



# YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2017 • **QUARTER 4** • EURO-ASIA DIVISION



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**On the Cover:** Nikita Kirkachev, 22, keeps the Sabbath even though his teachers have tried to expel him repeatedly in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. Read his story on p. 14.

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## Your Offerings at Work



Part of the 2014 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped build an Adventist school, left, in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, and an Adventist church in Minsk, Belarus.



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## Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter features the Euro-Asia Division, a region of the world that spans 11 time zones and 13 countries across eastern Europe and Central Asia. It includes the countries of Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Our mission stories this quarter feature six of these countries by name. Others cannot be identified, and people's names have been changed, to protect the church's work in challenging regions.

### The Challenges

Most of the countries in the Euro-Asia Division were once part of the former Soviet Union, which for 70 years restricted religious freedom. Today, the countries of the Euro-Asia Division are home to more than 322 million people, but only about

111,500 Adventists. That's one Adventist for every 2,888 people.

Ukraine has the highest concentration of Adventists, with one Adventist for every 900 people. This represents almost half of the division's believers. In contrast, the countries in the division's south, which includes Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, are largely Muslim and pose a special challenge. Only 4,200 Adventists live in this region of 103 million people. That is one Adventist for every 24,500 people—truly a mission field!

The projects featured this quarter were chosen for their potential for outreach within their area of influence.

### Special Features

You can download the PDF version of this *Mission* quarterly at the link: [bit.ly/adultmission](http://bit.ly/adultmission) and like us at [Facebook.com/missionquarterlies](https://www.facebook.com/missionquarterlies). You can also access new mission stories posted nearly daily on our website, [adventistmission.org](http://adventistmission.org).

Download *Mission Spotlight* videos, which feature mission reports about Thirteenth Sabbath Offering recipients and inspiring stories from around the world, at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](http://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

Check out the Leader's Resource on page 31 in this quarterly for sources of additional information to enhance your mission presentations. You also can contact me directly at [mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org) for more information.

Thank you for your dedication to mission around the world!

Andrew McChesney  
Editor

## Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help provide:

- A multipurpose retreat complex for Pathfinders and adults in Rezina, Moldova
- A Mentoring Through Sports program for children and teens in Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- A multipurpose sports complex at Heritage Christian School in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan
- A Serve and Shine Outreach Center in Rostov-on-Don, Russia
- A Gospel Harbor Outreach Center of Influence in Vladivostok, Russia
- Children's Project: A children's preschool in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan



# God Said, “Shh!”

Christian Müller, 33

*[Ask a man to present this first-person report.]*

**M**y family are Seventh-day Adventist volunteers in the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan.

Every year we have an annual leave. But to be honest, I complained a bit to God when I learned that my family would have to fly home to Argentina for our annual leave in June, when it was winter in Argentina. I wanted to go in December, when it is summer there, and I could spend Christmas with my mother.

But my wife was ill and needed treatment. So, we packed our suitcases and left Heritage Christian School, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Tokmok, a major city in Kyrgyzstan, where I have worked as development

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**Although we had prayed for a buyer for the woman’s house, I was shocked that the sale had come so quickly.**

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director for the past four years.

God had a reason for sending us back to Argentina at this time—besides my wife’s illness. He wanted me to learn about His timing.

## **God’s Challenge, Our Blessing**

While I was in Argentina, a woman called me. She is an Adventist, but we had never met before. She had heard that I was fundraising for the Adventist school in Kyrgyzstan, and she wanted me to come to her house to tell her more about the project.

When I arrived, she said, “I’m going to be straight with you. I have been trying to sell my house for the past two years and cannot sell it. I have even cut the price of the house in half, but still I cannot sell it.

## Fast Facts

- Kyrgyzstan lies at the crossroads of several great civilizations. The Silk Road and other commercial and cultural routes pass through or near the country.
- Because of the high cost of fuel, much of the farming in Kyrgyzstan is still done by hand and by horse, as it has been for centuries.
- The Kyrgyz people historically have been semi-nomadic herders, living in round tents called yurts and tending sheep, horses, and yaks.
- About 80 percent of the population of Kyrgyzstan is Muslim; about 17 percent follow Russian Orthodoxy, and 3 percent other religions.
- The Adventist Church has 757 members in Kyrgyzstan, meaning there is one Adventist for every 7,530 people.

So, I told God, ‘If I can sell this house, I will give \$100,000 to a church project.’”

My eyes widened with surprise as I listened.

“I’ve tried to contact several church institutions, but none of them returned my phone calls. Then I heard that you are here,” she said.

I told the woman that Heritage Christian School was trying to raise U.S.\$400,000 to construct a three-story building of classrooms that would allow the school to double its enrollment from the current 330 students. I explained that the school had been forced to turn away 40 students last year.

“Fine, I will give to this project,” the woman said.

“But you need to pray. I have been

trying to sell the house for two years, and it is impossible.”

## A Prayer and a Call

We prayed together, and I left. That evening, I shared the story with my wife and six- and seven-year-old sons. We prayed earnestly that night and the next morning.

The next day, a buyer agreed to buy the house.

Although we had prayed for a buyer for the woman’s house, I was shocked that the sale had come so quickly. I had been upset because we were in Argentina during the winter instead of the summer, but God had other plans. The sale of the house was like God saying, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalms 46:10, NKJV).

God knew that this woman’s desperation to sell her house would provide one-quarter of the cost of the new classroom block in Kyrgyzstan. Thanks to her gift, and the gifts of many others, the building is scheduled to open this year.

During our annual leave, I also made a long-planned trip to the United States to raise more funds. I worked hard during the month that I was there, but didn’t raise even a quarter of the amount donated by that Argentine woman.

Fundraising is all about prayer and faith. I’ve learned to allow God take me wherever He wants.

A portion of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help complete the construction of a new multipurpose center with an auditorium and other facilities at Heritage Christian School in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. Thank you for your prayers and for your Sabbath School mission offerings. 🌍

# Sabbath-Loving Janitor

KAZAKHSTAN | October 14

Yelena Golubeva



Yelena has every reason to be distressed.

She lost her job because of the Sabbath last year. After a period of unemployment, she found work as a low-paid janitor. Now she is receiving death threats because of her desire to help another woman keep the Sabbath in Kazakhstan.

But Yelena is visibly happy.

“I love to serve God,” she said.

Sabbath observance is a challenge in this country of 17 million people and only 3,500 Adventists. No church schools operate here, and public schools hold classes from Monday through Saturday. Employers often are unsympathetic to Sabbath requests, even when church members offer to make up the work during the week. Many people dismiss Adventists and other Protestants as “sectarians.”

Yelena’s troubles began when the pipe production company where she had

worked for five years decided to expand its work week to six days from the previous five. Yelena had disclosed during her job interview in 2011 that she observed the biblical seventh-day Sabbath, and her supervisor had replied: “No problem. We only work five days a week. Your Sabbath will fall on your weekend.”

But the company changed its work schedule in 2016, citing economic conditions, and Yelena had no choice but to leave.

After two months of unemployment, an Adventist friend helped her find a part-time janitorial job at a pawnshop. Yelena also received training as a massage therapist, allowing her to volunteer at a community health center operated by her church.

## Grandmother Faina

Yelena’s work as a massage therapist

led her to Grandmother Faina, as she affectionately calls the 75-year-old woman. They met through a church member, and Yelena agreed to give the elderly woman 10 daily sessions for free.

Grandmother Faina, who suffered pain from an accident in her youth, thanked Yelena profusely as her health improved. Yelena replied every time, “I am a Christian, so you need to thank God.”

The 10 days passed quickly. At the last session, Yelena invited Grandmother Faina to study the Bible together. The woman agreed, and the two began to meet once a week to go through the 24 Bible lessons.

