durante as apresentações. Ele era o escolhido para dirigir.

Certo dia, enquanto se apresentava sóbrio, ele percebeu que toda audiência se dividia em dois grupos: um com boas maneiras e inteligência, e o outro com uma atitude mais primitiva. Os outros músicos não percebiam a diferença porque estavam bêbados. Peter assistiu à multidão com fascinação em shows. As diferenças entre os dois grupos de ciganos desapareciam enquanto bebiam. Depois de começarem a beber, o grupo as pessoas educadas despiam-se até a cintura e se comportavam como os do grupo mais simples. Todos os eventos terminavam em uma luta de bêbados, mesmo nos funerais.

Quando uma plateia ligou Peter e outros músicos a um frenesi alcóolico na Republica Tcheca, Peter e seu irmão decidiram sair da banda. “Quero deixar de tocar música mundana”, Pavol disse. “Gostaria de tocar para Deus.” Pavol ouvia as músicas cristãs que os missionários compartilhavam. Em pouco tempo, Peter, Pavol e os outros membros da banda passaram a tocar músicas cristãs na casa de Pavol. Durante uma sessão, Peter notou uma Bíblia em cima da mesa. “Que tipo de livro é este?”, ele perguntou, tomando-a nas mãos. Pavol a arrebatou da mão dele, dizendo: “Coloque na mesa. Não é para você.”

Pavol estava estudando a Bíblia e não queria emprestá-la. Enquanto todos continuaram tocando, Peter colocou a Bíblia sorrateiramente sob o braço e saiu de casa. Em casa, leu-a no mês seguinte, passando por Apocalipse e os evangelhos. Depois de algum tempo, admitiu ao irmão que pegara a Bíblia. Como irmão mais novo, Pavol só pôde pedir a Peter que a devolvesse quando terminasse.

Certo dia, Peter leu Marcos 16:16, onde Jesus disse: “Quem crê e for batizado será salvo.” Ele fechou a Bíblia e abriu de novo. O mesmo verso apareceu: “Quem crê e for batizado será salvo.” Peter abriu e fechou a Bíblia três vezes e todas as vezes abriu no mesmo verso. Ele pegou a Bíblia e correu para a casa do irmão. Pavol estava tocando com dois amigos. “Por favor, venha e me batize”, Peter disse. Ele nada sabia sobre o batismo. Apenas queria obedecer a Jesus e ser batizado. “Você quer que eu o batize?”, Pavol perguntou.

“Sim, está escrito claramente que quem for batizado será salvo”, Peter respondeu.

Pavol estava hesitante, mas Peter estava inflexível. Os dois irmãos e os dois amigos entraram em um riacho de um metro de profundidade próximo ao assentamento e batizaram um ao outro. Eles confessaram seus pecados a Deus e suplicaram perdão. Depois, experimentaram uma grande alegria e falaram sobre o Céu se regozijar pelos batismos. Depois daquele dia, os quatro homens deixaram de falar palavrões, fumar e beber. Os vizinhos ficaram impressionados. Antes, quando os homens ficavam bêbados as pessoas fugiam de medo.

Os quatro amigos decidiram estudar a Bíblia diariamente juntos. Algumas vezes eles começavam durante a noite e iam até a manhã seguinte. Outras pessoas se uniram ao grupo da Bíblia. Muitas vezes 50 a 100 pessoas se acomodavam na sala de estar e cozinha da casa de Peter. Durante uma sessão da madrugada, a atenção de Pedro foi atraída a Marcos 16:9, que começava: “Quando Jesus ressuscitou, na madrugada do primeiro dia da semana...” Peter se lembrou de que Jesus e Seus discípulos descansaram no sétimo dia, sábado, e questionou porque os missionários que os visitavam guardavam o domingo. Nenhum missionário respondeu essa pergunta.

O grupo de estudos bíblicos continuou lendo a Bíblia e descobriu o quarto mandamento. Eles começaram a guardar o sábado. Certo dia, Peter mencionou sua perplexidade sobre o domingo a um desconhecido que visitava um parente cigano. O homem, Josif, que por acaso era adventista, contou que havia uma religião que guardava o sábado. Peter convidou Josif para falar no grupo de estudos. Depois Josif levou Peter e seus amigos para visitarem igrejas adventistas da região. Peter ficou impressionado com a reverência do culto adventista.

A sala de estar de Peter se transformou em uma igreja adventista com culto no sábado e outras programações. Em 2015, Peter, o irmão e 24 membros do grupo de estudos bíblicos foram batizados na igreja adventista. Nos dois anos seguintes, mais dez pessoas foram batizadas. Em 2018, uma igreja adventista foi construída nos arredores do assentamento e recebe aproximadamente 100 pessoas todos os sábados.

Essa é a igreja que Deus construiu a partir do zero na sala de estar da casa de Peter. Parte da oferta do trimestre ajudar a criar programas para crianças carentes da igreja em Rakúzy, Eslováquia. Agradecemos muito pelas ofertas que serão doadas neste trimestre e ajudarão esse e outros projetos missionários na Bulgária, Alemanha e Espanha.

<Boxe 2>

Dicas da história

- O narrador não precisa memorizar a história, mas deve estar familiarizado com o material para que não seja necessário ler ao contar a história à congregação.
- Leia a história de um garoto de doze anos cuja vida foi transformada durante os cultos na casa de Peter no Informativo Mundial das Missões dos Menores.
- Assista ao vídeo sobre Peter no *YouTube*: bit.ly/Peter-Mizigar.
- Faça o *download* das fotos no *Facebook* (bit.ly/fb-mq) ou banco de dados ADAMS (bit.ly/roma-village-sabbath).
- Faça o *download* das fotos dos projetos do trimestre no site: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

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Mission

First Quarter, 2020

Inter-European Division

1-20 Mission

Caption: Paula Cristina Ghibut had a big decision to make in Romania. She learned God's will through her parents, prayer, the Bible, and Ellen White. Story, Page 24.

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*T of special interest to youth

Your Offerings at Work

Three years ago, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped construct a Seventh-day Adventist church in Ragusa, Italy. You can read a story from Ragusa on page 6.

[Insert photo here.]

Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter we feature the Inter-European Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in 20 countries and territories: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and Vatican City.

The region is home to 338.1 million people, including 178,453 Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 1,895 people.

God is doing great things in this region. As I traveled across Europe to conduct interviews, I heard astounding stories about angels, dreams, miracles, and more. Every supernatural encounter led to the same result — one or more individuals being drawn to Jesus. I am excited to share these stories with you!

The four Thirteenth Sabbath projects for this quarter are listed below.

Special Features

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer a variety of photos, videos, and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story. Download a PDF of facts and activities at bit.ly/EUD-fastfacts-2020.

Also, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/missionquarterlies for regular updates.

For photos of tourist sites and other scenes from the featured countries, I recommend searching on a free photo bank such as pixabay.com and unsplash.com.

You also can download the PDF version of the youth and adult Mission magazine at bit.ly/adultmission and the Children's Mission magazine at

bit.ly/childrensmission. Mission Spotlight videos are available at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

If you have found especially effective ways to share mission stories, or if I can be of assistance, contact me at mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org.

Finally, your support for mission is essential for church unity. Ellen White writes in "Christian Service," p. 47, "Never can the unity for which Christ prayed exist until spirituality is brought into missionary service, and until the church becomes an agency for the support of missions. The efforts of the missionaries will not accomplish what they should until the church members in the home field show, not only in word, but in deed, that they realize the obligation resting on them to give these missionaries their hearty support."

Thank you for encouraging church members to be mission-minded!

Andrew McChesney
Editor

—Box— Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help to:

- Expand Sagunto Adventist College with a new seminary building in Spain
- Renovate landmark main building at Marienhöhe Academy in Darmstadt, Germany

- Establish an educational outreach program for vulnerable children in the Czech Republic and Slovakia
- Build a church with children's center in Sofia, Bulgaria

—End Box—

New Year's Miracle

Maria Bachvarova, 73

Bulgaria

January 4

Three elderly women decided to pray for unbelieving relatives on Bulgaria's biggest holiday, New Year's Eve.

The trio, members of Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church, would pray at 11:30 p.m. and then again at 12:15 a.m. in their homes in Bulgaria's capital.

On Dec. 31, when the appointed time arrived, Maria Bachvarova left her husband and adult son at their New Year's Eve celebration and slipped into another room. She prayed that both would accept Jesus. Then she remembered her younger brother, Nikolai. She had invited Nikolai, 66, to attend the New Year's celebration in her home, but he hadn't shown up.

Nikolai was gentle, diligent, and honest, but he had suffered a series of misfortunes. Once a well-paid business executive, he had gone bankrupt, and his wife had left him. Nearly penniless, he worked as a security guard at a construction site.

Maria prayed for Nikolai for 25 minutes, returned to the family celebration for 20 minutes, and then prayed for her brother again. Nikolai didn't show up that night.

But he did come the next day, and he had quite a story to share.

The previous night, he was supposed to keep the night watch at a construction site. But when he arrived, the other guard sent him away, saying that he was waiting for his wife and the couple wanted to celebrate the New Year together at the site.

Nikolai decided to go to his sister, and he went to the nearby tram stop. It was 10:30 p.m. He waited two hours for a tram, but none came.

Suddenly, a window opened in a newly constructed apartment building behind the tram stop, and a man and woman appeared. They invited Nikolai home.

Nikolai entered a well-furnished apartment, and he sat in a comfortable armchair. Later he ate a delicious meal, and his hosts played Macedonian music, which happened to be his favorite. As a business executive, he had developed a taste for fine things, and now he enjoyed his old way of life. In the morning, his hosts woke him up and told him that a taxi was waiting outside. They had already paid the fare. Saying good-bye, they gave him a banknote of 50 Bulgarian lev, about U.S.\$30. Nikolai had been flat broke.

Maria wept when Nikolai finished. "God took care of you last night," she said.

She went into another room and returned with a Bible and an Adventist book to present to the couple as a gift. "Tell them 'thank you' from me," she said.

Several days later, Nikolai gave the Bible and the book back to Maria.

"It is the strangest thing," he said. "I went back to the apartment building and found that it is unfinished. No one lives there yet."

The apartment building was vacant. At that moment, Maria understood that God had sent angels to care for her lonely brother on New Year's Eve. God had answered her prayers for Nikolai.

After that miracle in 2012, Nikolai started to go to church with his sister on Sabbaths. God hears us when we pray for unbelieving loved ones. As with Maria and Nikolai, He can answer in remarkable ways.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Maria's church, the Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church, move from rented premises to its own building.

By Andrew McChesney

Sidebar: Guns and Books

Maria Bachvarova and a friend decided to go door to door selling Adventist books in a new apartment high-rise in Sofia.

The two women started at the ground floor and worked their way up, stopping at every door. Many never opened. Some were slammed shut in their faces.

On a higher floor, Maria and her friend exited the elevator and saw six apartment doors. As they paused to choose a door, all six doors flew open. Six huge men wearing black suits, white shirts, and black ties stepped out, pointing guns.

"We're offering books," Maria stammered.

The men roughly pushed the women back into the elevator. "Leave," one said.

In her fright, Maria pressed the wrong button. Instead of the bottom button to go down, she pressed the top button. When the elevator doors opened, the women saw only one door. Although scared, the women felt a strong urge to go to the door of the penthouse apartment. They prayed and pressed the doorbell.

An elegant-looking woman answered.

"Who are you looking for?" she asked.

"We have some interesting books to show you," Maria said.

The woman glanced at Ellen White's "Conflict of the Ages" series and other books and declared, "I'll buy them all."

Later Maria learned that the floor where they had been greeted by guns was owned by a mafia boss. The huge men with guns were his bodyguards. The man was killed shortly afterward. Maria was never able to enter the building again.

"I'm grateful to God that we were able to share those books with the woman on the top floor," she said.

Story Tips

Ask church members to share the names of unbelieving family members and then pray for them by name.

Watch Maria on YouTube: bit.ly/Maria-Bachvarova.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/new-years-miracle).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Miracle Church

Stoyan Petkov, 48

Bulgaria

January 11

Pastor Stoyan Petkov prayed for two years for a new church building in Sofia, Bulgaria. Unbeknownst to him, as he prayed world church leaders in the United States decided to give part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering from first quarter 2020 to build a new church for his congregation.

Stoyan didn't know that God had answered his prayers until the Thirteenth Sabbath project had been approved.

Here's what happened.

Stoyan became the pastor of the Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2015. At the time, the congregation met on the premises of an evangelical church.

The downtown location of the church was excellent, but Stoyan noticed a problem. The church was dead. People gathered to worship on Sabbaths, but that was all. No cooking classes or children's programs during the week. No prayer meetings.

Stoyan asked the owners of the evangelical church for permission to rent the building during the week, but they declined without explanation.

Stoyan decided to look for a new building on his own. He combed the neighborhood, walking up and down streets. Nothing. He started a prayer group to lift up the matter to God.

Months passed.

In March 2017, Stoyan stopped looking for a church building. Instead, he announced that the church would hold an Easter concert.

The church had no choir. It didn't have a place for a concert. Stoyan told the church's young people that they would organize the concert and sing. The youth willingly formed a choir, and Stoyan rented a hall with 50 seats for the concert.

The day before the concert, however, the landlord backed out, saying he had rented the hall to someone else.

Stoyan walked the streets and prayed. Passing a shopping center with many vacant shops, he considered speaking with the owner. But he only had a little money, and the owner wasn't interested in renting to religious groups. Nevertheless, Stoyan called the owner and, to his surprise, was able to rent a vacant shop for the concert.

The concert was a big success.

Afterward, the owner stopped by as church members cleaned up the hall.

"You are interesting people," he said. "I expected lots of noise and shouting, but you are very well-mannered."

Learning that the congregation needed a place to rent, he offered to knock down a wall and combine two shops into a large hall. He also offered a third shop on another floor where the church could hold children's programs for the community. The rental contract cost less than a contract to lease a church out of the city.

After the West Sofia church moved into the shopping center, church attendance grew rapidly, and the church's outreach programs mushroomed. The shopping center also saw changes. New tenants moved in, and the once-empty center bustled. This was not lost on the owner.

"You have brought me luck, and many people are renting now!" he exclaimed.

Church members started health classes, a cooking school, and children's programs. Five people were baptized in the first year at the new location.

"Two years ago, this was unthinkable," Stoyan said. "Before, I only went to church, preached, and returned home. God has opened doors."

But the church needed its own building. The pastor knew that the rent would not always remain low. In any case, church membership quickly shot up to 120, leaving little room to grow in the hall.

It was then that Stoyan learned from Bulgarian church leaders that his church had been chosen to receive part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in first quarter 2020.

Stoyan was thrilled!

Looking back, he said it is no coincidence that good things started to happen when he stopped worrying about finding a new church building and instead focused on spreading the gospel.

"The Lord provided us with a new place to rent when we planned the Easter concert," he said. "It was at that moment that I knew the Lord would provide us with our very own church building one day. It's important to move forward in spreading the gospel."

Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath offering to help construct a new building for Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Stoyan as: sto-YAN

Watch Stoyan on YouTube: bit.ly/Stoyan-Petkov.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/miracle-church).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Stranger With Warm Eyes

Jivko Grushev, 69

Bulgaria

January 18

The retired 67-year-old professor arrived at Bulgaria's national police academy with his last three copies of Ellen White's "The Great Controversy."

His mission: Enter the heavily guarded campus and deliver a book to the police academy's commander.

It had been a busy week for Jivko Grushev as he presented "The Great Controversy" to university leaders across Bulgaria's capital, Sofia. After delivering about 100 books, Jivko had three left in his bag. He walked up to the police officer guarding the police academy's gates. Just as he arrived at the gates, he watched a black limousine drive out. Greeting the police officer, Jivko said he wished to visit the commander.

"The commander isn't here," the officer said.

He had just left in the black limousine.

"Then I would like to speak with his secretary," Jivko said.

"What do you want to discuss with her?" the officer asked.

The question was unexpected, but Jivko immediately replied, "I would like to discuss a certain donation with her."

The officer wrote down Jivko's personal information and waved him onto the campus.

Walking to the academy's mammoth administrative building, Jivko wondered whether the officer had called ahead to announce his visit.

At the lobby's entrance, Jivko found a small gate and a glass booth for a police guard.

The gate, however, was open, and the glass booth was empty. Several police officers spoke animatedly near a gray marble staircase in the lobby.

Jivko boldly walked through the gate and asked the police officers for directions to the secretary.

"That way," an officer replied, gruffly, pointing to the gate and out the exit.

Jivko walked out the gate but remained in the building.

"Lord, I came to bring Your light here," he prayed. "Please intervene."

The police officers resumed their conversation.

At that moment, a man in his early 30s descended the gray marble staircase. His eyes met Jivko's and seemed to be saying, "Wait a minute." The man walked over to the police officers and spoke to them.

Jivko couldn't take his eyes off the man. He had never seen such an imposing, dignified-looking police officer. The man was slender and handsome.

"What does he do?" Jivko wondered.

The man wore black like the other officers, but his clothing was of a much higher quality. No epaulets decorated his shoulders.

When the man finished speaking with the officers, he looked at Jivko with warm eyes as if to say, "It is finished." Then he walked out the gate, passed Jivko, and exited the building.

The gruff officer rushed to the guard booth, and a female officer joined him. The two officers asked in unison, “Are you going to visit the secretary?”

The female officer jotted down Jivko’s personal information, and the gruff officer said, “I’ll take you to the secretary.” He ran up the marble stairs as if he were being chased, skipping two stairs at a time. Jivko struggled to keep up. At the top of the stairs, the officer opened a door and stared at the floor as Jivko entered. He closed the door from the outside.

Jivko introduced himself to the secretary and placed his three books in front of her.

“These are gifts for the commander and his deputies,” he said.

Leaving the academy a short time later, Jivko joyfully thanked God for helping him to accomplish a seemingly impossible mission. His mind returned to the handsome police officer with warm eyes. The man had appeared just in time to solve his problem. The books never would have been handed over to the secretary without his help.

Jivko had no doubt that the man was an angel sent by God so he could share the message of salvation. He remembered how Hebrews 1:14 describes angels, saying, “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”

The encounter with the kind stranger with warm eyes changed Jivko’s spiritual life, and he often thinks about that day.

“God is great in His desire to save people,” he said. “My heavenly Friend is so wonderful.”

Jivko is an elder at Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church, which will receive part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to construct its own church building in Bulgaria’s capital. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Jivko as: DZHEEV-ko

Watch Jivko on YouTube: bit.ly/Jivko-Grushev.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/stranger-with-eyes).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Trains, Trucks, and Sabbath

Rosen Nakov, 48

Bulgaria

January 25

The 10-year-old boy listened in amazement to his first sermon in a Seventh-day Adventist church.

The preacher told the story of a postman who picked up a letter addressed to Santa Claus. A small boy had written the letter, and he longed for a toy train. The postman didn't have a child of his own, and he decided to buy a toy train for the boy.