Grandmother Faina accepted what she heard, and her lifestyle began to change. She sought to observe the Sabbath.

When she told her adult son, Pavel, about her new faith, he was furious. Pavel, a divorced father who lives alone with his mother, called church members to complain.

“My mother was completely different before,” he said. “She used to make good food, but now she won’t prepare pork. Before she drank alcohol during holidays, and now she refuses to drink.”

## Fast Facts

- Kazakhstan is the world’s largest landlocked country and the ninth-largest country in the world.
- Historically, Kazakhstan has been inhabited by nomadic tribes.
- Kazakhstan has two official languages—Kazakh and Russian. More than half the people speak Kazakh, and most of the people speak Russian.

## Death Threats

Pavel threatened to go to court if the Bible studies continued.

Several days later, when his mother refused to stop the lessons, his threats grew more serious. He told Yelena that he would kill her if she set foot in the house again.

The Bible studies stopped for two weeks. Church members prayed about the situation. It was decided to resume the Bible studies by phone.

“Grandmother Faina started to call me when the son went to work,” Yelena said. “We prayed by phone and then did the lesson.”

With only two Bible lessons left, the son lost his job and refused to leave the house. The lessons stopped for two more weeks. The church members prayed that the son would find work.

“God heard our prayers,” Yelena said. Pavel found work and the Bible lessons resumed.

Yelena expressed excitement at seeing how God would lead next.

“When we pray, Grandmother Faina praises God that she was able to meet people who could help her live a healthier life and get to know Him,” she said. “Last Sabbath she called me and asked me to pass greetings to the whole church.”

Yelena said it can be difficult to reach people in the world with the gospel. But she said she was willing to do whatever it takes—even losing her job and working for low wages—if it meant that she could obey God and share her faith.

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help fund the opening of the first Seventh-day Adventist preschool in Yelena’s hometown of Pavlodar, Kazakhstan. 🌍

# Massage Opens a Door

EURO-ASIA DIVISION | October 21

Nikolai, 20

photo: Pixabay



*Nikolai received a frantic phone call that changed a family forever.*

**N**ikolai, a 20-year-old Seventh-day Adventist, lives in a restrictive Muslim nation where it is dangerous to even acknowledge being a Christian. He attended a month-long training course on massage therapy, organized by the Adventist Church in another country. Upon returning home, he placed an advertisement offering massage therapy on his Facebook page.

## Desperate Mother

Not long afterward, he received a frantic phone call from a mother who had seen the advertisement. She begged Nikolai to treat her young son.

Nikolai hesitated when he learned about the boy's disability. "I don't have that much experience," he said. "I'm

only at a beginner level."

But the mother insisted. "Please, come," she said. "No one else wants to help my son."

Nikolai reluctantly agreed to meet the boy in person. But when he arrived and saw the boy's condition, he realized that the case was very serious. He told the mother, "I'm so sorry. I don't have enough experience or wisdom to help your son."

The mother broke into tears. "Please, help him," she said. "I have asked every massage therapist that I can find. Everyone has refused to help. You are my last hope."

## Let Me Pray

Nikolai's heart went out to this dear mother. "Fine," he said. "I will help under one condition. I am a Christian, and I need God's wisdom to help your son. If you will allow me to pray before every



massage session, maybe God will give me the wisdom to help your boy.”

To his surprise, the mother agreed.

The boy’s father was at home when Nikolai came for the third session and watched with curiosity and suspicion as Nikolai prayed and then began the massage session. Nikolai learned that the father was a powerful government official. There was nothing Nikolai could do but explain what had happened. He said he hadn’t felt qualified to assist the boy but had finally agreed under the condition that he could ask God for help. Nikolai’s explanation satisfied the father, who told Nikolai to continue with his work.

A few more massage sessions passed. One day, during a session, the boy’s father received an urgent phone call. Nikolai didn’t know what the phone call was about, but he could see that it was an emergency. The father quickly got dressed and rushed toward the door. Nikolai stopped him at the door. “Sir,” Nikolai said politely. “I don’t know what this emergency is, but let’s pray about it before you go.”

The boy’s father agreed! Nikolai prayed for him, and the father ran out the door. Nikolai never found out more about the emergency, but he later learned that it had been resolved.

### Unexpected Recommendation

As the massage therapy progressed, the parents saw changes in their son. The boy was not cured, but he was making remarkable progress. He began to do things that he couldn’t do before, and the parents were delighted. The boy’s father began to tell other senior government officials, “You won’t believe the massage therapist who is helping my son. He is the

## Fast Facts

- Most of the countries in the Euro-Asia Division were once part of the former Soviet Union.
- Today, the countries of the Euro-Asia Division are home to more than 322 million people, but only about 111,500 Adventists, or one Adventist for every 2,888 people.
- The countries in the southern region of the division, which includes Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, are predominantly Muslim and pose a special challenge. Just over 4,200 Adventists live in this region of 103 million people. That is one Adventist for every 24,500 people—truly a mission field!

best in the country. You should try him!”

With such recommendations, Nikolai has become the massage therapist for a large group of well-placed government officials in that country. Nikolai cites God’s promise in Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (NKJV).

We may wonder how the gospel can be shared in restrictive countries. Nikolai’s story reminds us that we serve a powerful God. Like Nikolai, you may not have much experience. But when you pray for God’s wisdom, God opens the door in remarkable ways.

Please pray for Nikolai and the Adventist work in the restrictive countries of the Euro-Asia Division. Thank you for your mission offerings, which help spread the gospel in difficult-to-reach areas of the world. 🌍

# The Clouds Cried Out

EURO-ASIA DIVISION | October 28

Murad, 10

photo: Pixabay



Ten-year-old Murad [MYUHR-ad] approached his teacher after class. “I have a secret,” he whispered to her.

The teacher, a Seventh-day Adventist who works in a restrictive country, looked at the boy quizzically. Although Murad had been in her class several months, he had never spoken to her in that way before.

“I have a secret to tell you,” Murad said again, still whispering. “What is it?” the teacher asked.

## Vision in the Clouds

Tears ran down Murad’s cheeks as he

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**Murad’s words and the tears in his eyes as he told his secret cut to his teacher’s heart.**

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spoke. “One day when I was going to school, I saw a cloud that looked like a man hanging on a cross,” Murad said. “I didn’t know who it was until I heard you talking about Jesus. When you spoke about Jesus, I

remembered the cloud.”

Murad’s words and the tears in his eyes as he told his teacher his secret cut to her heart. Clearly, he didn’t know what to make of his vision.

Tears formed in the teacher’s own eyes as she recalled the encounter. She wasn’t sure what to say to Murad. Although she shares Bible stories about Jesus as she tells her students the importance of good values, she

## Mission Post

- Pray for the believers in difficult-to-reach regions of the Euro-Asia Division.
- Pray for those who are seeking to know God but don't know how to find Him.
- Pray for wisdom for the leaders in these fields as they seek new ways to reach millions of people for Christ under difficult circumstances.

cannot say much else without risking major problems with the authorities.

“I don't know what to do,” the teacher said a few weeks after Murad had confided in her. “Murad shared his vision with me in secret because his parents forbid him to believe in Jesus.”

### Message of Hope

We may wonder how the gospel will be spread to the difficult parts of the world such as Murad's homeland. But this young boy's story offers an insight into how God can make His presence known, even when His name cannot be spoken.

Ellen White says that children will have a special role in sharing the gospel in the last days. “When heavenly intelligences see that men are no longer permitted to present the truth, the Spirit of God will come upon the children, and they will do a work in the proclamation of the truth which the older workers cannot” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 202).

Unusual phenomena such as clouds are among the ways that people's attention

can be drawn to Jesus in the 10/40 window, which includes a majority of the most challenging regions in the world in which to share the gospel. People also report seeing Jesus in their dreams, in which many people put great credence. Many people have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior in this region after dreaming about Jesus.

Murad's vision of the cross in the clouds reminds us of Jesus' words, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:40). The Pharisees were urging Jesus to rebuke His disciples for making joyous declarations that He was the Messiah. With those words, Jesus was telling the Pharisees that the stones would cry out that He is the Messiah if His disciples were prevented from speaking that truth.

Likewise, even the clouds are crying out in a part of the world where the gospel is restricted today. When Murad saw the clouds above his home, he understood the message that Jesus is the crucified Savior and Redeemer. And Murad's teacher was convinced that Jesus was reaching out to the young boy's heart through the clouds. Although she wasn't sure what to do next, she knew that if Jesus could make the clouds cry out, she needn't worry.

“The most important thing,” she said, “is God finishes the work that He starts. He will finish the work that we cannot complete on our own.”

Please pray that people will be open to hearing and accepting God's message of love in restricted countries as well as around the world. Your mission offerings help reach people in these difficult-to-reach regions of the world. Thank you for giving. 🌍

# Three Miracles in the Hospital

RUSSIA | November 4

Natalya Grigiryeva, 57



*[Ask a woman to present this first-person report.]*

I was baptized at the age of 19 because I wanted to fit in, but I left the Seventh-day Adventist Church six months later. I stayed away for 33 years. But three miracles—all involving family members in the hospital—brought me back to Jesus.

## Miracle One

The first miracle happened when one of my four sisters, Olga, fell ill. Olga is a faithful Adventist who lives in another city. She underwent three difficult surgeries. When the doctor announced that she faced a fourth surgery, Olga called me and asked me to pray.

“I’m scared,” she said. Olga explained that an X-ray had identified an unexplained growth inside her. It looked like cancer.

I got on to my knees and began to pray. I promised God that I would give up alcohol, cigarettes, and pork if He would just help my sister. During the two weeks that I prayed before the surgery, I quit drinking, smoking, and eating unclean meat.

On the day of the surgery, Olga texted me from the hospital. She wrote, “They didn’t do anything to me. I’m going home.”

It seemed that my worst fears had come true. Olga must have inoperable cancer. I called Olga and asked, “What happened? Why didn’t the doctors operate?”

Olga said, “Before taking me into the operating room, the doctors took another X-ray. This time they couldn’t find anything wrong. I am well!”

What a relief! I thanked God every day for the rest of the week. On Saturday morning, however, I went to work as usual. A conflict quickly broke out inside me. I felt terrible for breaking God’s law by working on the Sabbath after God had just saved my sister’s life.

I finally dropped what I was doing and drove to the Seventh-day Adventist church—and arrived just in time for Sabbath School. My mind immediately felt at peace. I realized that I had come home. That day I gave my heart to Jesus.

## Miracle Two

Four years passed. In 2015, my elderly mother suffered a massive stroke. My sisters and I raced to the hospital and found her lying staring blankly at us. This strong woman, an Adventist who had raised four girls, couldn't do anything but stare at us.

We prayed for my mother for two weeks. She slowly improved, but she remained paralyzed. Finally, we brought her home.

One day, a week after she returned home, my mother abruptly stood up and began to walk. Her nine-year-old great-granddaughter shrieked with joy when she saw what was happening. "Let's thank God!" she said. And we did.

Then, in 2016, my 79-year-old father was badly injured in a traffic accident in another city. A bus hit him as he was riding his bicycle, and he was rushed to the hospital in critical condition.

My father was an avowed atheist who had divorced my mother when I was 13 and later remarried. He stopped talking to me when I told him that I was going to church, and he threw away the DVDs of sermons and Christian films that I mailed him. Two weeks before his accident, he tore up a Bible that I had sent him.

## Miracle Three

Now he was hospitalized in a coma. We were far away and could not go to him.

When my sister Olga and my mother were in the hospital, we prayed that God would heal them. But in my father's case, my mother and the rest of our family pleaded with God to awaken him long enough to repent. We prayed that he would accept Jesus.

On the third day, my father woke up

## Fast Facts

- Rostov-on-Don is a large port city on the Don River. In the nineteenth century, the harbor was a major trade hub in southern Russia, especially for the export of wheat, timber, and iron ore.
- Because of its location and its role as a major transportation center, some refer to Rostov-on-Don as the "Gateway to the Caucasus."
- The region around Rostov-on-Don produces one-third of Russia's vegetable oil from sunflowers.

with a sound mind and asked relatives what had happened. He asked why he was in the hospital. Three hours later, he passed away. Only God knows what went through my father's mind during those last moments. But I am so grateful to God that my father was given a last opportunity to repent.

After this third answer to prayer, my heart has been really drawn to God. I understand that God really does listen to our prayers and answers them.

People should pray. Pray for your family, for your children, for your parents, and for your neighbors. God hears—and He answers—the faithful prayers of His righteous children.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a community center in my hometown of Rostov-on-Don. Join me in praying for this community center — and join me in giving to the Sabbath School mission offering to help spread God's Word around the world. 🌍



# No Saturday Classes

Nikita Kirkachev, 22

*[Ask a young man to present this first-person report.]*

**M**y Seventh-day Adventist mother taught me about God when I was a young boy, but my father prevented me from going to church. He said I could do whatever I wanted after I turned 18. But until then, he said, I had to obey him.

After I turned 18, I moved away from home to study architecture at a university in the city of Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia. The first thing I did after unpacking was find the nearest Adventist church. Then I began to study the Bible carefully and to keep the Sabbath.

## Sabbath Issues

Almost immediately I ran into problems with the university. Teachers began to send me letters. Every time I skipped a class on Saturday, I received a letter. I skipped all my Saturday classes, so I received many letters. A student who gets too many letters can be expelled.

My father was furious when he learned

that I was attending church instead of classes. He berated me in a long phone conversation. He accused me of being involved in a religious sect. I realized that he had hoped that I would forget about God after I turned 18. I told my father that I loved him but I loved God even more and wanted to obey God.

My mother was happy that I was putting God first. She read Isaiah 41:10 to me, which says, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (NKJV). My mother prayed for me, and I also prayed.

I asked the university dean for permission not to study on Saturdays. But the dean said he couldn’t make an exception for me. He said the other students would accuse him of playing favorites.

Without any other options, I decided to ask each teacher individually for permission to make up classes on other days. This approach worked for two years. Many exams also were given on Saturdays, and the teachers allowed me to take them on other days of the week.

My classmates didn’t understand me at first. But they began to support me and speak up for me in front of the teachers.

Several teachers, however, disliked

## Fast Facts

- Today's Rostov-on-Don was built on the site of Tanais, an ancient Greek colony that later became Fort Tana under the Genoese, and Fort Azak in the time of the Ottoman Empire.
- The city and its surrounding regions are host to a wide variety of religious faiths. Predominant is the Russian Orthodox Church, but there are a significant number of Catholics, some Jews, Buddhists, and Armenian Christians, as well as Protestants.
- Some famous authors associated with Rostov-on-Don include Anton Chekhov, Mikhail Sholokhov, Alexander Pushkin, Maxim Gorky, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

me. They didn't understand why I chose church over studies. I grew increasingly worried about being expelled. I knew that education was important for my father, and I didn't want to disappoint him.

## The Ultimatums

One day, the dean called me into his office and gave me the ultimatum that I had been dreading. He said, "If you skip one more class on Saturday, I will expel you."