The boy was delighted to receive the present!

As young Rosen Nakov listened to the story, he also was delighted. He also had longed for a toy train in his home in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The story touched his heart, and he returned to the church the next Sabbath. And then the next. Soon he made friends with people at church and formed a friendship with Jesus.

After graduating from high school, Rosen needed to sign up for compulsory military service in the then-communist country. But he had two options: He could enlist as a soldier for two years, or he could work in a factory for five years. He chose the factory to avoid any problems with observing the Sabbath.

At least 10 Adventists worked at a mammoth truck factory in Sofia, and Rosen decided to work there for his alternative military service. Visiting the factory, Rosen met an Adventist who invited him to join him in a department that installed engines into trucks. Rosen went to the factory office to apply for the position. A manager, however, looked at Rosen's application papers and saw that he had experience as a car mechanic.

"Why are you applying for that job of installing engines?" he said. "You should repair truck engines in the garage."

Rosen immediately asked whether the position gave Saturdays off.

"Yes," the manager replied. "The job is from Monday to Friday."

He sent Rosen to the human resources department to finish the paperwork. When Rosen presented his documents at human resources, however, a manager said, "Why are you applying to repair truck engines? You should work in the garage's small engines shop."

On Rosen's first day at the factory, he learned that six other people worked in the small engines shop. On lunch break in the factory cafeteria, a new coworker asked, "Tell us, who do you know in top management?"

"What do you mean?" Rosen asked.

"You must have a high-level friend in top management to get this job," said another coworker.

Rosen learned that the small engines shop was one of the most popular places to work at the factory. Many of the thousands of employees at the factory engaged in difficult, dirty labor. But the work on car motors at the small engines shop was relatively light and clean. All of Rosen's coworkers had received their jobs because they had friends in top management. Rosen realized that by honoring God with the Sabbath, God had honored him with a coveted job.

Across the cafeteria table, a coworker pressed Rosen for an answer.

"Who's your friend?" he said.

Rosen pointed heavenward.

“My Friend is above,” he said.

From that day, everyone in the small engine shop and the larger garage knew that he was a Seventh-day Adventist. Many sought his assistance as word spread that he was an expert mechanic. He was the only Adventist in the garage.

“Many Adventists worked in the factory, but none worked in the garage,” he said in an interview. “Apparently, God needed me there.”

Rosen, now 48, doesn’t know whether any coworkers accepted Jesus through his influence, but he is certain that God had a plan.

“Just like God used the toy train story to touch my heart as a boy, perhaps He wanted me to be in the garage so I could touch someone’s heart,” he said. “The good Lord knows how to touch every person’s heart.”

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a church building for Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rosen’s hometown, Sofia, Bulgaria. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Rosen as: ROS-en

Watch Rosen on YouTube: bit.ly/Rosen-Nakov.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/trains-trucks-sabbath).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Stoned in Sicily

Salvatrice “Salvina” Mazza, 85

Italy

February 1

Father took 13-year-old Salvina Mazza on a 33-mile (43-kilometer) bicycle ride on the Italian island of Sicily.

But the outing wasn't for fun.

“A family in the village of Rosolini asked for help in understanding the Bible,” Father said before they left. “Come and listen so you can learn how to share Jesus.”

Father didn't own a car, so he and Salvina hopped on their bicycles for the trip from the mountainside town of Ragusa. They were joined by a friend, Giovanni Giallanza, the first Seventh-day Adventist in Ragusa. Giovanni had introduced Father to the Adventist Church after learning about Adventists in Belgium.

After some time, the two men and girl arrived at the family's home in Rosolini.

Neighbors excitedly poked their heads out of doors and windows.

“Who are these strangers?” asked one.

“What are they doing here?” said another.

The neighbors followed the visitors into the family's home, and soon the house was packed with people. The man who had invited Father to visit asked a question from the Bible. Father opened his Bible and showed the answer. The man asked another question, and Father replied from the Bible.

Two women didn't seem happy with the answers that Father gave, and they left the house. About 20 minutes later, two well-dressed men carrying briefcases walked in the door. After listening for a short time, one spoke to the other.

“There is nothing going on here,” he said. “They are just talking about the gospel.”

The two men left. They were police officers sent by the two unhappy women.

Three hours later, the meeting ended, and Father said good-bye.

“If you want to study more, let me know, and I'll return,” he said.

Outside, Salvina got onto her bicycle and followed Father and his friend to the road back to Ragusa. To her surprise, the road was lined with hundreds of people.

“Father, is there a religious festival going on?” Salvina asked.

“Yes,” he said. “There is a big festival going on — for us!”

Urgency filled his voice.

“Let's pedal quickly so we can get through the crowd,” he said.

The trio pedaled as fast as they could.

Loud cries rose from the crowd.

“We don't need this kind of church,” someone said.

“We don't want Protestants here,”

said another.

People picked up stones and hurled them at the cyclists.

“Don't react,” Father said. “Just pedal.”

Salvina pedaled as fast as she could.

A safe distance from the crowd, Father stopped to see whether anyone was injured.

Everyone was fine. The three bowed their heads in prayer.

“Thank you, God, for protecting us,” Father said. “The crowd threw stones, but no one was hurt.”

No one from Rosolini asked Father to visit again.

Father, whose name is Carmelo Mazza, faced many hardships sharing his faith. He rode his bicycle around Sicily, working as a photographer, after World War II. But he was not discouraged by the stone-throwing crowd in 1946 or by other difficulties. He and Giovanni opened the first Adventist church in Ragusa in 1952, and they also established three other churches in Mazzarrone, Modica, and Vittoria.

Salvina is now 85, but she remembers the bicycle ride well.

“It was a great miracle that I will never forget,” she said.

After the attack, she has never been afraid to speak about Jesus. She treated neighbors with patience and love when they snubbed her for being an Adventist. She shared her faith in school even though classmates and the priest scoffed. Even now, she speaks with enthusiasm about her convictions.

“I love to share the gospel,” she said.

Part of a 2016 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped construct a church building in Ragusa. Church members had met in rented premises since the church was cofounded by Salvina’s father in 1952, and they are grateful to have their own building. Thank you for having made it possible with your offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Salvina as: sal-VINA

Watch Salvina on YouTube: bit.ly/Salvina-Mazza

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/Stoned-in-Sicily).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

From Village to Palace

Vincenzo Mazza, 70

Italy

February 8

Father exploded in rage when 16-year-old Vincenzo Mazza returned home to their village on Italy's island of Sicily and announced that he had been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Father's anger grew when the teen declared plans to become a pastor.

"If you go, don't come back," said Father, an impoverished World War II veteran who strictly raised five children.

Little did anyone realize that one day Vincenzo would lead the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Italy and study the Bible with the country's president.

Father's threats didn't discourage the boy, who was baptized during an extended visit with an older brother, himself a new Adventist, in another city. Vincenzo traveled to the Adventist seminary, Villa Aurora, in Florence. On arrival, he learned that he couldn't enroll without money and no work was available.

Disappointed, he walked around a small garden on the seminary grounds. He didn't want to return to Sicily because Father would demand that he denounce his faith to live at home. He prayed desperately.

Suddenly, he heard a whisper in his ear. "Look into your shirt pocket," it said.

Vincenzo reached into his pocket and found a piece of paper with the address of a German family whom he had met by chance on his arrival in Florence. The family had invited him to visit them in Karlsruhe, Germany.

He remembered that the Adventist Church had a seminary in Germany, in the city of Darmstadt. Counting his coins, he had just enough to buy a one-way train ticket to Karlsruhe, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) south of Darmstadt.

Vincenzo took the train to Karlsruhe and, staying one night, told the family about his desire to study at the seminary. The family bought him a train ticket to Darmstadt.

The teen arrived with no money, no knowledge of German, and no directions to the seminary. He walked around for several hours, looking for the seminary. Reaching a forest, he kept walking and soon was lost. The sun was setting, and he was cold and afraid. Uncertain what to do, and he wept and prayed to God for help.

"Hey, young man!" a voice said, causing him to jump. "What are you looking for?"

Vincenzo hadn't heard anyone approaching, and he looked up with surprise to see a small, old man with white hair. Astonishing him even more, the old man was speaking in German but he could understand everything that he said.

"I'm looking for the Adventist seminary," Vincenzo replied in Italian.

"I'll tell you how to get there," said the old man, still speaking in German.

The old man gave detailed directions, and Vincenzo walked away. After several steps, he turned around to thank the kind stranger. He was gone.

Vincenzo reached the seminary and explained his situation to the teachers. They enrolled him and provided work.

Vincenzo went on to become a lifelong pastor of churches in Germany and Italy. He served as leader of the Adventist Church in Italy from 1995 until his retirement in 2000. He kept in regular contact with his father. After much time had passed, Father begged Vincenzo for forgiveness.

“I have been an authoritarian father,” he said during a visit by Vincenzo, his wife, and two sons to Sicily one summer. “I recognize this, and I am very sad about what I have done to my children.”

As leader of the Adventist Church in Italy, Vincenzo once wrote a letter of gratitude to Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro for supportive remarks that the president had made about Protestants.

A few days after mailing the letter in 1997, President Scalfaro called to invite Vincenzo to visit the presidential palace.

After the first visit, they became good friends. President Scalfaro invited him several times and always said, “Pastor Mazza, please read the Bible with me. Please pray with me.”

A highlight of the friendship came when the president accepted an invitation from Vincenzo to attend the opening of an Adventist retirement home in Forle in 1998. The president’s presence transformed the low-key event into national news. People across Italy who had never heard about the Adventist Church were introduced to the church and the seventh-day Sabbath.