We prayed about the situation at church. Two pastors visited the dean to explain why I was skipping classes. God intervened. The dean said I could stay if I agreed to engage in extracurricular work for the university. He asked me to help organize several health exhibitions.

Things quieted down for a while. Then the dean left, and my problems started again.

The biggest trouble came when one teacher refused to give me a final exam. I hadn't attended any of her classes all

semester because they were on Sabbath. My classmates gave me the assignments and delivered the homework they had covered on Saturdays. When I explained to the teacher why I couldn't take the final exam on Sabbath, she said, "Come to class on Saturday, or don't come at all."

I thought that this was the end of my education. The dean didn't support me, and the teacher wouldn't back down. She even scheduled a makeup final exam for a Saturday.

I cried out to God to intervene.

## Change of Heart

Shortly after that prayer, the teacher passed me on the sidewalk. Then she stopped and turned to me. "Come to my office and show me your homework," she said.

This was the teacher who had refused to work with me all semester. Now she suddenly was agreeing to look at my homework. God had changed her heart. I passed the class.

Through the Sabbath challenges, I have learned to obey God and to surrender to Him. I am grateful that He has given me confidence and hope for the future.

Soon I will graduate and enter the workforce. I'm not worried about the future for two reasons. God has been faithful in fulfilling His promise to uphold me with His righteous right hand. And my last exam before graduation is scheduled for a weekday!

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a Seventh-day Adventist community center in Rostov-on-Don where students like me can meet and share Jesus with others. Thank you for supporting the gospel with your Sabbath School mission offering. 🌍

# A Graveyard Walk

TAJKISTAN | November 18

Surayo Khudjamkulova, 34



As a teenager, Surayo [SU-rayo] worshipped with Seventh-day Adventists for two years at the invitation of a neighbor in Tajikistan. But when she was 18, she stopped attending and eventually forgot about God as she pursued a career in nursing. Then she got married. But marriage didn't bring the happiness Surayo had hoped for. Her husband gambled and used drugs, and he often beat her.

During a moment of sadness, Surayo found the Bible that an Adventist had given her years earlier. She opened it at random, and her eyes fell on Isaiah 5:4. She read the verse several times. It said, "What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?" (NKJV).

Tears filled Surayo's eyes. She sensed that she was the vineyard prepared by God, but she had failed Him. She prayed, "God, if I should stay with my husband, please make him stop beating me. And make it possible for us to worship You together. If You want me to leave him, provide a peaceful way to do it. I will follow You."

Shortly after her prayer, Surayo announced to her husband, "I love someone else more than you. He is more than a person to me."

Her husband interrupted triumphantly, "I knew there was somebody else!"

"No, it's not like that," Surayo said. "I love Jesus, and I want you to love Him, too."

"You must love Mohammed," the husband said. "He is our prophet, not Jesus."



“The issue is not about who is a prophet,” Surayo said. “Jesus is more than a prophet. He is our path to salvation.”

## Dangerous Decision

A few days later, Surayo’s husband, high on drugs, lost a sizeable sum of money in a betting game. He decided that he would rather go to jail than to face the shame of not being able to pay his debt. So, he decided, while still high on drugs, that his ticket to jail was to kill Surayo. He invited her to go for a late-night walk.

The moon was so pretty that Surayo didn’t notice where they were walking. She was surprised to find that they were in a cemetery. Then she felt something sharp and cold on her neck—a knife! Her husband was trying to slit her throat!

Surayo grabbed his arm. “Why are you trying to kill me? It’s not worth going to prison for me.”

The couple struggled, and several of Surayo’s fingers were cut to the bone. “Jesus, save me!” she cried out. “Stop him!” Then she lost consciousness.

She awoke in her own bed a few hours later. Her husband told her that he had brought her home.

Surayo immediately told him that she could not live with him anymore. He did not resist, and the couple parted ways. It had been a week since Surayo had promised to follow God if He helped her get a peaceful divorce. But she forgot her promise to follow God.

Surayo rented an apartment and found a job as a nurse working the night shift at a hospital. Then she remembered the promise. She began to pray, “If you want me to follow You, tell me which denomination to join. Which church is the real one, the one where You are?”

## Mission Post

- Tajikistan is a mountainous, landlocked country in Central Asia, with about 8 million people. Most of the people who live there are ethnic Tajiks who speak Tajik, a dialect of Persian.
- As a result of being part of the Soviet Union for 70 years, many Tajiks also speak Russian.
- About 70 percent of the population is under the age of 30.
- The national sport of Tajikistan is gushtigiri, a form of traditional wrestling.

## The Wrong Bus

One Saturday morning, after a long night at the hospital, Surayo unintentionally got onto the wrong bus. She didn’t realize her mistake until the bus reached its last stop. She looked around, trying to get her bearings. Then she saw an Adventist building in front of her. She realized that getting on the wrong bus was no accident; God had brought her to where the Adventists were worshipping.

It was Sabbath morning, and worship services were just starting. Surayo went inside and realized that this was exactly where God wanted her. She has never left.

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go toward outreach programs in Tajikistan, a country of 8 million people but only 204 Adventists. Thank you for remembering Tajikistan in your prayers and with your Sabbath School mission offerings. 🌍

*Read more about Surayo on the Adventist Mission website ([bit.ly/Jesus-in-Tajikistan](http://bit.ly/Jesus-in-Tajikistan)) and a children’s story about her on p. 22 of the Children’s Mission quarterly.*

# Reaching Youth Through Soccer

TAJIKISTAN | November 25

Bakhriddin Sanginov



Neighborhood boys who play soccer under a Seventh-day Adventist coach in Tajikistan have more to worry about than yellow and red penalty cards. They also try to avoid the special blue card. The coach, Bakhriddin [bahk-RIH-dihn], flashes the blue card when he hears a player use profanity. If a player receives two blue cards, he is out of the game.

Parents like the discipline that Bakhriddin demands of his soccer players. They have noticed that their children are helping them more at home because of the discipline they're learning on the

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**Bakhriddin immediately embraced the idea of working with children and creating friendships that can extend to their parents.**

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soccer field. The boys are swearing less and are not spending as much time playing computer games.

## A New Outreach

The soccer team is part of an Adventist effort to reach out to neighbors in Tajikistan,

a landlocked country in Central Asia that is predominantly Muslim. Only 204 Adventists live here. More than 1,000 church members left Tajikistan amid instability over the past decade. Church leaders say it is difficult to share Jesus because public evangelism is banned.

But church leaders are hopeful after 18 people were baptized in 2016 as a result

## Mission Post

- Tajikistan considers itself a secular state, with a Constitution providing for freedom of religion, but 98 percent of the population is Muslim.
- The first Adventists, Ivan and Vasily Kosmjnin, traveled to Tajikistan in 1929.
- Only 204 Adventists worship in Tajikistan. One out of every 39,215 people in Tajikistan is an Adventist. Believers are searching for new ideas to reach out to others in their country in practical ways, and God is opening doors.

of prayer and outreach programs. Church leaders are working to develop more outreach programs, such as the soccer team. They are working to establish an English-language school, hold health and family expos, and support a small but popular bicycle club. These programs create opportunities to develop friendships with neighbors and contribute to the improvement of society.

Part of this quarter's Thirteen Sabbath Offering will be allocated for outreach programs such as the soccer team in Tajikistan.

### Accidental Mission

The soccer team plays on a field near the only Adventist building in Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe [doo-shahn-bay]. The team was formed in 2015 when

neighborhood children saw Bakhridin playing on the field and asked him to be their coach. Bakhridin immediately embraced the idea of working with children and creating friendships that can extend to their parents. His project didn't require a lot of expense—just three soccer balls, a whistle, and a stopwatch. Then he received certification from the Asian Football Confederation, the governing body of the sport in Asia, to coach children's soccer.