Today, Vincenzo is 70 and has advanced Parkinson’s disease. But he remains a pastor at heart, and he posts short sermons on his Facebook page.

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help renovate the main building at Marienhöhe Academy in Darmstadt, Germany. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Vincenzo as: vihn-CHEHN-zoh.

Watch Vincenzo’s son Andreas on YouTube: bit.ly/Andreas-Mazza.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/Village-to-Palace).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Challenging the Sabbath

Vincenzo Gallina, 29

Germany

February 15

German IT specialist Vincenzo Gallina couldn't comprehend what was happening. One global crisis seemed to be followed by another — 9/11, European financial turmoil, Crimea, and a migrant crisis.

Something was wrong. Vincenzo wondered whether the world was ending. He struggled to understand politicians' seemingly illogical decisions. He looked for answers on YouTube. He returned to the church of his childhood.

Vincenzo didn't attend only the usual Sunday worship services. He also went to services on Saturdays and Wednesdays. Church leaders were so impressed with his interest in religion that they tried to convince him to become a priest. Vincenzo declined. He only wanted answers to global events and to live a holy life.

As he searched, he embraced three important principles in his heart: to follow the truth no matter where it led; to be honest with others and especially to himself; and to act the way that he spoke.

Reading the Bible, he became frustrated. He didn't understand what he read.

One night, he prayed desperately for God to send someone to explain the Bible.

"God forgive me for I am too stupid to understand Your Word," he prayed.

The next time he browsed YouTube, he stumbled across a sermon by a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist. Something clicked in his mind as he listened. He liked that the evangelist used the Bible to back up everything that he said.

Soon he was watching five YouTube sermons a day, his mind like a dry sponge, absorbing new knowledge.

Convinced that the seventh day is the biblical Sabbath, he began to attend an Adventist church in his hometown, Cologne, on Saturdays. He wanted to worship the Creator God. He wanted to prove the devil wrong in saying that it is impossible to keep God's commandments. He wanted to be honest and to follow the truth wherever it led.

Because he was still living with his parents, he found it difficult to live a holy life. His parents did not pray before meals, and he heard the television playing on Sabbath. Doubts crept into his mind about the importance of keeping the Sabbath. He pondered Jesus' words in Matthew 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." He remembered Paul saying, "You are not under the law but under grace" in Romans 6:14. He stopped keeping the Sabbath.

One Friday evening after sunset, Vincenzo was working on his computer when he sensed a voice say, "You know, you are not keeping one of My commandments."

Vincenzo remembered his principle about being honest to others and himself.

"Yes, I am not keeping the Sabbath," Vincenzo said. "But is it really that important?"

He returned to his work.

"You know, you are not keeping the law," the voice said. "What you are doing is not right."

"But is it really so important to keep this day?" Vincenzo said, picking up his dark-green Bible from the table. "Didn't Jesus say that man is made for the Sabbath? Aren't we no longer under the law?"

The voice wouldn't stop.

Finally, Vincenzo prayed for guidance. He knelt and, with the Bible in his hand, asked God for a clear answer.

“Do You want me to keep the Sabbath?” he prayed. “Is this day important to You? I need help in making this decision.”

He thought that he needed to create an opportunity for God to answer. Looking down at the Bible in his hand, he decided to open it at random and accept whatever answer God gave. Vincenzo closed his eyes and opened the Bible. Looking into the Bible, he read Isaiah 58:13, 14, which says, “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord.” Vincenzo started to cry. He could not work after receiving an answer like that. He turned off the computer and opened the Bible.

Since then, Vincenzo has had no doubt about keeping the Sabbath. He returned to church on Sabbath morning and, now 29, has kept going ever since.

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help renovate the main building at Marienhöhe Academy in Darmstadt, Germany. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Vincenzo as: vihn-CHEHN-zoh.

Watch Vincenzo on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/Vincenzo-Gallina>

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/Challenging-the-Sabbath).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Atheist Missionary

Jan Haugg, 30

Germany

February 22

Nothing thrilled Jan Haugg more than saving the environment.

As an 18-year-old high school student, he joined a German political party to tackle global environmental problems.

At the university, he invited friends to watch environmental films and tried to make his own life greener through choices in food, travel, cleaning agents, and hygiene. He even went through apartments that he shared with roommates and turned off unneeded lights, much to the annoyance of others.

He was a missionary, but without Jesus. His religion was saving the environment.

As an international business student, Jan secured an internship at an environmentally friendly bank and decided to fulfill an international work requirement in Norway's capital, Oslo. But he had trouble finding an affordable place to stay in Oslo. Then he remembered a family that he had met two years earlier while, in an attempt to learn how to be more self-sufficient, he had spent a summer on a Norwegian farm. He e-mailed the family for help and, several days later, they replied that they had found a place in Oslo. Soon after Jan arrived in Oslo, he realized that he was surrounded by Seventh-day Adventists. His new roommate, David Mikkelsen, was an Adventist living in a small room in a church-owned home for Adventist students. Jan was a die-hard atheist from the former East Germany, which has the highest concentration of atheists in the world. More than 60 percent of the east German population identifies as atheist.

Although grateful for a place to stay, Jan thought, "They will try to convert me, but they won't get me. I know what I believe."

Nothing happened for three months. Jan liked the Adventist students, and they treated him kindly, even when he violated the rules with alcohol. They gained his confidence by taking care of his needs.

One day, Jan was invited to join 50 young Adventists on a boat trip to southern Norway. Jan enjoyed the outing and was pleased that the youth showed interest in his desire to protect the environment.

Then one of the youth leaders, Joakim Hjortland, invited Jan to study the Bible with him. Jan wasn't interested, but he didn't want to offend Joakim. He tried to come up with a good excuse.

"We don't have time today," he said. "Maybe tomorrow."

The next morning, Joakim said, "Hey, remember what we talked about yesterday? How about studying the Bible?"

Jan tried another excuse. "I can't study the Bible because I don't have a Bible," he said. Later, he called it the stupidest excuse that he could have given. He was surrounded by people with Bibles. Within moments, he was holding a Bible.

To believe the Bible, a person first needs to believe that it is God's word. Jan didn't believe in God. Joakim opened the Bible to Daniel 2. Jan listened with shock to Daniel's prophecy about the rise and fall of the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. He saw that present-day Europe was fragmented as shown in the statue's feet of iron and clay.

He decided that the Bible contained supernatural information and bought one for further study. In Oslo, Adventist friends helped him find biblical answers to questions about the origin of sin, why God hadn't destroyed Satan, and how the biblical account of Creation could be believed over evolution. The day came when he decided to give his heart to God.

"I never wanted to become a Christian, but the weight of the evidence was too heavy," he said. "There must be God. And if God is there, and He is who He says He is, then there is no logical consequence but to follow Him. Who wants to join the losing team that has already lost the battle? That would be stupid. I wanted to be on the winning team."

Today, Jan is 30 and training to be a pastor at the Bogenhofen Seminary in Austria. After graduation, he hopes to share the gospel with atheists in eastern Germany as well as with environmental activists. "I especially want to minister to the green movement people who want to save the world with their own strength," he said. "If they would just get Jesus into the picture, their efforts could be channeled into the right direction. They are missionaries, but without Jesus, their work will not result in eternal life."

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help renovate the main building at Marienhöhe Academy in Darmstadt, Germany. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help renovate the main building at Marienhöhe Academy in Darmstadt, Germany. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

Story Tips

Pronounce Jan as: YAN.

Watch Jan on YouTube: bit.ly/Jan-Haugg.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/Atheist-Missionary).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Praying in the Bathroom

Dante Marvin Herrmann, 36

Spain

February 29

It was a tough first year at the Seventh-day Adventist college in Spain.

Dante Marvin Herrmann used up the last of his savings to pay the annual tuition of about 5,000 euros. Between classes, he worked to earn another 5,000 euros to provide for his wife and two young sons.

Now he faced a long summer away from home, working as a literature evangelist to pay for his second year of studies.

Dante didn't mind the hard work, but he hadn't enrolled at Sagunto Adventist College to sell books. He wanted to spend the summer traveling from church to church, telling how he, a tattoo-covered German, had left a life of drugs in the Canary Islands to become an Adventist.

Dante needed to talk to God about his financial problems. He made his way to his favorite place of quiet solitude — the apartment bathroom — and locked the door.

Kneeling, he poured out his heart.

"Papa, the first year has finished. I received top marks in my classes, and I see that You have called me here," he said.

Dante always addresses God as "Papa" in his personal prayers.

"Papa, I know You provide scholarships to some students," he said. "Please help me because I don't want to work as a literature evangelist with a focus on earning money. I want to preach Jesus. I need freedom to preach. I don't have any money after using up my savings. Papa, please help me."

Dante paused, and he sensed a still, small voice replying within him.

"How much do you need?"

"Let me see," Dante said. "I have five years left at the college, and it costs 10,000 euros per year. I need 50,000 euros."

"OK, Dante," the voice said. "Do you believe that I can give it to you?"

"You know that I don't believe," Dante said. "But I'm very grateful that You can help me to believe, and I thank You now for giving me 50,000 euros."

Ten minutes later, Dante received 50,000 euros.

After praying, he left the bathroom and went to the guest room to check on his mother, who was visiting.

"Hi," he said as he walked into the room. "You know that I love you."

Mother sat motionless on the bed, her face as white as a sheet. She held her cellphone in one hand.

"What happened?" Dante asked, alarmed.

"Something amazing happened," she said.

"What is it?" he said.