These days he coaches two or three matches a week. Fifteen minutes of every 90-minute training session is set aside for a moral lesson. The boys, ages 11 to 13, have quit using drugs and other harmful substances as they get involved in sports.

No blue cards for profanity were flashed during a soccer match that Adventist Mission watched. The boys chased the white ball with determination as they played in light rain. They smiled widely whenever the coach addressed them. A half dozen boys watched the game, clearly wishing that they would be invited to play, too. Bakhridin said the spectators would have an opportunity to join the team.

After the soccer games, parents invite the coach into their home for tea and conversation.

"Parents are glad that the children are serious about playing," the coach said. "They come to me and tell me, 'We are glad that you have organized this team to put our son on the right track.'"

Please pray for the soccer team—not to win games, but to win hearts. And support outreach in Tajikistan and around the world with your Sabbath School mission offerings. 🌍

# Is It Worth Doing Good?



UKRAINE | December 2

## Roman Prodanuk

to make good money in the Netherlands. Toma asked them to repay the debt, but they refused. They stopped answering his phone calls.

Toma was furious. He flew to the Netherlands and told his business friend who had hired the relatives to dock their wages so he could collect the debt. Then he flew back to Georgia with the \$15,000 in cash. But something spoiled his plans to buy a car. Someone stole half the cash.

Then one day, Toma was on a business trip to Kiev [kee-YEHV], the capital of Ukraine. He spotted dozens of children playing games in a city park. He drew closer and learned from an adult that the Seventh-day Adventist church located across the street had organized a special festival for the neighborhood children. The adult introduced himself as Pastor Roman.

Toma, his mind still on his relatives, immediately shared the story about how his good deed had been returned with evil. “What do you think?” he said. “Is it worth doing good after all that?”

At that moment, several Bible verses came to the pastor’s mind.

Pastor Roman turned to Toma. “I think you have left out some important details of your story. Before you helped them, your relatives blamed God for their poverty, didn’t they?”

“How did you know?” Toma exclaimed. “That’s exactly how it was!”

“I know,” Pastor Roman said, “because

Toma is a businessman in the country of Georgia. He had saved U.S.\$15,000 and wanted to buy a new car. But he felt an overwhelming urge to give the money to several relatives suffering hardship. Try as he might, Toma could not shake the thought. It even kept him awake at night and made it difficult to focus on work during the day. It was as if someone was telling him to help his relatives.

Finally, Toma gave up. Through a business friend, he found seasonal jobs for his relatives in the Netherlands. He paid for their air tickets to the Netherlands and split the remaining money between them.

The relatives were stunned. “How can we thank you?” they asked.

“It isn’t exactly a gift,” Toma replied. “Work and pay back the money. Then I can buy that car.”

## Disappointing Debtors

After some time, the relatives began

## Fast Facts

- Ukraine, formerly part of the Soviet Union, is now the largest country entirely within Europe. It has a population of about 42.5 million.
- For centuries Ukraine's fertile farmlands have earned it the title of "global breadbasket." It is one of the world's largest grain exporters. The country also has a large industrial sector.
- Residents of some parts of Ukraine suffer from serious air and water pollution, and thousands have died from radiation poisoning and cancer following the 1986 explosion of a nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl power station in Ukraine.

it is written in Romans 3:4, 'Let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged.'" Your relatives blamed God for their poverty, but God gave them a chance to have money and start a new life."

The pastor didn't pause. "The second thing that you didn't tell me is that your relatives wasted all their money after they returned to Georgia, and they are blaming God for their poverty again."

"That's exactly how it happened!" Toma said. "But how did you know?"

"I know because it is written in Proverbs 13:11, 'Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished.'

## Surprising Prophecy

"There is one last thing that you didn't tell me," Pastor Roman said. "When you returned to Georgia, bitterly disappointed after your trip to the Netherlands, your business began to flourish."

"How did you know?" Toma said. "I was

so successful at work that I was surprised."

"I know because it is written in Proverbs 19:17, 'He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.'"

Toma was amazed by what he heard, but he couldn't quite see the whole picture. He asked the pastor to explain further.

Pastor Roman explained: "Your relatives were poor and blamed God for their problems. God decided to give them an opportunity, so they wouldn't have a reason to blame Him on Judgment Day. God looked for someone to give them money. That was when the Holy Spirit convicted you to help your relatives. You felt such an overpowering desire to help them that you couldn't refuse. But your relatives were dishonest and didn't take advantage of the opportunity. So, on Judgment Day they will not be able to excuse themselves by saying that God didn't give them a chance. You also will appear before God on Judgment Day and may want to ask, 'Why did You do good to my relatives and not to me?' God will reply, 'What do I owe you? Even though your relatives were not dependable, I returned your loan. You got back the money that you gave.'"

At those words, Toma cried out, "God didn't just give me back my money. He returned three times more!"

Pastor Roman asked quietly, "So is it worth doing good?"

"Yes," Toma said. "There is no other way of looking at it."

Thank you for remembering Adventist pastors and their mission outreach with your prayers and mission offering. 🌍

*Roman Prodanuyuk is president of Kiev Conference.*

# Sharing Jesus on a Train

UKRAINE | December 9

Nikolai Zhukalyuk, 84



*[Ask a man to present this first-person report.]*

Being a Christian is not about talking the talk. Being a Christian is about living so that people who look at you see that something about you is different. Then they ask questions, and you can reply with enthusiasm because you know the Answer. But if no one asks you anything, then you have no reason to talk.

## Active Recruiter

I look for ways to get people to ask questions. I don't think it is right to start a conversation by discussing the Sabbath or another doctrine. Instead, I want strangers to see that I have something that they need.

The other day, I boarded a train in Lviv [Le-VIV] for an overnight trip to Kiev [kee-YEHV], the capital of Ukraine. I reserved a bed in a two-person sleeping

compartment, and the other passenger turned out to be a woman.

When we first met, I told the woman, "Let's get acquainted. We are going to be traveling together for quite a few hours. Are you from Lviv, or were you in Lviv on business?"

The woman said, "I am not from Lviv. I am from Kiev, and I am going home."

I smiled and answered, "I am from Lviv and am traveling to Kiev."

"Why are you going to Kiev?" she asked, politely curious.

I told her that I am a former church leader and have many friends around the world. When my friends come to Ukraine, they sometimes invite me to meet them in Kiev. I told her that it's more convenient for them to meet in Kiev, and I'm happy to travel to see them. With these words, I provided a short biography of my life.

## Mission Post

- The majority of Ukrainians identify with Orthodox Christianity; about 2.2 percent of the population are Protestant Christians, almost 2 percent are Catholic, and about 1 percent are Muslims. Roughly 11 percent of the population do not affiliate with any religious group.
- About 47,500 Adventists live in Ukraine. This number represents about 45 percent of the division's Adventists. That means that Ukraine has one Adventist for every 900 people.

### Inciting Interest

My words interested the woman. She said, “My name is Nadya. Which church did you help to lead?”

I didn't answer her immediately. Instead I smiled at her and asked, “Which church do you attend?”

“I don't go to any church,” she answered. “But I consider myself Orthodox.” Nadya explained that she works as a psychologist and specializes in treating people who have been traumatized by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. Then she said, “I understand that you aren't an Orthodox believer. What is the difference between your church and the Orthodox Church?”

“Orthodox believers worship on Sunday, and we worship on Saturday,” I said.

“What do you mean, you worship on Saturday?”

“Have you read the Bible?” I asked.

“Yes, of course, I have.”

“Have you heard of the Ten Commandments?”

“Yes,” she said thoughtfully. “Don't steal. Don't kill.”

“Well, the Fourth Commandment talks about Saturday,” I said.

The conversation continued for a long time. I realized that we could talk all night, so I finally suggested that we get some sleep. The woman wanted to know more, and she asked whether she could find any of my books in Kiev bookstores. I had mentioned during our conversation that I am the author of 15 books.

### Stay in Touch

The woman expressed disappointment when I said the books were out of print, but I promised to mail her a book if she gave me her contact information. She wrote down her address and phone number.

When we arrived in Kiev the next morning, the woman introduced me to her husband, who was waiting at the train station. She and her husband helped carry my luggage into the train station's waiting room and told me to call if nobody arrived to pick me up. “We'll take care of you,” the woman said.

This is mission outreach! Now I have a new friend who is interested in learning more about God and His truths. I will continue to converse with her.

Your mission offerings help provide literature and books to those around the world who hunger to know the truth. Thank you for remembering the church's mission in your prayers and with your Sabbath School mission offerings. 🌐

*Nikolai Zhukalyuk is 84 years old and a former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine. He was jailed for two years in Soviet times for his faith. Read more about him on the Adventist Mission website at: [bit.ly/nikolai-zhukalyuk](http://bit.ly/nikolai-zhukalyuk).*



# Three Prayers

Nadezhda Raya, 54

I became curious about which was the right day to worship: was it Sabbath, as the Bible said, or Sunday, as my Orthodox neighbors believed?

My mother told me to go to a nearby town and ask a certain priest. “He is an honest person,” she said. “He will tell you.”

## The Priest’s Conversation

I found the priest and told him, “I have come to buy a Bible. I have an Adventist Bible, and I want to compare it with the Orthodox Bible.” The priest ordered someone to bring a Bible. As we waited, I asked the priest, “What does the Bible say is the right day to worship?”

He said, “You want to buy a Bible. See for yourself.”

“No, tell me. Please,” I said. “I want to hear it from you.” I begged him, but he refused to give me a simple answer.

Someone finally brought me a Bible, and I paid the priest 30 rubles, a considerable sum at the time. A fear overwhelmed me as I left the Orthodox church. I wondered what my husband would say when he learned that I had paid so much for a Bible.

I decided not to go home immediately, so I went to visit my mother first. Along the way, I met my older brother and told him the whole story. We compared the two Bibles on the road. I saw that the texts were identical in both and thought with dread,

*[Ask a woman to present this first-person report.]*

My husband and I lived near a Seventh-day Adventist church. I often saw people walking along the road, some carrying Bibles pressed against their chests. I began to think that something was missing from my life because I didn’t know what the Bible said. This happened around the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Bibles were not common in Moldova, and I didn’t have one.

Wishing to learn more, I secretly visited an Adventist family and listened to them read from the Bible. I didn’t want anyone to know what I was doing because people in my town laughed at Adventists.

## The Unorthodox Bible

After a while, I asked the Adventist family for a Bible, and they gave me one. I was surprised that the Sabbath seemed to appear on every page. I thought, “This must not be an Orthodox Bible.”



*What have I done? I have paid precious money for Bibles that are the same.* I prayed that my husband would not find out.

Moments later my brother declared that he wanted my new Bible and gave me back my 30 rubles. I couldn't believe it! God had answered my prayer!

## Reluctant Husband

Back at home, my husband didn't support my new desire to become an Adventist. We had not attended any church, and he didn't want to start now. I began to pray for him.

Around the time that I was baptized, a terrible rash broke out on my husband's chest and back. It was horrible to look at. Every time I washed his sores, I asked God for help. I remember my tears falling on his back as I prayed, "This is my husband. I love him." Some time passed. One day while I was washing his back, I exclaimed, "What happened to your rash?"

My husband replied, "I don't know!" The rash was gone.

After that, my husband began to think about his anger toward me for attending church. One night he had a dream in which he saw the Second Coming. He felt the earth shake. He awoke with a start and turned to me, asking, "Do I have time to be baptized?"

My second prayer was answered. My husband was baptized 10 years after me.

## An Old Friend

Then I started praying for a dear friend from school days. I hadn't seen her for 20 years, and I prayed for her salvation. One day, my husband and I traveled to Moldova's capital for a special celebration at the church's headquarters. At the celebration, my old friend whom

## Fast Facts

- Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Its primary industry is agriculture.
- The official language of Moldova is Romanian, a language related to Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- The capital of Moldova is city of Chi in u [KEE-shee-now], which is home to almost 500,000 people.
- Trânta (a form of wrestling) is the national sport in Moldova.

I had been praying for ran up to me. I asked her, "What are you doing with all these Adventists?"

She said, "I also am an Adventist."

"But how?" I said.

She replied, "You told me 20 years ago that the Adventist Church was the right church."

"That isn't possible," I said. "I didn't even know Adventists back then."

She insisted that I had introduced her to the Adventist faith.

The only explanation that I can think of is that I probably spoke to her about Christians, and God intervened so she heard the word "Adventists" instead of "Christians." After that conversation, my friend embarked on a spiritual journey that led her to the Adventist Church. God answered my prayer for her salvation 20 years before I asked.

This is the power of prayer.

I am praying now for a Soviet-era health resort that the Adventist Church is turning into a Pathfinder camp and conference center with money from this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Join me in supporting this important project. 🌐



# The Case Against God

Victor Bufeac, 40

*[Ask a man to present this first-person report.]*

Life was tough in my homeland of Moldova, where I worked as a state prosecutor. So, I bought a Polish passport on the black market and moved to Ireland to start a better life.

But then I found out that my Moldovan roommate was a Seventh-day Adventist.

## Aggravating Roommate

Alexander infuriated me with his constant Bible reading. Every time I asserted that a belief from the church of my childhood was correct, Alexander would open his Bible and point to a text to prove me wrong. I could not convince him to worship on Sunday or to eat unclean foods. I felt like I had a major disadvantage. Alexander read the Bible every day—he said he'd read through it eight times in the eight years since he had been baptized. I had never even opened the Bible!

I challenged Alexander to prove that the Bible had not been changed in

2,000 years. He gave me five books on archaeology and the history of the Bible. I read the books during my 90-minute commute to and from work in Dublin every day. I realized that the Bible had not been changed.

Then I decided that Alexander was reading from a special Adventist Bible. So, I got my own Bible and compared it with his. The words were identical.

## Proving Alexander Wrong

One Friday evening I got extremely upset when I saw Alexander preparing to welcome the Sabbath. I didn't understand how Alexander, a simple welder, knew so much about the Bible. I decided to study the Bible for myself and prove him wrong. I used my legal knowledge to seek evidence to build a case. I wrote down 100 questions that I would tackle, including:

- Why Saturday and not Sunday?
- Why no pork?
- Why the prophecies of Daniel 2?

## A Changed Heart

As I read the Bible, I found answers to each question. My eyes were opened, and I saw that the church of my childhood was far from the truth. I realized that I needed to admit that I was wrong and to start obeying God, beginning with keeping the Sabbath.

Alexander was shocked when I said I wanted to attend church with him. I was baptized a year later.

My relatives back home were not happy to learn I had joined a different church. My friends in Ireland thought I was crazy. But nothing could stop me. For me, the most important thing in life was to abide in Christ and to walk with Him.

## Nudging Me Toward Honesty

Alexander began to nudge me about my black-market Polish passport, which allowed me to live in Ireland. I grew convinced that I needed to obey both God's law and man's law. So, I tore up the passport and threw it away. That left me only with my Moldovan passport, which did not grant me permission to live in Ireland. Any police officer who stopped me could deport me.

I prayed, "I don't know if You want me to stay here, but send me back home if it is Your will."