"You know, I have been trying to sell my house in Germany for 10 years," she said.

"Well, I just received a WhatsApp message from a man who wants to buy the house, and he offered 50,000 euros more than I asked."

Dante didn't know what to do. He didn't feel that it would be right to blurt out, "That's my money. I prayed for it."

"Wait," he said out loud. "Wait a moment. I have to go to the bathroom."

Locking the door, he knelt on the floor.

“Papa, if I had asked for 100,000 euros, would You have given it to me?” he said.

“Dante,” the voice said. “You asked for 50,000 euros, and I gave you 50,000 euros.”

“Yes, but if I had asked for 100,000, would you have given it to me?”

“Yes, I would have given 100,000 euros. But you asked for 50,000, so I gave 50,000.”

“Can I change my mind?”

“No, you can’t,” the voice said. “You have to learn to think bigger. You think very small.

You think for only the moment, but I want to give you more. I want you to believe in Me.

I want you to believe that I will give you what you need.”

“OK,” Dante said. “But who will tell my mother that she should give this money?”

“Do you believe that I can do it?”

“Yes, I believe, I believe!”

Dante exclaimed.

He returned to the guest room, where his mother was still sitting on the bed.

“Dante, you know something?” she said as he entered the room. “I think it would be best if I gave you this extra money so you can pay for your studies.”

Dante, who is 36 and finishing his second year of studies, believes God guides those who walk in obedience and faith.

“When God answered my prayer, I realized that walking with God was walking with faith,” Dante said. “God doesn’t necessarily reveal to you all that will happen. He only asks you to trust in Him.

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help Sagunto Adventist College expand its campus with a new seminary building, allowing more students like Dante to study to serve God.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Watch Dante on YouTube: bit.ly/Dante-Herrmann.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/Dante-photos).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Same Dream for 10 Years

Laurentiu Stefan Druga, 35

Spain

March 7

Only three Seventh-day Adventist children attended the elementary school near Romania's capital, Bucharest.

All three were in Laurentiu Stefan Druga's eighth grade class, and before long they invited him to church. Laurentiu fell in love with Jesus and was baptized.

A desire blossomed in him to become a pastor. The Adventist school in Bucharest, however, only had 20 openings, and Laurentiu had to score well on the entrance exam.

On exam day, Laurentiu entered the classroom and sat at a big table. He looked down at the paper in front of him and took the exam. He placed 21st.

"No problem," he told his parents. "I'll try again next year."

That year, however, he grew careless in his spiritual life. When the time came for the entrance exam, he entered the same classroom. He sat at the same big table. He looked down at the paper. But something felt wrong. He knew that he was living an ungodly life, and his mind went blank. Abruptly, he stood up and left the room.

Several years passed. Laurentiu moved to Spain and became a construction worker. He got married and drifted farther from God. At the age of 23, he met an uncle, an Adventist, also working in Spain. He remembered his first love for God and his desire to become a pastor. He and his wife decided to be baptized together.

Ahead of the big day, Laurentiu began to wonder how to plan his new life. "God," he prayed, "what is your plan for me?"

The next day, he prayed again, "God, what is your plan for me?"

Two nights after his baptism, Laurentiu had a dream. In the dream, he entered a classroom, sat at a big table and looked at a piece of paper. With horror, he realized that he was taking a math exam and hadn't studied for the past year. His mind went blank. Fear turned to panic, and his heart beat wildly. At that moment, Laurentiu woke up. It was 3 a.m. "That was just a dream," he reassured himself.

Falling asleep, he had a second dream. This time he stood, talking and smiling, at the pulpit in his Madrid church. People listened with great interest. Peace flowed through him. He sensed God's presence.

In the morning, Laurentiu dismissed the dreams. That night, he prayed as usual, "God, what is your plan for me?"

Asleep, he dreamed that he entered a classroom and sat at a big table. Looking down, he saw that he was taking a Romanian-language exam. He hadn't studied for a year, and his mind went blank. He panicked. A moment later, however, he was seated at another table. Now he was smiling and laughing as he spoke to a group of people who listened with interest. Joyfully he sensed God's presence.

Similar dreams occurred nearly every night. The classroom was always the same, but the exam varied. He never was prepared for the exam, and he felt miserable.

Then the scene changed to a church, another table, or a crowd of people. He was teaching and sensed God's presence.

After about three months of dreams, Laurentiu wondered whether God was telling him to become a pastor. "But how?" he asked God. "I can't quit my job. I'm married and have a family to support."

The dreams kept coming. A year passed. Then two, three, four years. He told his parents and several close friends about the dreams, but they dismissed them as the workings of his subconscious mind.

Eventually, he got used to the dreams. While sleeping, he would wait for the miserable first part to end so he could enjoy the pleasant second part.

Also every evening, Laurentiu kept praying, “God, what is your plan for me?”

After 10 years, Laurentiu told his wife about the dreams. One evening, Laurentiu and his wife attended a youth conference of about 250 people. The speaker seemed to be reading his thoughts. Every time Laurentiu raised an objection in his mind about becoming a pastor, the speaker responded from the platform with an answer.

Laurentiu’s wife nudged him. “You have to go to the seminary,” she said.

Three months later, Laurentiu, his wife, and their 9-year-old son moved to Sagunto Adventist College, located 235 miles (380 kilometers) east of Madrid. From that day, the dreams stopped.

Laurentiu is now immersed in his second year of seminary studies. “Every class that I take and every moment that I have with the teachers is the second part of the dream,” he said. “I don’t miss the first part of the dream. The second part is now the reality of my every-day life.”

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a much-needed building for the seminary where Laurentiu studies at Sagunto Adventist College.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Pronounce Laurentiu as: lau-REN-tee-oo

Read a story about Laurentiu’s 10-year-old son in the Children’s Mission magazine.

Watch Laurentiu on YouTube: bit.ly/Laurentiu-Druga

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/same-dream-years).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Making a Big Decision

Paula Cristina Ghibut, 18

Romania

March 14

What do you do when you have to make a big decision?

Paula Cristina Ghibut had a big decision to make. She was 14 and about to finish eighth grade in Romania. She had to decide where to go to high school.

Paula wanted to become an elementary school teacher. She could go to a nearby public high school that offered a special teaching track for high school students. But she had attended Adventist schools since kindergarten. The Adventist high school offered only a science track.

Paula prayed and read the Bible at home in Targu Mures village in north-central Romania. She spoke with her parents and read passages from books by Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White.

As she read, she found advice that seemed to suggest Adventist children should study in non-Adventist schools in order to be a light in the world.

In Ellen White's "Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students," she read, "The followers of Christ are to be separate from the world in principles and interests, but they are not to isolate themselves from the world" (page 323). In "The Great Controversy," she saw that Waldensian students had used their Christian influence to transform entire schools in the 13th century and beyond. Paula decided to enroll in the public school. She thought it would be a good opportunity to share Jesus as she prepared to become a teacher.

But first she needed to pass the entrance exam. She prayed, "If it is Your will for me to study there, help me to do well."

Competition was fierce for the 150 slots at the school. Four children applied for each opening. Paula placed seventh.

But Paula still didn't feel peace. It was difficult to leave Adventist schools. She knew public school teachers wouldn't pray and students wouldn't sing about Jesus.

Two weeks before classes started, Paula had a nighttime dream that she was at the public school. The teachers were proud and unloving, and they blamed her for the mistakes of her classmates. The false accusations upset Paula. At the end of the day, as she prepared to go home, she heard a voice shout, "Run away, run away, and never come back!" Paula turned around to see who was shouting but saw no one.

Waking up in the morning, she wondered what the dream meant. She wasn't sure that the dream was from God because she knew that the devil also could cause dreams.

"God, if this dream is from You, please confirm it to me through another way," she prayed.

Paula turned to her parents for advice. They said she had to decide on her own. So she prayed and fasted for several days. She also read more from the Bible and Ellen White. She was amazed to see that everything she read now indicated that she should go to an Adventist school.

In "Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students," she read, "To place over young children, teachers who are proud and unloving is wicked" (page 175). In the same book, she read, "Our church schools are ordained by God to prepare the children for this great work" (page 176).

She thought, “I wanted to start training to be a teacher at the public school, but the Adventist school can train me even better, even though its emphasis is on science.” Then in “Child Guidance,” she read, “In planning for the education of their children outside the home, parents should realize that it is no longer safe to send them to the public school, and should endeavor to send them to schools where they will obtain an education based on a Scriptural foundation” (page 304).

Paula went to the Adventist school.

Paula learned some important lessons about understanding God’s will. She prayed and asked her parents for advice. She read the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. Then she made a decision.

Paula is sure that she made the right choice. While at the Adventist high school, she gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized when she was 16. Now she is 18 and will graduate soon. She realizes she will have plenty of time to learn how to be teacher at the university.

“My walk with God has been a process,” she said. “I didn’t use drugs and then have a miracle conversion story. Instead, God led me step by step. I want to encourage young people also to live step by step for Christ. In every step of our lives, we need to recognize Him, and He will work in our lives.”

Three years ago, part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering went to help a church outreach program for young people in Romania. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Watch Paula on YouTube: bit.ly/Paula-Ghibut.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/making-big-decision).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

God in Prison

Elena, 20

Romania

March 21

I'm a 20-year-old introvert in Romania, and I love to read personal testimonies.

When I first met a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, he asked me, "What kind of books do you like to read?"

I told him the title of the last book that I had read, a personal testimony written by a Christian author.

A week later, the pastor brought me several books filled with personal testimonies.

One day, I'd like to write my personal testimony.

If I wrote my personal testimony, I'd start with the happy moments in my childhood. I'd describe how I relentlessly teased my great-grandparents, causing them to become upset with me. I was only 4 or 5 years old, and it was great fun to tease them.

If I wrote my personal testimony, I would talk about my first day of school. It was a happy day. My great-grandmother took me to school and later helped me with my homework at home.

My great-grandparents loved me a lot. I lived with them until I went to prison.

If I wrote my personal testimony, I'd tell about the happy moments in prison. I'd describe the good people whom I've met, like the Adventist pastor who visits once a week to teach me and other young offenders about life and God. The pastor comes with three Adventist university students, and they show us educational PowerPoint presentations. I dropped out of school after the eighth grade, so everything that they show is new and interesting. After each PowerPoint presentation, they tell us a story from the Bible. We also pray and talk.

If I wrote my personal testimony, I'd tell about the worst time in my life. It was the nine-month period from my arrest at the age of 17 to my arrival in prison to serve a 12-year sentence. I was so alone. No one from my family visited me, and no one hired a lawyer to represent me.

My great-grandmother died several months before I was arrested, and my great-grandfather was old and ill. During those long months in pretrial detention, I never heard a kind word.

But everything changed once I arrived in prison. Some of the prison guards are nice, especially the woman who has been assigned to help me rebuild my life. I also like the Adventist prison ministries program. Through the weekly program, I have met wonderful people and grown close to them. I thought I could never be close to anyone. The Adventists speak kindly, and they are teaching me to be useful and to trust God. That is important to me. I have been in prison for three years and seven months, and I will be eligible for parole in two years. My behavior is very important to qualify for parole. I need to show that I can be independent and useful to society.

If I wrote my personal testimony, I would admit that I have experienced a lifetime of sorrow in just 20 years. It is hard for me to talk about it. My family had financial difficulties. They weren't there for me when they should have been. Many violent things happened in my life. Things happened to me that I couldn't control. Maybe this is the reason that I am not very open about my life. Maybe this is why I'm an introvert.

If my great-grandmother hadn't died, I wouldn't have gone to prison. But things got really bad after she passed away, and I killed someone.

After my release from prison, I would like to have my own family. I want to do something useful in life.

But for now, I'm just a 20-year-old introvert who loves to read personal testimonies. One day, I'd like to write my personal testimony.

Three years ago, part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering went to help a church outreach program for young people in Romania. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

By Elena as told to Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

Ask a young woman to share this first-person testimony during Sabbath School.

Adventist Mission is not identifying Elena by her full name for the sake of her privacy. For the same reason, no photos or video are being provided of Elena.

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

Thirteenth Sabbath: Roma Village Finds Sabbath

Peter Mižigar, 44

Slovakia

March 28

The 2,000 inhabitants of a Roma settlement in Slovakia considered themselves Christian. But none attended church. None had ever read the Bible. After Slovakia's independence in 1993, various missionaries started coming to the Rakúsy settlement. The first, a married couple, preached on the main street every Sunday. People gathered to listen but understood little because they had never read the Bible.

One villager, Peter Mižigar, was more interested in performing in his band than listening to the preaching. He played bass guitar at weddings and funerals. Usually, the band members, including his younger brother Pavol, spent the band's earnings on alcohol. But Peter never drank while performing. He was the designated driver.

While performing sober, he noticed that every audience consisted of two groups: one with good manners and high intelligence, and the other with a more primitive attitude. The other musicians didn't notice because they drank.

Peter watched the crowd with fascination at concerts. The distinctions between the two groups of Roma disappeared as they drank. When people were drunk, the rich ones stripped to the waist and behaved the same as those who were poor. Every event ended with a drunken fistfight, even the funerals.

When an audience turned on Peter and the other musicians in a drunken frenzy in the Czech Republic, Peter and his brother decided to quit. "I'm going to stop playing worldly music," Pavol said. "I would like to play to God."

Pavol had been listening to Christian music shared by visiting missionaries.

Soon, Peter, Pavol, and the other band members were playing Christian music at Pavol's house. During one session, Peter noticed a Bible lying on the table.

"What kind of book is this?" he asked, picking it up.

Pavol snatched it away. "Put it down," he said. "It's not for you."

Pavol was studying the Bible and didn't want to share it.

While Pavol and the others were playing, Peter slipped the Bible under an arm and left the house. At home, he read the Bible for the next month, going through Revelation and then the gospels. After a while, he admitted to his brother that he had taken the Bible.

As the younger brother, Pavol could ask only that Peter returned it once he finished. One day, Peter came across Mark 16:16, where Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved."

He closed the Bible and opened it. The same verse stared back at him. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Three times Peter closed and opened the Bible, and every time it opened to the same verse. Peter grabbed the Bible and ran to his brother's house. Pavol was jamming with two friends.

"Please come and baptize me," Peter said.

He didn't know anything about baptism. He just wanted to obey Jesus and be baptized. "You want me to baptize you?" Pavol said.

"Yes, it is written here clearly that whoever is baptized will be saved," Peter replied. Pavol was hesitant, but Peter was adamant. The two brothers and their two friends waded into a three-foot (one-meter) deep brook outside the settlement and baptized one another. They confessed their sins to God and sought forgiveness. Afterward, they experienced a tremendous joy and spoke about all of heaven rejoicing about their baptism.

After that day, the four men stopped cursing, smoking, and drinking. Neighbors were astonished. Before, when the men had drunk, people had fled in fear.

The four friends decided to study the Bible together daily. Sometimes they started at night and read until morning.

Other people joined the Bible group. Often 50 to 100 people were packed in Peter's joint living room and kitchen.

During a late-night session, Peter's attention was drawn to Mark 16:9, which begins, "Now when He rose on the first day of the week." Peter remembered that Jesus and his followers had rested on the seventh day, Saturday, and wondered why missionaries visiting his settlement worshipped on Sunday.

No missionaries were able to answer Peter's question.

The Bible study group kept on reading and found the fourth commandment. They began to keep the Sabbath.

One day, Peter mentioned his perplexity about Sunday to a stranger visiting a Roma relative. The man, Josif, happened to be a Seventh-day Adventist, and he told Peter that there is a church that keeps the biblical Sabbath. At Peter's invitation, Josif spoke to the Bible group. Later Josif took Peter and his friends to visit Adventist churches in the area. Peter especially was impressed with the quiet reverence of an Adventist communion service.

Peter's living room became an Adventist house church with Sabbath worship services and other programs.

Peter, his brother, and 24 other members of the Bible group were baptized into the Adventist Church in 2015. Ten more people were baptized over the next two years. In 2018, an Adventist church was constructed on the outskirts of the settlement, and it is packed with about 100 people every Sabbath.

This is the church that God built from the ground up in Peter's living room.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help fund programs for vulnerable children at the church in Rakúsy, Slovakia. Thank you for your generous offering for this project and the others in Bulgaria, Germany, and Spain this quarter.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

The narrator doesn't need to memorize the story, but he or she should be familiar enough with the material so as not to have to read it.

Read about a 12-year-old boy whose life was changed by Peter's house church in the Children's Mission magazine.

Watch Peter on YouTube: bit.ly/Peter-Mizigar.

Download photos on Facebook (bit.ly/fb-mq) or ADAMS databank (bit.ly/roma-village-sabbath).

Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: bit.ly/eud-2020-projects.

—Box—

Thirteenth Sabbath Program

Congregational Song	“Don’t Forget the Sabbath” The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 388
Welcome	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
Prayer	
Story	“Roma Village Finds Sabbath”
Offering	
Closing Song	“Bringing in the Sheaves?” The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 369
Closing Prayer	

—End Box—

—Box—

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering next quarter will help the Trans-European Division to:

- Open a center of influence in Sortland, Norway
- Establish a church in New Belgrade, Serbia
- Construct a church and center of influence in Nicosia, Cyprus

—End Box—

Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free Mission Spotlight video, featuring video reports from around the Inter-European Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

Online Information

Following are sources of information that may be helpful in preparing for the mission segment of Sabbath School. For more information on the cultures and history of the countries featured in this quarterly, visit:

Websites

Bulgaria: government Visit Europe	bit.ly/GovtBul bit.ly/VisitBulg
Czech Republic: government Czech Tourism	bit.ly/GovtCze bit.ly/CzechTour
Germany: government Germany Travel	bit.ly/GovtGer bit.ly/GermanyTrav
Italy: government Italia	bit.ly/GovtIta bit.ly/ItaliaTrav
Romania: government Romania Tourism	bit.ly/GovtRom bit.ly/RomTour
Slovakia: government Slovakia Travel	bit.ly/GovtSlo bit.ly/SlovTrav
Spain: government España	bit.ly/GovtSpa bit.ly/EspanaTrav

Seventh-day Adventist

Inter-European Division	bit.ly/SDA-EUD
Bulgarian Union of Churches Conference	bit.ly/SDABulgUnion
Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference bit.ly/SDACzechUnion	
North German Union Conference	bit.ly/SDANGERUnion
South German Union Conference	bit.ly/SDASGerUnion
Italian Union of Churches Conference	bit.ly/SDAItalyUnion
Romanian Union Conference	bit.ly/SDARomania
Spanish Union of Churches Conference	bit.ly/SDASpainUnion

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Determine a goal for your class's weekly mission offering. Multiply it by 14, allowing a double goal for the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

Remind your Sabbath School members that their regular weekly mission offerings will help the missionary work of the world church and that one quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in the Inter-European Division. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving on Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

NKJV. Bible texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version ®
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Masthead

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receive a complimentary subscription by contacting the above telephone numbers or e-mail address.

EUD Sidebar Material

Fast Facts and Mission Posts

Bulgaria

1. The Bulgarian Union of Churches Conference has 118 churches, 104 companies, and a membership of 7,084. That's an average church size of 32 members.
2. In a population of 7,076,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 999 people in Bulgaria.
3. In 1899, Ellen G. White's "Steps to Christ" was translated into Bulgarian and published in Bulgaria, the first Adventist book to be translated into that language.
4. Bulgaria has no state religion, but most Bulgarian citizens identify as Eastern Orthodox Christians.
5. Bulgaria's Rila Monastery houses a wooden cross with 140 microscopic scenes from the Bible. The biggest of the 1,500 figures featured is smaller than a grain of rice.
6. Bulgaria is the oldest country in Europe that hasn't changed its name since it was first established, which was in 681 AD.
7. Plovdiv, the second-largest city in Bulgaria after the capital, Sofia, was founded 7,000 years ago, making it the oldest city in Europe outside Greece.
8. The famous Bulgarian rose oil is used for making some of the world's most-popular and expensive perfumes. It takes 1,000 rose blossoms to make 1/3 ounce (one gram) of rose oil.
9. Every year on March 1, Baba Marta Day (Grandmother March), Bulgarians exchange martenitsi, small pieces of adornment, made of white and red yarn, usually in the form of two dolls, a male and a female (Pizho, who is usually white, and Penda, who is usually red). Martenitsi are worn from Baba Marta Day until the wearer first sees a stork, swallow, or blossoming tree (or until late March) and symbolize the end of Winter.
10. The first digital wristwatch was invented by a Bulgarian named Peter Petroff.
11. Bulgarians shake their heads to mean "yes" and nod for "no."
12. The official language of Bulgaria is Bulgarian, and all ethnic groups speak it, either as a first or second language. It is the oldest-written Slavic language and is written in the Cyrillic alphabet.
13. The Cyrillic alphabet was invented by two Bulgarian monks (Cyril and Methodius) during the 10th century.
14. The food in Bulgaria has a strong Greek and Turkish influence, with dishes like baklava and Shopska salad. In fact, because of the popularity of a wide variety of salads, meat consumption is lower in Bulgaria than the European average.
15. The national instrument is the bagpipes, called the gaida in Bulgaria. There are only three nations in the world that employ the bagpipes in their traditional music — Scotland, Ireland, and Bulgaria.
16. According to Mensa, Bulgarians score second highest in the world in IQ scores as well as SAT scores. The person with the highest IQ ever recorded by Mensa is Bulgarian Daniela Simidchieva, who achieved a score of 200.
17. Rila is a mountain range in southwestern Bulgaria and the highest mountain range of Bulgaria and the Balkans; its highest peak is Musala, at 9,596 feet (2,925 meters).

18. Bulgaria has three national parks, 11 nature parks and 54 nature reserves. Forests cover about 35 percent of the country and deer, bears, wild boars, wolves, foxes, badgers, jackals, and lynx may be found.
19. The Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo are a group of monolithic churches, chapels, and monasteries hewn out of solid rock. The caves in the region were inhabited by monks from the 13th to the 17th centuries, where they cut cells, churches, and chapels out of solid rock.
20. The Bulgarian folk song “Izlel e Delio Haydutin” was included with Bach’s and Mozart’s greatest works when the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 probes were launched into space in 1977.
21. Orpheus, a legendary musician, poet, and prophet in ancient Greek myth, is said to have come from ancient Thrace, part of which now makes up southern Bulgaria.
22. Although Bulgaria allied with Germany during World War II, it was one of only two countries (the other was Finland) that protected their Jewish inhabitants from being sent to the Nazi concentration camps.
23. Bulgaria’s population is shrinking due to low birth rates and outward migration. It is estimated that the current population will decline by almost one-third by the year 2060.
24. Kozunak is a traditional braided sweet bread. It is a favorite among Bulgarians, especially during Easter.

Czech Republic

1. The Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference has 191 churches, 42 companies, and a membership of 9,736. That's an average church size of 42 members.
2. In a population of 16,031,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 1,338 people in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
3. Seventh-day Adventist tracts in the Czech language were prepared as early as 1890 by the Hamburg Publishing House. A Czech Baptist in Hamburg by the name of Antonin Simon read these tracts, accepted the Adventist doctrines the same year, and at once translated some other tracts. After returning to Bohemia, he settled near Prague. The members of the Simon family were active missionaries and soon made converts of many of their associates and neighbors.
4. The government of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy strongly opposed efforts to teach Protestant doctrines, especially through the circulation of publications. Early Adventist colporteurs were arrested several times while doing colporteur work in 1912.
5. The Czech Republic ranks as one of the least religious populations in the world, with only 19 percent of them claiming to believe in God.
6. The word robot was first used by Czech writer, Karl Capek, in his play, R. U. R., to describe creatures that could perform all the work humans didn't want to do and had no soul. Robota means drudgery or hard work in Czech.
7. The astronomical clock in the capital, Prague, was installed in 1410, making it the oldest in the world.
8. According to the "Guinness Book of Records," Prague Castle is the largest ancient castle in the world, with over 700 rooms. It occupies an area of almost 750,000 square feet (70,000 square meters). It is about 1,870 feet (570 meters) in length and an average of about 430 feet (130 meters) wide.
9. Puppetry and marionette exhibitions are very popular for both children and adults and puppetry festivals are held throughout the country each year. The puppet museum in Prague has the largest collection in the world.
10. The Czech Republic is known worldwide for its mouth-blown decorated art glass and crystal, all individually made.
11. Czechs have invented the first grounded lightning rod, the screw propeller, the modern compass, sugar cubes, photogravure, the arc lamp, the plastic explosive Semtex, and soft contact lenses, among other things.
12. Germany occupied the Czech part of the nation during World War II until the U.S. and the Soviet Union liberated it in 1945. By 1946 the country had become Communist under Soviet influence. During the 1989 Velvet Revolution, the communist regime collapsed and in June of 1993, Czechoslovakia was peacefully dissolved. It then became two independent states: the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
13. Skoda Auto, Europe's largest carmaker, is based in the Czech Republic.
14. The Czech Republic is castle capital of the world. With more than 2,000 of them, the country has the highest density of castles in the world.

Germany

1. The German Union Conferences have a total of 553 churches, 32 companies, and a membership of 34,783. That's an average church size of 59 members.
2. In a population of 83,102,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 2,389 people in Germany.
3. Scattered Sabbath-keepers and small groups of people who anticipated Christ's soon return appeared in Germany as early as 1844. There were Christians in Bavaria who accepted the biblical Sabbath, inspired by the writings of Tennhardt, an 18th-century Nürnberg Bible student. In 1902, two Württemberg men who had been keeping the seventh-day Sabbath for more than 50 years were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
4. In 1889, Hamburg was chosen as the headquarters for Adventist work in Germany. The first training institute to prepare workers for Germany was held there that summer. As a result of the work of the early colporteurs in Hamburg, 12 people were baptized in 1889, the first Adventist baptism in that city, followed by the organization of a church of 25 members.
5. About two-thirds of the population of Germany are Christian, split evenly between Protestant and Catholic, but there are more Protestants in the north and more Catholics in the south. There are around 4 million Muslims and 100,000 Jews.
6. Germany shares borders with nine other countries: Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.
7. Whenever German people greet one another they either give each other a kiss on the cheek or they shake hands.
8. At the end of World War II, Germany was divided into East and West Germany by the Berlin Wall. The Wall came down in 1990, and since then the country has been unified.
9. The autobahn highway runs through Germany and has no speed limit.
10. The Easter Bunny originated in Germany; legend says that a bird was transformed into a rabbit one winter and was still able to lay eggs.
11. Christmas trees (Tannebaum) originated in Germany, as did gingerbread houses, which were first created in Nuremberg and were so popular that people came from all over to buy intricate gingerbread houses. By the late 1800s they began appearing in houses during Christmas.
12. Oktoberfest is the world's largest Volksfest. Held annually in Munich, Bavaria, Germany, it is a 16- to 18-day folk festival running from mid or late September to the first weekend in October, with more than 6 million people from around the world attending the event every year. The Oktoberfest is an important part of Bavarian culture, having been held since the year 1810.
13. The world's narrowest street is found in Reutlingen, Germany. It is actually a narrow alley, called Spreuerhofstraße, between two closely built houses. At its narrowest point, it is just one foot wide.
14. Opened in 1844, the Berlin Zoological Garden (Zoologischer Garten Berlin) is the oldest and best-known zoo in Germany. It covers 84 acres (34 hectares) and is located in Berlin's Tiergarten. With more than 1,500 different species and around 17,000 animals, the zoo presents the largest collection of species in the world.
15. The first book to ever be printed was the Bible by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1450s in Germany.
16. Germany is known as *das land de dichter und denker*, "the land of poets and thinkers"— composers Bach, Beethoven, Händel, Schumann, Mendelssohn,

Brahms, Wagner and Strauss were all German. Some of the world's greatest philosophers include Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. Famous German authors include Goethe, Schiller, Hoffman and Remarque. Some well-known artists are Holbein, Dürer, Friedrich, and Klee.

17. Germany is one of the world's largest car producers, selling 6 million cars in 2015. Volkswagen's Golf is one of the best-selling cars of all time.
18. Over 100 Germans have been awarded the Nobel prize in their field, including Albert Einstein, who was born in Germany.

Italy/Sicily

1. The Italian Union of Churches Conference has 110 churches, 18 companies and a membership of 9,491. That's an average church size of 74 members.
2. In a population of 61,012,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 6,428 people in Italy.
3. Italy occupies a unique place in denominational history in that it was the first country in Europe in which Adventist doctrines were preached. M.B. Czechowski, a Polish ex-Catholic priest, had been baptized in 1857, and had worked among French-speaking people in America. He failed to persuade the Seventh-day Adventists to send him to Europe and so he went under the sponsorship of another Adventist denomination, arriving in Torre Pellice, in the Waldensian valleys of Piedmont, northern Italy, in 1864, where he taught Seventh-day Adventist doctrines.
4. Italian Adventist University Villa Aurora (Istituto Avventista di Cultura Biblica Villa Aurora) is located in Florence, Italy and teaches Theology and Italian Language, Art and Culture, the latter to mostly foreign students.
5. Sicily is the largest and most populated island of the Mediterranean. It stretches over nearly 10,000 square miles (25,711 square km) and is followed by Sardinia and the much smaller Cyprus.
6. Etna is the tallest active volcano in Europe and it is still active: spectacular eruptions are often visible from many miles away.
7. Sicily is separated from the Italian mainland by the Strait of Messina, only 2 miles (3 km) wide at its narrowest point.
8. Sicily has been affected by man-made deforestation since Roman times, when the island was turned into an agricultural region. The climate gradually dried, leading to a decline in rainfall and the drying of rivers. The central and southwest areas of the island are nearly completely devoid of forest.
9. Sicily has a wide variety of animals, including fox, least weasel, pine marten, roe deer, wild boar, crested porcupine, hedgehog, common toad, Vipera aspis, golden eagle, peregrine falcon, hoopoe and black-winged stilt.
10. Sicily is well known for its varied and delicious food, of which cannoli is probably the best known — tube-shaped fried pastry dough with a sweet filling usually containing ricotta cheese.
11. One of the characteristic cultural traditions of Sicily is the Opera dei Pupi (Opera of the Puppets): a marionette theatrical representation of romantic poems such as the "Song of Roland" or "Orlando Furioso."
12. The Sicilian coppola is a traditional kind of flat cap (usually made in tweed) typically worn by men in Sicily. Today it is widely regarded as a definitive symbol of Sicilian heritage.
13. Today in Sicily most people are bilingual and speak both Italian and Sicilian, although the use of Sicilian is limited to informal contexts (mostly in family).

Romania

1. The Romania Union Conference has 1,096 churches, 243 companies, and a membership of 64,295. That's an average church size of 48 members.
2. In a population of 19,596,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 385 people in Romania.
3. Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were first preached in Romania by M.B. Czechowski, a former Polish Catholic priest who had learned of the seventh-day Sabbath and of the imminent return of Christ while he was in America. Returning to Europe in 1864, he preached these doctrines in Italy and Switzerland even though he had not been sent by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the winter of 1868–1869 he came to Romania and preached in Pitesti, where about 12 people accepted his message.
4. The name "Romania" comes from the Latin word "Romanus" which means "citizen of the Roman Empire."
5. Peles Castle in Sinaia was the first European castle entirely lit by electricity, which was produced by the castle's own plant, and its central heating system, built in 1888, is still functional and in use today.
6. The tallest wooden church in the world, and the second tallest wooden structure in Europe, is found in Sapanta Peri, Maramures in northwestern Romania. The church is 257 feet (78 meters) tall and is topped by a 23-foot (7 meter) cross that weighs 1,000 pounds (454 kg).
7. The first ever perfect ten awarded in the Olympic Games went to Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci for her performance on the uneven bars in Montreal, Canada in 1976.

Slovakia

1. The Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference has 191 churches, 42 companies, and a membership of 9,736. That's an average church size of 42 members.
2. In a population of 16,031,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 1,338 people in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
3. The Slovak Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. In a survey carried out in 2011, 62.0 percent of Slovaks identified themselves as Roman Catholics, 8.9 percent as Protestants, 3.8 percent as Greek Catholics, 0.9 percent as Orthodox, 13.4 percent identified themselves as atheists or non-religious, and 10.6 percent gave no answer.
4. Tennis champion Martina Hingis, former world No. 1 and winner of five Grand Slam singles titles and nine Grand Slam women's doubles titles, was born in Slovakia in 1980 to a Slovak father and a Czech mother.
5. Štefan Banič (1870-1941) invented the first actively used parachute, patenting it in 1913.
6. Slovakia has the world's highest number of castles and chateaux per capita. There are 180 castles and 425 chateaux in a country with a population smaller than the city of New York.
7. The picturesque village of Čičmany in Northern Slovakia is the world's first reservation of folk architecture. The village is particularly famous for its traditional wooden houses, decorated with white geometrical patterns, which can also be found on the folk costumes of the villagers.
8. Nearly 50 well-preserved wooden churches stand all over Slovakia, several of which are part of the cultural heritage of UNESCO. The oldest and best preserved of them is the church of St. Francis of Assisi in Hervartov, built in 1500.
9. According to a chromosomal study conducted in 2009, of all the non-Gypsy populations in the world, Slovaks have the highest percentage of Romani or gypsy genes.
10. The caves in Slovakia are so unusual that the UNESCO has named a large number of them as "World Heritage Sites." The rarest flower-like formations called Aragonite formations can be seen here.
11. The most popular sports in Slovakia are ice hockey and soccer.
12. Bryndzové Halušky is one of the national dishes in Slovakia. It consists of small potato dumplings (halušky), similar to gnocchi, and a soft sheep cheese (bryndza). There is an annual Bryndzové Halušky festival in Turecká that features an eating contest.

Spain

1. The Spanish Union of Churches Conference has 110 churches, 54 companies, and a membership of 16,748. That's an average church size of 102 members.
2. In a population of 46,687,000, there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 2,788 people in Spain.
3. The territory of Spain was assigned to the Latin Union Conference when it was organized in 1902. B.G. Wilkinson, Jean Vuilleumier, and Jules Robert were sent in 1903, to survey the possibilities and to evaluate prospects for evangelism in Spain, giving special attention to the large cities of Barcelona and Madrid. On his return, Jules Robert wrote: "After a stay of four weeks in Spain, we have only good reports to give of this country, in regard to the facilities for evangelization, because, in spite of existing conditions, God has opened a way" (in "Messager de la Prophétie," May 1903, 43).
4. Through the years thousands of Adventist books have been sold in all the mainland provinces of Spain and in the Balearic and the Canary Islands. Especially successful was the sale of the health book "Guia Practica de la Salud" ("Practical Guide to Health").
5. According to a 2012 study by the Center for Sociological Studies in Spain, although around 70 percent of Spain's population are Roman Catholic, only 13.6 percent actually goes to church.
6. Spanish is the second-most widely spoken language in the world, after Chinese. There are an estimated 437 million people native speakers of Spanish. While Castilian Spanish is the official language, in Catalonia, the Basque country, and Galicia, the regional languages of Catalan, Basque and Galician all have official status.
7. Spain's capital, Madrid, is located in the center of the country and has a population of more than 3 million. The most ancient recorded name of the city, "Magerit," comes from the name of a fortress built on the Manzanares River in the ninth century, and means "place of abundant water" in Arabic
8. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was a Spanish author, considered to be the greatest writer in the Spanish language and one of the world's most eminent novelists. His book "Don Quixote," written in 1605, is considered to be the first modern novel and has been translated into more than 140 languages and dialects; it is, after the Bible, the most-translated book in the world.
9. The first known stapler was made in the 18th century in the Basque region of Spain for the French King Louis XV — and every single staple was engraved with the royal emblem.
10. Spain produces over half of the world's olive oil — more than 1.5 million tons, and almost all of it comes from the southern region of Andalusia.
11. Although other restaurants claim they are older, the title of the oldest restaurant in the world has been awarded by "Guinness World Records" to Restaurante Botín, in Madrid, which has been open since 1725.
12. Spain has a variety of foods and unique dishes such as paella (a type of rice dish) and tapas (a range of small snacks or appetizers).
13. The 1992 Summer Olympic Games were held in Barcelona, the second-largest city in Spain.

CONTRATO DE CESSÃO DE DIREITOS DE TRADUÇÃO

“Informativo das Missões-Adultos-1º trimestre/2020

Por este instrumento, de um lado **DENISE EMÍLIA FAYE SANTOS**, brasileira, portadora da cédula de identidade RG nº 72.534.737-0 (PR), e inscrita no CPF sob número 285.908.298-04, residente e domiciliada à Rua Projetada G, 259, bairro Ouro Verde, Sarandi-PR, aqui designada **TRADUTORA CEDENTE** e, de outro, **CONFEDERAÇÃO DAS UNIÕES BRASILEIRAS DA IGREJA ADVENTISTA DO SÉTIMO DIA**, pessoa jurídica de direito privado, inscrita no CNPJ sob nº 33.871.088/0001-76, sediada à Av. L3, SGAS 611, módulos 75/76, em Brasília – DF, neste ato, representada por seu Procurador, Sr. **DIEGO LOTTERMANN DE MORAES**, brasileiro, casado, portador da Cédula de Identidade 1414274-0 e CPF sob nº 007.191.781-00, ao final assinado, ora denominada **CESSIONÁRIA**, de acordo com o que preceituam a Constituição Federal, o Código Civil, a Lei nº 9.610/98, e por força das demais Leis e Tratados em vigor, FICOU CONVENCIONADO o seguinte:

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Brasília - DF, 04 de julho de 2019.

TRADUTORA

CEDENTE _____

CESSIONÁRIA

**CONFEDERAÇÃO DAS UNIÕES BRASILEIRAS DA
IGREJA ADVENTISTA DO SÉTIMO DIA**