I didn't have a job at the time, and it seemed impossible to find one without a passport. But shortly after my prayer, I received an offer to work as a night security officer at a fitness club. I was given Sabbaths off.

Then I prayed, "God, I want to pay taxes like everyone else so I can be honest. I want to give to Caesar that which is Caesar's."

I marched into the tax office with my

## Mission Post

- Orthodox Christians make up about 90 percent of Moldova's 3.5 million people.
- Moldova has 9,000 members, or one Adventist for every 388 people. This is the highest ratio in the Euro-Asia Division.
- While Moldova has 238 churches and companies, it has only one Adventist school in the entire country. This school is located in a village 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the capital city.

Moldovan passport, determined to secure a tax number that would allow me to pay taxes. Ahead of me in line stood a couple from Latvia who spoke poor English. The tax officer spoke with them for a long time. I grew increasingly nervous as I waited. I wondered what the tax officer would say when he learned that I was living in Ireland illegally.

After the Latvian couple finally left, I slid my passport under the glass window and explained that I wanted a tax number. The tax officer glanced at the long line of people behind me and returned my passport with a document to fill out. He never even looked at my passport! A week later I received a tax number by mail and began to pay taxes. My friends couldn't believe it!

When I moved back to Moldova several years later, the Irish tax authorities even returned money that I had overpaid in taxes.

Back in Moldova, I received a master's degree, and now I work as a legal adviser for a German company. I still get Sabbaths off, and I pay my taxes.

Today, by God's grace, I obey the law of God and of man—and God has blessed me beyond measure. 🌍

## Thirteenth Sabbath Program

➤	Opening Song	“Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 358
➤	Welcome	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
➤	Prayer	
➤	Program	“Father Has Completely Changed”
➤	Offering	Ask the children to sing “Sing Hallelujah to the Lord” in Russian (see p. 27 of <i>Children’s Mission</i> )
➤	Closing Song	“Lead Them, My God, to Thee” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 653
➤	Closing Prayer	

**Participants:** Narrator and two speakers to present the story: a man and a teenage girl.

*[Note: participants do not need to memorize their parts, but they should be familiar enough with the material that they do not have to read everything from the script. Practice so that participants can feel comfortable adding inflection where appropriate.]*

**Narrator:** This quarter we have met people from throughout the Euro-Asia Division, a field that spans nearly halfway around the world, across two continents, and stretches from the polar regions in the north to the lush mountain valleys and deserts of Central Asia. The challenges in this field are as vast as the land itself.

Today we will present one family’s story. But, as you listen to the way God led them, remember how He has led you and imagine how He is leading millions in the Euro-Asia Division. And as you consider these thoughts, ask God how you can help spread the gospel in this field as well as your own home field.

## Father Has Completely Changed

Dmitry Kostash and his daughter, Anjila

*[Ask a man and a teenage girl to present this first-person report.]*

**Anjila:** My name is Anjila [AHN-jih-lah], I am 18 years old, and I live with my parents and 14-year-old brother in a small

town in northern Moldova. This is my father, Dmitry [dih-MEE-tree]. He used to be angry all the time.

**Dmitry:** Good morning. I trained to be a music teacher. But I couldn’t find a

teaching job, so I was working as a guard at a private lake. My job was to feed the fish and prevent people from fishing.

**Anjila:** When I was 12 years old, a Seventh-day Adventist woman came to our house and invited my brother and me to church. Mother took us to church every Sabbath for about a year. But my grandparents—my father’s parents—didn’t like it. They said, “Everyone is laughing at us. This is such a disgrace!”

Mother invited Father to come to church with us, but he refused because he was afraid of his parents. He offered excuses such as:

**Dmitry:** I have other things to do. I don’t have time for God. I might have time for God and church after I finish making major repairs around the house.

**Anjila:** That was the end of the discussion. Dad got tired of the church talk. No one was allowed to go to church.

The woman who had invited us to go to church kept visiting us and inviting us back, but we didn’t go.

After several months, Father finished fixing up the house. He said:

**Dmitry:** Finally, I have some free time.

**Anjila:** But he didn’t make time for God. He didn’t keep his promise to go to church.

Then strange things started happening to my father. He became afraid to stay at home alone. He was nervous and yelled all the time. He developed high blood pressure, and went to the doctor who gave him medicine. But nothing helped. The doctor didn’t know what else to do.

My grandmother advised Father to go to a nearby monastery. She said the priest would know what was wrong without even

asking Father any questions. My father went to the monastery several times, but that didn’t help either.

Father began to look for answers elsewhere. He asked people about the point of life. One person he talked to was an Adventist church elder. After they spoke, Father accepted an invitation to attend a holiday program at the church. When he returned home, he told my mother.

**Dmitry:** I went to the church program, and I was really impressed. When I returned home, I told my wife, “Let’s start going to church.”

**Anjila:** Mother was shocked, but she was very happy. I was happy, too. I thought I was dreaming.

The next Sabbath we started to go to church, and we have gone every Sabbath since.

**Dmitry:** But what you don’t know, Anjila, is that I prayed before deciding to attend church.

I didn’t like being angry and afraid. But it seemed like my life was over. There was no point in living. I felt that something was pressing down on me. I know now that it was Satan working on me. He wanted to kill me.

So, one day I got on my knees and prayed. I knew that only God could help me. I prayed, “Help me, a sinner. I don’t know what is going on, but help me with Your strong hand.” When I finished praying, I felt a burden being lifted from my shoulders. I sensed a voice saying, “You need to move forward, and all will be fine. I will help you.”

**Anjila:** We went to church together, as

a family. The pastor invited us to attend baptismal classes. All four of us—my father, my mother, my brother, and I—were baptized last year.

Grandmother and Grandfather are not happy about our decision. They think my brother and I are being forced to go to church. Grandmother told my parents, “You have disgraced the children. They are young and have their lives ahead of them. They can’t go out and dance. How will they get married?”

I told her that dancing and marriage are not the most important things in life. We have invited Grandmother and Grandfather to church, but they refuse to come.

I praise God for performing a miracle for Father. He has completely changed. He is no longer nervous and worried. He isn’t the man that he used to be. He loves God and serves as a deacon and the music

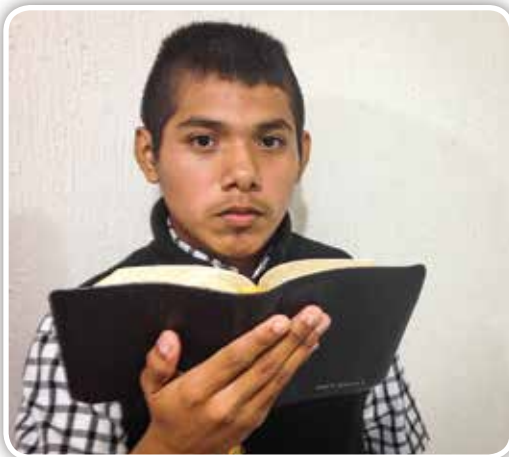
director of our small church.

**Dmitry:** My family and I were baptized at a Soviet-era health resort that the Adventist Church is turning into a Pathfinder camp and conference center. Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help renovate the complex. Thank you for remembering Moldova and the Euro-Asia Division today as you give your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

**Narrator:** Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help make possible special projects in several countries across the Euro-Asia Division. The details are listed on the back of your Sabbath School lesson quarterly. Ask God how you can help finish the work here and around the world so Jesus can come.

*[Offering]*

## Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects



Next quarter the Inter-American Division will receive the Thirteenth Sabbath blessing from church members around the world. Projects there will include:

- A center of influence/evangelism center at Antillean Adventist University in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico
- A cross-cultural mission center and church at University of Southern Caribbean in Maracas, Trinidad
- A cross-culture mission center and hospital in Tabasco, Mexico

## Leader's Resources

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 the websites listed below or write to me, Andrew McChesney, at [mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org).

Russia:	<a href="http://government.ru/en/">government.ru/en/</a>
CIA's Russia Facts:	<a href="http://bit.ly/RussiaCIA">bit.ly/RussiaCIA</a>
Wikitravel:	<a href="http://bit.ly/wikiRussia">bit.ly/wikiRussia</a>
Lonely Planet:	<a href="http://bit.ly/PlanetRussia">bit.ly/PlanetRussia</a>
Kyrgyzstan:	<a href="http://bit.ly/wikiKyrgyzstan">bit.ly/wikiKyrgyzstan</a>
	<a href="http://bit.ly/KyrgyzstanCIA">bit.ly/KyrgyzstanCIA</a>
Moldova:	<a href="http://bit.ly/wikiMoldova">bit.ly/wikiMoldova</a>
Tajikistan:	<a href="http://bit.ly/wikiTajikistan">bit.ly/wikiTajikistan</a>
Ukraine:	<a href="http://bit.ly/wikiUkraine">bit.ly/wikiUkraine</a>
	<a href="http://bit.ly/UkraineCIA">bit.ly/UkraineCIA</a>

### Seventh-day Adventist websites

Euro-Asia Division:	<a href="http://adventist.ru">adventist.ru</a>
West Russian Union Conference:	<a href="http://zrs.adventist.ru">zrs.adventist.ru</a>
Moldova Union of Churches Conference:	<a href="http://adventist.md">adventist.md</a>
Northern Kazakhstan Mission:	<a href="http://adventist.su">adventist.su</a>

Be sure to download your free *Mission Spotlight* video featuring video reports from the Euro-Asia Division and beyond at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](http://bit.ly/missionspotlight). *Children's Mission* contains additional material that can add flavor to your mission presentation. Find the *Children's Mission* online at [bit.ly/childrensmisson](http://bit.ly/childrensmisson).

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Ask your Sabbath School council to set a quarterly mission-offering goal; then chart the weekly progress toward the quarter's goal on the goal device.

One of this quarter's projects focuses on reaching out to a largely non-Christian population through a sports program for children and teens in Tajikistan. The Tajik people love soccer. Create a large soccer field using green poster paper. Draw lines resembling a soccer field, and prepare and cut out pictures of soccer players (or soccer balls if that is easier). Although each team has 11 players, you may wish to prepare 13 player figures, including a goalie and a referee dressed in a yellow shirt. Each week that your class reaches its chosen goal for mission offerings, add a player (or a soccer ball) to the playing field. Label the poster "Reaching Youth for Jesus."

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 Euro-Asia 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.

# YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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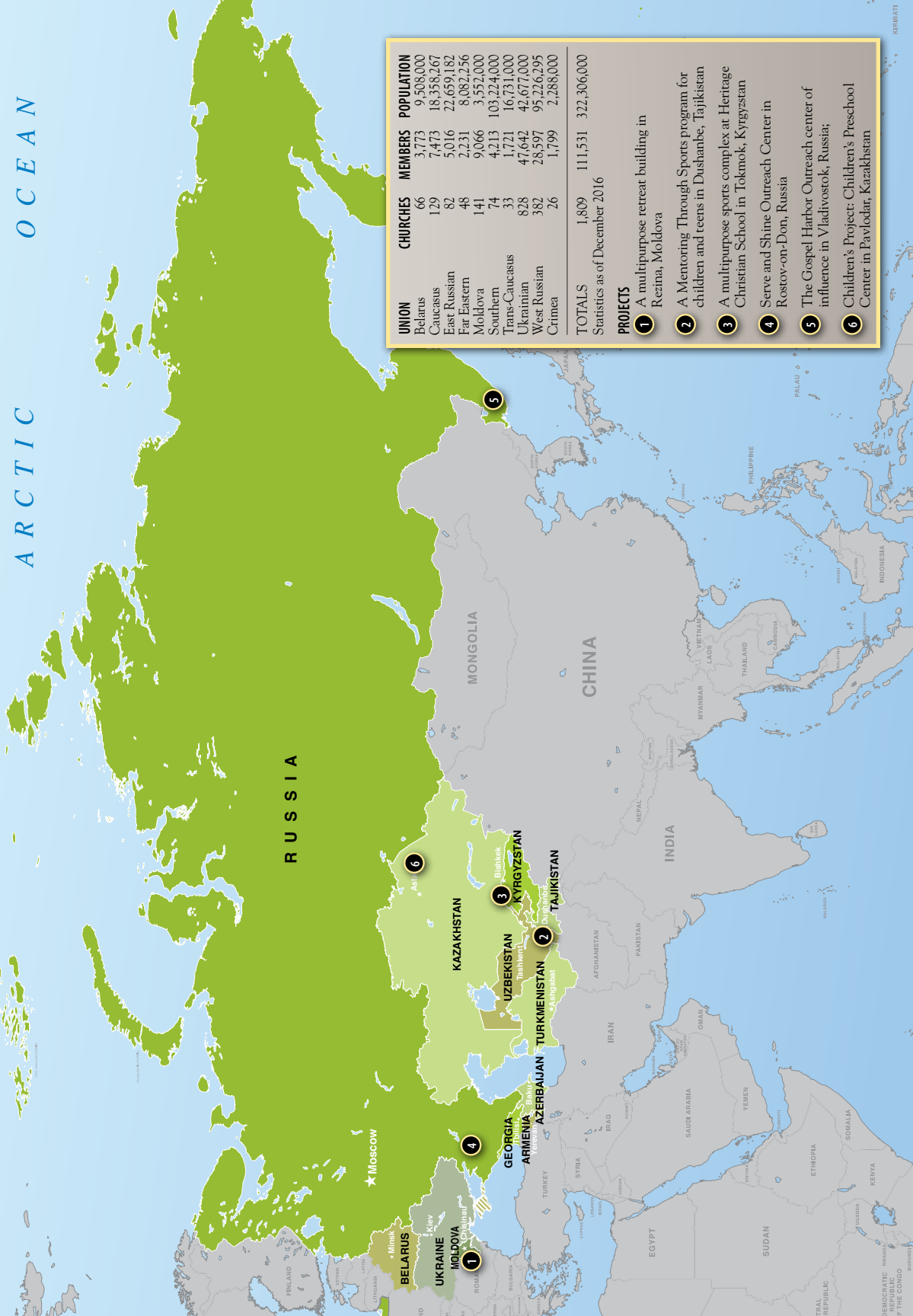
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# Euro-Asia Division

ARCTIC OCEAN



UNION	CHURCHES	MEMBERS	POPULATION
Belarus	66	3,773	9,508,000
Caucasus	129	7,473	18,358,267
East Russian	82	5,016	22,659,182
Far Eastern	48	2,231	8,082,256
Moldova	141	9,066	3,552,000
Southern	74	4,213	103,224,000
Trans-Caucasus	33	1,721	16,731,000
Ukrainian	828	47,642	42,677,000
West Russian	382	28,597	95,226,295
Crimea	26	1,799	2,288,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>111,531</b>	<b>372,306,000</b>

Statistics as of December 2016

### PROJECTS

- 1 A multipurpose retreat building in Rezina, Moldova
- 2 A Mentoring Through Sports program for children and teens in Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- 3 A multipurpose sports complex at Heritage Christian School in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan
- 4 Serve and Shine Outreach Center in Rostov-on-Don, Russia
- 5 The Gospel Harbor Outreach center of influence in Vladivostok, Russia;
- 6 Children's Project: Children's Preschool Center in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan