



YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2014 • QUARTER 3 • EURO-ASIA DIVISION





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 = stories of special interest to teens

Your Offerings at Work



Your mission offerings have helped build churches, youth centers, a multi-purpose building, evangelistic centers, a medical center and more in the Euro-Asia Division (ESD). Shown here is a building on the campus of the Ukrainian Adventist Center of Higher Education in Bucha, Ukraine.

For a listing of recent offering projects in ESD, see page 9.

Our brothers and sisters across the division want to thank you for your support.



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Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter features the people of the Euro-Asia Division (ESD), which spans the distance from the polar regions of the Arctic Circle to the predominantly Muslim regions in the south. It includes the countries of Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The Challenges

Most of these countries were 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 316 million people, but fewer than 120,000 Adventists. That's one Adventist for every 2,600 people.

Our focus this quarter is on the city of Kazan, in Tatarstan, Russia; in Minsk, Belarus; and in several cities across Ukraine. See the "Opportunities" box for specifics.



One Family

It's wonderful to realize that we are part of a huge, worldwide family of more than 18 million members, living in 200+ countries of the world. Each quarter, we'll meet our brothers and sisters in the featured world division. Not every story will be linked directly to a mission project, but I hope that as we become acquainted with the people, our hearts will be linked with theirs and that we will do all we can to help them fulfill the wonderful Gospel commission in their part of the world. Thank you so much for your generous support of Adventist mission!

Your sister in Christ
Gina Wahlen
Editor, *Mission*

Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will go to help:

- build a church/center of influence in Kazan, Tatarstan, Russian Federation.
- establish a church/center of influence in Minsk, Belarus.
- build or expand schools in Cherkasy, Lviv, Vinnytsya, Ukraine.
- establish an educational complex in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine.
- CHILDREN'S PROJECT: build a children's playground in front of the church in Kazan.

Real Christians, Part 1



KIEV, UKRAINE | July 5

Anna

The conference youth director told Anna that the Euro-Asia Division (ESD) was considering many applicants, so he couldn't guarantee that she would be chosen. After indicating her interest, they prayed together, and then Anna put it out of her mind.

Doing Something for God

Sometime later she received a call from the Division youth director, asking if she was really interested in participating in One Year in Mission.

"Yes, I really want to do something for God," Anna responded.

Soon afterward she learned that she was chosen to represent her division in the OYIM program, launching in New York City in 2013.

After overcoming some challenging visa problems, Anna arrived in New York on January 24, 2013, and immediately joined the other 13 young adults representing all divisions and attached fields of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Together the young people received leadership training in community service, evangelism, medical missionary work, and communication. The missionaries would then take their practical experience and training back to their divisions, where they would train a team of 10 volunteers from each union of their division. In this way the missionary effect would multiply.

Anna knew that God led her to study at Saratov State University, located beside the famous Volga river in Russia. Now she was graduating with a degree in biology. Eager to put her knowledge to work, Anna began looking for a job, but no work could be found.

"God," she prayed, "I can't find a job, and I don't know why. But I know you provided this education, and I know you have something in mind for me."

God did indeed have plans for Anna—much bigger than she could have imagined. One day, the youth director of the Volga Conference asked Anna if she would be interested in serving as a missionary in the new One Year In Mission (OYIM) program, a special General Conference initiative to train young adults and give them opportunities to participate in the world church's Mission to the Cities outreach.

Christ's Method Alone

“The main thing for us was to revive the church, so we tried using Christ’s method alone—mingling with people, realizing their needs, giving Bible studies, and inviting them to follow Jesus,” Anna said.

Day after day the OYIM missionaries went around their neighborhood knocking on doors. “Hello, we have recently moved here and just wanted to greet you. We are your new neighbors and want to be friends.” Most of the neighbors were from India or Nepal.

“When we talked together, they became our friends and would listen to us,” said Anna. “Many wanted to study the Bible, and often we would pray with them.

“Sometimes I made *blinis* [thin Russian pancakes], and delivered them to the neighbors, telling them that I just wanted to give them some pancakes and let them know that God loves them. It was just a little piece of God’s love.”

Reaching the Community

In addition to reaching out to her

neighbors, Anna was assigned to work in a church located in a Spanish-speaking community in New York City. Many of the nearby residents wanted to obtain U.S. citizenship, but they needed to know English. So the missionaries started free English as a second language (ESL) classes at the Adventist church.

“It was really great,” remembers Anna. “People were so happy that we could help them. We began every lesson with a Bible verse, explaining the grammar and the meaning of the verse. After the lessons we invited them to come to the evening evangelistic programs where they could check their English. We made many contacts in this way!”

As local church members watched these enthusiastic OYIM missionaries work, they understood that they, too, could do something special for the community and began to follow the example of reaching out to their neighbors, rather than simply focusing on programs and activities that were primarily pointing inward.

“We Really Need to Be Here”

“I can tell you honestly,” said Anna, “that I didn’t used to think much about working in the big cities—I didn’t see what the real problems were. And it’s easier to go to a village. But after being involved with this project, I understand that we really, *really* need to be here.

“I learned how to look at the church with different eyes. I realized that we need to work differently—we need to be real Christians. Something in my mind had changed; I understood how we need to live, and how to work. 🌐

Next week we follow Anna as she continues her One Year in Mission experience in the Euro-Asia Division.

Mission Post

- The One Year in Mission program now involves many hundreds of young adults in effective outreach to the world’s largest cities.
- The Euro-Asia Division (ESD) was officially organized in 1990.
- There are 1,925 churches in ESD, and 120,351 members.
- For more information, watch this quarter’s Adventist Mission DVD, available from your Sabbath School superintendent or online at www.AdventistMission.org

Real Christians, Part 2

KIEV, UKRAINE | July 12

Anna and Leonid



Anna Gavelo, 23, represented the Euro-Asia Division in the pilot program of “One Year in Mission.” She, along with 13 other young adults worked in New York City as part of the Mission to the Cities outreach.

When I was in New York, I was dreaming about coming back home and doing something really special,” Anna recalled. “I was so inspired in New York, and began praying about what could be done in ESD.”

In June 2013, hundreds of leaders, pastors, and evangelists from around the world descended on New York City to participate in the General Conference International Field School of Evangelism. The program included classes in the day and practical experience in evening evangelistic meetings held across the New York metropolitan area.

Leonid Rutkovsky, a pastor from ESD,

gave presentations at the Ukrainian and Russian churches in New York. When he wasn’t in class or meetings, Leonid and Victor Kozakov, the Adventist Mission director for ESD, discussed how they could do something similar in their division.

“We decided that if people were preaching in New York, and having good results, then why not in our territory?” Leonid said. “If it can happen in New York—a difficult city—then it can happen in Moscow or Kiev.

“The field school gave us clear direction for reaching the big cities. Now we were focused, we had a purpose in mind, and a goal to reach.”

When Anna met Leonid, she was excited to hear about the developing plans. “We have a goal to knock on every door in Kiev,” he told her. “There are 700,000 doors in Kiev, and we want every one. We will have special maps showing every street, every block, and every house.”

Anna was delighted. “I could see God was leading, and knew I needed to go to Kiev. He has His wonderful plan—we just need to follow it.”

Following the meetings in New York, the OYIM missionaries returned to their home divisions to begin the second phase of their work. Anna went to Kiev where she worked with Leonid.

As the Mission to the Cities director in Kiev, Leonid provides training in preaching for church members and

oversees the work of Bible and literature workers and medical missionaries who provide simple remedies to the community and offer health education—including 16 classes such as smoking cessation, cooking and weight loss, alcohol recovery, mother and child health, and more.

“Here we have done even more than we could in New York,” said Leonid.

One hundred fifty missionaries came to Kiev—all were chosen by their unions or conferences. In addition a youth team was formed, with 18 members from across the Euro-Asia Division. During the nearly six-month training program, the missionaries worked alongside Bible workers and medical missionaries, and helped in the health stores. Additionally, 400 pastors came during two-week rotations to prepare for similar programs to be held in other cities throughout the division.

Anna, who led the youth group, was involved in several facets of the program. Describing her first day in Kiev, she said, “We went prayer walking, and walked close to the doors of the houses where we would be returning. At each house we would pray, “Please, God, give us this house. Give us these people. Prepare them for us.”

The next day team members went two by two, with one speaking while the other

prayed. “First, we talk with the person about events happening in the world,” Anna describes. “Then we ask if they have ever read the Bible, and if they think there is a connection between spiritual life and health. We try to continue the conversation and become acquainted with the people.”

“What works in this method,” adds Leonid, “is not our faces or our questions. It is that God prepares a special person for us. I believe that God has this person prepared to hear what we have to share with them. This is very important.”

After just two weeks of going door to door the team was rejoicing that 26 new people came to church. Additionally, the health program participants were delighted to learn how to live longer and better, and were enjoying being with the missionaries. “You have such a wonderful team,” they told Leonid and Anna. “We want to be with you. We like what you are doing.”

Anna is especially pleased with the effect the project is having on the youth. “I’m so happy when I hear them say, ‘You know, we feel like we’re in heaven. We feel like we are really living here.’ At home, they have other worries, but here they feel the love of Jesus. When we work with Jesus and for Him, it’s real life.”

“Our youth program is part of the larger Mission to the Cities project,” said Leonid. “Here we are all involved in one project—one mind, one spirit, and it’s really great, we can all move together.”

“This project is the result of a lot of prayers,” adds Anna. “Our entire world church has been thinking about how to reach people in the cities. If we are all together, we can really do wonderful things—and Jesus will come!” 🌍

Mission Post

- In the Mission to the Cities program each world division has designated one or more cities in their territory to reach for Christ. In the Euro-Asia Division, where approximately 80 percent of the population live in cities, the capital cities of Moscow, Russia, and Kiev, Ukraine, were chosen.

Saved by the Sabbath

BUCHA, UKRAINE | July 19

Andre



Andre grew up in the western Ukrainian city of Lutsk. While at school, he became acquainted with Pavel, a student who attended a Seventh-day Adventist church on Saturdays. Being a nonbeliever, Andre didn't think much about when or where people went to church, nor did he care.

After finishing their high school education, both Andre and Pavel planned to study at the Lviv National Academy of Arts, so they went to Lviv to take the academy's entrance exam. After

finishing the exam, the two decided to walk around the campus.

Life-impacting Decision

Suddenly a large notice on an announcement board caught their eye—

there was going to be an air show commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Ukrainian Air Force's 14th Air Corps. The event would be held at Sknyliv Airfield, just six kilometers (3.7 miles) from central Lviv.

Excitedly Andre and Pavel scanned the notice for further details. Then

"That event made me realize that I could have died there, or could have been severely injured."

Pavel noticed the date of the air show: July 27, 2002. Realizing that day was a Saturday, he decided that he would not be going to the air show after all.

“Andre, I’m going to church on July 27—would you like to come with me?” Pavel asked.

Now it was Andre’s turn to consider the situation carefully. He really wanted to go to the air show, but there was something so sincere about Pavel’s invitation that Andre decided to accept. He wondered what could be so special about this church that would make Pavel choose to go there rather than to the air show.

Reflecting on that first visit to a Seventh-day Adventist church, Andre later recalled, “We spent the whole day there, and I really liked the church.”

Terrible Disaster

What Pavel and Andre didn’t know was that while they were at church, the worst air show disaster in history was taking place at Skynliv Airfield. With more than 10,000 spectators watching, at 12:52 p.m. a Su-27 aircraft, flown by two experienced pilots, crashed and exploded into the crowd of spectators. Seventy-seven spectators were killed, including 19 children. Another 100 spectators were hospitalized with head injuries, burns, and bone fractures, and 443 others were injured but not hospitalized.

When Andre heard the news the next day, he was stunned. “That event made me realize that I could have died there, or could have been severely injured. I became friends with the many young people at the Adventist church, and after attending regularly for one year, I decided to be baptized.”

Mission Post

Previous Thirteenth Sabbath Mission Offerings have helped our brothers and sisters in the Euro-Asia Division by providing:

- an evangelistic center, dental/physical therapy clinic, and primary school in Kishinev, Moldova.
- A medical center in Kiev, Ukraine.
- Evangelistic centers in Almaty, Kazakhstan; Vitebsk, Belarus; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Khabarovsk, Russia.
- Youth centers in Podolsk and Krasnoyarsk, Russia.
- A multipurpose building on the campus of Zaosky Theological Seminary in Zaosky, Russia.
- Churches in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Irkutsk, Krasnodar, and Petrapavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Russia; Luhansk and Sumy, Ukraine; Brest, Belarus; and Kishinev, Moldova.
- Sabbath School lesson materials for children in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Later Andre also decided to change his career plans. He is now a student at the Ukrainian Adventist Center of Higher Education in Bucha, where is studying to become a pastor.

In 2004 part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering went to build a dormitory at the Adventist Center in Bucha. Thank you for your continued support of this important offering. 🌍

Hungry for the Word, Part 1

BUCHA, UKRAINE | July 26

Vladimir



When I was born, the umbilical cord was wrapped so tightly around my neck that it was strangling me. Fortunately I was released in time to take my first breath. By the time I was 3 years old, my parents divorced, and I did not see my father again.

Life became very hard for my mother and me, and she often considered taking her own life, but she was worried about who would take care of me. Finally she made plans to send me to an orphanage and then commit suicide, but when everything was ready she couldn't tell me what she had planned to do, so she just cried and hugged me.

A few days later the electricity to our small apartment was cut off because we couldn't pay the bill. It was so cold, but without electricity we weren't even able to boil water for tea. Often I went to school hungry. We lived like this for several years, but by the time I was 12 my mother renewed her resolve to commit suicide.

During this time a friend of my mother's

invited her to a concert celebrating the birth of Christ. The concert was at a Seventh-day Adventist church, and even though my mom didn't know anything about Christ, she decided to attend. At the concert she heard for the first time the story of the birth and sacrifice of Jesus.

**As she was talking
her face lit up like
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wanted to live.**

Fast Facts

- More than 97 percent of the religious communities now registered in Ukraine are Christian. About half of these communities are of the Orthodox tradition. The other half is divided among Catholics and Protestants.
- The population of Ukraine is 45.59 million. Ukrainians love to read, and the country boasts a 99.7 percent literacy rate.

When she returned home, my mother told me that there was a God who loves us, who wanted us to live and to be happy. As she was talking her face lit up like a torch on fire, and I could see that she wanted to live.

We wanted to learn more about this God, and especially wanted to have our own Bible—but where could we get one? Even though this was in 1998, a number of years after the fall of Communism, it still wasn't easy to find a Bible.

Then one day my mother learned where we could buy a Bible—but it would cost almost two weeks' wages. At that time she was working in a café, where she earned the equivalent of just two U.S. dollars per week. It was barely enough for food.

"My son," she asked, looking straight into my eyes, "would you be willing to be hungry for two weeks, but have a Bible instead?" Without flinching I told her, "Yes."

She bought the Bible, and as she began reading it, I noticed some changes in my mother's behavior. She was happier. She started to punish me less and talk with me more, which, of course, made me happier too!

For several months my mom attended the Adventist church. Word spread around our neighborhood that we were joining a cult, and suddenly my friends were against me. They didn't want to play football with me anymore—when I stepped outside, they would all go home. I tried smoking, hoping that would bring my friends back. But nothing worked—I didn't know what to do.

One day the Adventist pastor invited us to stay with his family for a while. During worship time the pastor would pray for me, but a war was raging in my heart—to really accept Jesus as my Savior, or to be accepted by my old friends. Because this war was so strong, I would leave when he was praying for me.

As my mother studied to be baptized, she often shared with me the things she was learning—about the seventh-day Sabbath, about the Christian life, and so on, and she often prayed for me. Seeing the change in my mother, learning the Bible truths she was sharing with me, and her prayers, and that of the pastor, had a big effect on me. The following year I was baptized in the city of Kirovograd, Ukraine.

But then more trouble began. I was in secondary school, and when the principal discovered that I had joined what he called a "sect," he called me into his office, handed me my documents, and told me to leave. 🌍

To be continued next week.

Hungry for the Word, Part 2

BUCHA, UKRAINE | August 2

Vladimir



Vladimir grew up alone with his mother. At the age of 13 he was willing to live for two weeks without food so they could afford to buy a Bible. The following year he was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist, but was then asked to leave his secondary school because, according to the school's principal, Vladimir had joined a "sect."

After being forced to leave his school, Vladimir eventually found another place where he was able to complete his high school education. Hoping to study at the Ukrainian Adventist Center of Higher Education in Bucha (near Kiev), Vladimir took the

entrance exam—but failed.

His faith still strong, he decided to go to work in security services in the central Ukrainian city of Kirovograd. Vladimir soon became known for his excellent work, and before long he was transferred to the capital city of Kiev, where he was promoted to a substitute manager for one of the largest fruit companies in Ukraine.

But Vladimir still felt that he was lacking something. Thinking that money would bring happiness, he put in 16-hour workdays. "I had a lot of money in my pocket, but I still wasn't happy," he remembered. He was offered another promotion, but it meant

"I had a lot of money in my pocket, but I still wasn't happy."

being on duty 24 hours a day. Vladimir decided that even though the new position would bring in more money, he didn't want to have to work like that.

"I spent 10 years of my life working hard to have a lot of money, but I wasn't happy," he said. "Then I asked God, 'If there is no happiness in money, what can bring happiness?' Finally, I asked, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?'"

Determined to learn the Lord's will for His life, Vladimir searched the Bible for answers. One day he came across a passage in Isaiah 54: " 'All your sons will be taught of the Lord; and the well-being of your sons will be great. In righteousness you will be established; you will be far from oppression, for you will not fear; and from terror, for it will not come near you. . . . No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me,' declares the Lord" (verses 13-17, NASB).*

"I was amazed that all God's children will be taught by Him," Vladimir recalled. He wondered if this would mean going back to school. "God, I'm 27 years old, and I don't want to go to school again," he prayed. But he did want to be the kind of man who no weapon formed against him would prosper.

Not long after this, Vladimir's mother died. Wanting to distract him from his sorrow, an Adventist pastor invited Vladimir to come to his district to do missionary work as a literature evangelist and to work with Bible instructors in giving Bible studies.

Vladimir enjoyed the work so much that one day the pastor asked if he would

Mission Post

- The Ukrainian Adventist Center of Higher Education, established in 1999, is located on forested land that was once a Soviet youth camp.
- Of the approximately 120,000 Adventists in the Euro-Asia Division, more than 45 percent live in Ukraine.
- In Ukraine the Adventist Church was the first Protestant broadcaster to receive a broadcasting license.

like to study ministry at the Adventist Center in Bucha. It was then that he remembered the words from Isaiah 54:13: "All your sons will be taught of the Lord" (NASB). So Vladimir decided to take the entrance exam again. "God," he prayed, "It's Your decision if I should study here or not. But if You want me to be here, please help me, and I will help others to know You better."

This time Vladimir passed the exam! He is now studying in the theology program and plans on becoming a pastor. "When there is such a specific answer from God, you don't want to ask for anything else. It changes how you live," he said. His favorite class is Koine Greek, where he is learning to read the New Testament in its original language.🌐

* Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the New American Standard Bible, copyright© 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995, by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

From Mafia Men to God's Messengers, Part 1

KAZAN, TATARSTAN | August 9

Igor



Although his grandfather was an imam, and many other relatives were devout in their faith, Igor himself had a very secular childhood. Excelling in sports, he soon became a leader, respected—and feared—by the other boys on the street.

That leadership, respect, and fear followed Igor into adulthood, at which time he became highly involved in the Mafia. Big guns, big money, and big deals became an integral part of Igor's life. But in spite of the thrills and excitement that his fast life was delivering, Igor felt that something was missing.

There was a hole in his life that he just couldn't seem to fill, so he went searching for answers.

Searching for Something

First he visited the Hare Krishna people—just out of curiosity. Then he went to the Russian Orthodox church, and then to the mosque, but still Igor didn't find the elusive “something.”

One day a friend told Igor that he knew a man who owned a Bible. Intrigued, Igor wanted to know more, so the friend put the two in touch. “Do you know,” the Bible owner asked Igor, “that in the Bible you can read about unclean foods—and how you are not allowed to eat pork?” This was news to Igor; he thought only the Koran taught such things.

Over the next few months Igor placed several phone calls to this believer, who always patiently explained things to Igor from the Bible. Finally, the believer invited Igor to attend church with him.

“I will *never* visit your church,” Igor rudely responded. But the Bible believer didn't lose heart, and continued to keep in

“Let your hold be on God, not guns.”

contact with the tough Mafia man. Six months later he again invited Igor to visit his church, and this time Igor accepted.

The Visit

On the appointed day, Igor got into his car (after following his usual routine of checking for any hidden explosive devices) and prepared to drive to the church. Putting the key in the ignition, he started the car, but instead of going forward, he went into reverse and swiftly crashed into the neighbor's car. "I won't tell the neighbor now," he reasoned, "but will wait until after I return."

The church group met in a small rented facility that didn't look like much; nevertheless, Igor felt drawn to the place, and continued to return. Some church members eyed the mafia man with suspicion, wondering who he "really" was. But as Igor learned more about the Bible and its teachings, he would compare it to the holy book of the other prominent faith tradition with which he was familiar.

"I was fairly well acquainted with history," Igor recalled, "and I could compare the teachings of the two books. Eventually it was the truth of the Bible that won me over."

Before his baptism, Igor studied the Bible with the Adventist pastor, peppering him with a barrage of questions during each meeting. Then a prominent evangelist came to Kazan, and at the end of those meetings Igor was baptized.

God or Guns?

"When I was baptized, I understood that I could no longer take part in things that happened on the streets. But even though I didn't do those bad things anymore, I was still a hooligan," Igor admitted.

Every Sabbath Igor would bring his gun to church, keeping it securely on his lap. One Sabbath a church member told him that he shouldn't bring his gun to church. "Let your hold be on God, not guns," he admonished.

The following week Igor decided to leave his gun at home, but feeling fearful, he found it difficult to come to terms with no longer carrying a gun. As he was returning home, he saw a dark silhouette following him. Deciding not to be afraid, Igor turned toward the silhouette, only to find a man carrying a sack of potatoes!

Sharing His Faith

From then on, his faith grew stronger and stronger, and he began to tell others about the truth he had found. Igor's wife and sister started visiting the Adventist church, and after a year they too were baptized. So were his niece and nephew, and many others with whom he shared his faith.

One day Igor was telling a friend about the truth he had learned from the Bible, but the friend wasn't very interested in what Igor was sharing. However, a man standing nearby was listening to the conversation and wanted to learn more.

Vasily, the man who had been eavesdropping on Igor's conversation, had been living a very hard life. He too was involved with the Mafia, and crime had taken its toll. Scars and disfigurement marked where enemies had used broken glass to cut deep gashes all over his head, face, eyes, and an ear. Other scars showed where bullets had grazed his scalp without inflicting fatal wounds.

God had sent Igor into Vasily's life for a reason. 🌍

To be continued next week.

From Mafia Men to God's Messengers, Part 2

KAZAN, TATARSTAN | August 16

Igor



Igor had always been a leader. Although he became very successful in the Russian Mafia, he felt something was missing in his life, so he went searching. His search led him to a number of religions, until he finally found “the truth as it is in Jesus” and became a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As he shared his newfound faith, many others also joined the church. However, some weren’t so interested in what Igor was sharing, but even then, others were listening.

Vasily was involved with big money. He worked for a company that created contracts worth multiple millions of Russian rubles. Trained as a bodyguard, Vasily spoke with company leadership in code. He had expensive equipment that

allowed him to eavesdrop into closed rooms. People who wanted to ruin this company recognized that Vasily was a key player in winning the big contracts, and because he was an obstacle to their goal, they had tried to kill him—twice.

The first time was during a trip to an outdoor market with his daughter to buy food. Although viciously attacked, he survived.

The second time he was shot multiple times, but was somehow able to get up and run to his apartment. Rushing in, Vasily collapsed onto the floor. Fearing he was about to die, he begged his mother to forgive him, but his mother assured him that he was going to live. With renewed hope Vasily began fighting for his life and called the police. He was quickly taken to the hospital, where he was placed on a stretcher and wheeled to the elevator. As they started to get out of the elevator, Vasily exclaimed, “Stop! Please let my head go out first. Only dead bodies go feet first through the door, and I’m still alive!”

Forgive Them

Later Vasily met a Baptist man who asked him, “Do you want to kill the guys who did this to you?”

“Of course!” Vasily replied.

“Don’t do it,” said the Baptist. “Forgive them. If you kill them, you can never live peacefully. Just forgive.”

Sometime later Vasily went for a walk in the forest. As he was walking, he saw one of the men who had tried to kill him sitting in the forest with a girlfriend. Looking over at his potential killer, Vasily quietly breathed, “OK, I will forgive him.”

Six months later he learned that the man had died of a drug overdose. The second person who had tried to kill him became permanently disabled, and the third was shot and killed.

Party Time

As the new year drew near, Vasily geared up for the big parties that took place around the holiday. He had many friends whose birthdays were in late December and early January, so with several birthday parties in a row, along with the big New Year’s celebration, it was two solid weeks of drinking vodka and smoking.

But somehow this time it wasn’t the same. Vasily no longer enjoyed the partying, and at the end of the two weeks he had had enough. “Was I born for such a dirty life?” he asked himself. The answer was a decided, “No! I need a new life!”

A New Life

Falling to his knees, he prayed that God would help him. Somehow he was able to obtain a Bible, and with Bible in hand he went to each of his friends, inviting them to come with him to the forest for three days. Two friends decided to join him.

“We went to the forest, where we were quiet for three days, just reading the Bible,” said Vasily. As we were out there, in the quiet nature, suddenly

a child came by on skis, calling out, “Merry Christmas to you!”¹ Because it was so unlikely to see anyone else in such a desolate place, Vasily saw this as a special sign from God.

He prayed, asking God to “give me one month to live this new life.” And He did. Then Vasily asked God for a second month of clean living, and it was given to him. He asked his wife for forgiveness, and he is continuing to live a clean life.

Spreading the Truth

When Vasily and Igor met, they realized that they had much in common. “In every place there are some people who like the truth,” said Vasily, “and I like such people.”

Vasily and Igor are now close friends who work together to spread literature through a special newspaper that is delivered throughout the region of Kazan. The newspaper is filled with information about how to obtain better health, as well as offering spiritual insights. It is one of the most popular newspapers in Russia. The two former Mafia men also work together finding sponsors so that thousands of Adventist books can be ordered and distributed around Kazan.

Vasily and Igor are earnestly looking forward to having the new church/center of influence in the center of Kazan, made possible through your generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering gifts this quarter.

“Our stories seem to be terrible,” said Vasily. “But actually it is our world, so they really aren’t so terrible.” He and Igor just want to help people find a better way. 🌍

¹ In the Julian calendar, followed by the Russian Orthodox Church, Christmas falls on January 7.



Friends Tell Friends

Timor

at the university. Young, intelligent, and motivated, Timor and Albina enjoy the challenges of being in such a rigorous academic setting. But in addition to academics, Timor has accepted an even higher challenge—sharing his faith in the atmosphere of a scientific university.

“All of my friends know about my faith,” he said, “but at times it is difficult to share, because some people don’t want to listen. And it can be especially difficult here in Tatarstan to tell people about Jesus Christ, because many people have another set of beliefs.”

But in spite of the difficulties, Timor hasn’t given up. One day while talking with his classmate Albina, he told her about his faith in God. He explained that the way to know God and His will for our lives was found in the Bible.

“After talking with Timor, I was interested in studying the Bible, because he told me that everything I was wondering about was addressed there,” Albina recalled. Soon she had a Bible of her own and began to study.

“I really liked reading the Bible, and when I had questions, I could ask Timor. Sometimes he answered directly, and sometimes he directed me to another passage in the Bible that answered my question. After a while he told me, ‘You

Kazan Federal University is one of the oldest and most respected universities in Russia. Established in 1804, the university is wellknown for excellence in science and mathematics, and boasts many famous alumni, including Ilya Ulyanov, the father of Vladimir Ulyanov (later Lenin), who also attended the university but was expelled for his political activism. However, his father, Ilya, graduated from the university’s Department of Physics and Mathematics in 1854, and had a special interest in meteorology. He wrote two scientific works—*On the Benefits of Meteorological Observations*, and *On Thunderstorm and Lightning Rods*.

Today students at the internationally recognized Kazan Federal University can still visit the meteorological observatory used by Lenin’s father, Ilya.

Sharing His Faith

Two of those students are Timor, 18, and Albina, 19—both studying meteorology

know, there is a pastor, and he can explain many things.’”

The Invitation

Timor invited Albina to visit the rented hall where the Adventists meet each Sabbath, and she was delighted. “I loved Sabbath School,” she said. “It was very interesting—it’s a place where we can study the Bible together and discuss it. I also enjoy the beautiful music during the church service. I am very happy.”

Albina has been coming to the rented Adventist meeting hall in Kazan for one year now and plans to be baptized soon.

“I told her about my faith,” said Timor, “and then God had His influence on her heart. That’s why she’s here.”

Timor and Albina, along with the many other believers who are meeting in the small rented space in Kazan, are eagerly waiting for the new Seventh-day Adventist church to be built in the city center.

Location Matters

“Renting a place, rather than owning your own building, brings many challenges,” said Pastor Anwar Gindullin. “When you have your own building, the [government] authorities respect you, but when you don’t, you must go to the authorities frequently and give them documents showing that you are renting this building. You must assure them that your meetings don’t have any political intentions and that you aren’t connected to terrorism.

“And it is important to have a church building in the city center,” the pastor adds, “because it gives credibility and accessibility.”

At the moment, there is just one Adventist-owned church building in this

Fast Facts

- Kazan is a multiethnic city famous for Muslims and Christians living side by side in peace.
- Kazan is considered the “sports capital” of Russia. From July 16 to 23, 2014, the city is hosting the World Fencing Championships, and in 2015 the World Aquatics Championships will be held in Kazan. In 2018 the city will host the FIFA World Cup.

city of more than 1.1 million residents, and it is located on the outskirts of Kazan. By contrast, the new church will be located in the heart of the city, just 70 meters [230 feet] from a major metro and bus transportation center.

“We plan for this church to be a real center of influence, busy meeting the needs of the community every day of the week.”

Plans include a large auditorium for worship services, a music room, a sports/fitness hall, a place for young people, and possibly a small café. Additionally, a children’s playground is planned for the area in front of the church.

“In this area of the city there are very few places where children can play,” said Pastor Gindullin. “We want them to have a beautiful place to play, a place where parents can rest and listen to nice music while their children are playing. We want people to get used to being at a Seventh-day Adventist center. It’s our dream.”

This new church/center of influence is one of the featured Thirteenth Sabbath Offering projects this quarter. Please plan to give liberally to help make this dream a reality for our brothers and sisters in Kazan. 🌍

Find the Book

The Book



Gahida¹ was born into a non-Christian, very religious family. Prayers, sacrifices, and the reading of religious books was very important in Gahida’s spiritual experience. For decades Gahida followed the religion of her family and carefully observed everything she had been taught to do—especially in praying.

Then one day as she was praying Gahida saw an angel. The angel told her to “find the Book,” and then repeated the command: “Find the Book.” Wondering what this could mean, Gahida opened her own religious book and turned to the section about Moses and his law, David and his son, and Jesus Christ and His gospel. But she still wondered what “the Book” was.

Five years later she received the answer when a Seventh-day Adventist came to her city, offering lectures about the Bible. Gahida decided to attend the lectures, and it was there where she saw a Bible for

the first time and had the opportunity to purchase one.

“When I bought the Bible and began reading it, it was then that I understood that this was ‘the Book’ that the angel told me to find.” As she dug deeper into the Bible, Gahida found many parallels between it and the religious book with which she was more familiar.

Although she enjoyed the Bible lectures, Gahida did not immediately become a Seventh-day Adventist. She was afraid that God would punish her if she started attending an Adventist church. However, unbeknownst to her, the Adventist Bible lecturer had been praying for her, and at last Gahida decided that she would visit the Adventist church “just once.”

“During my first visit to an Adventist church,” recalled Gahida, “the sermon was about the Samaritan woman in John 4. I knew it was me—I was like that Samaritan woman who was searching for something better. She found this “better” in Jesus Christ. And when I fell in love with Jesus,

¹ Not her real name.

I understood that He is the best—I don't need anything but Christ in this world!"

Gahida knew that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the place for her. Following more Bible studies, she was baptized and became a member of the church.

A few years later Gahida wanted to find a way to share her new faith with those who were still in the religious community in which she had been raised.

"I have always loved to write," Gahida said, "so I decided to write a book about my own spiritual journey, and then examine more closely some elements of my previous faith, and compare that with the teachings of the Bible."

Gahida, and her grown son, prayed a lot about the publishing of this book, and soon they were receiving donations. "One sister gave a generous donation, and we were able to publish 1,000 books. And then a brother gave some money and we were able to publish 500 more," Gahida told us.

Unafraid, she hand-delivered her book to hundreds of religious leaders of her previous faith, telling them, "You need to think about what you believe in, and I think you'll find this book helpful." Together, Gahida and her son have organized Seventh-day Adventist churches in several different cities and towns throughout various regions.

In addition to writing a number of books and other religious material, Gahida has also translated several books

"When I bought the Bible and began reading it, it was then that I understand that this was 'The Book,' that the angel told me to find."

by Ellen G. White from Russian into her native language. She remembered one book in particular—*Patriarchs and Prophets*—that was almost not published because of political unrest.

"When the central press in the capital city received my translation files for this book, it was a time of great political unrest. Someone tried

to kill the country's president, and immediately all publishing houses were closed. Government agents checked every publishing house in the country, looking for controversial material. When the agents came to the central press, the chief editor turned white with fear because he was not able to turn on one of the press computers. It was the only computer that had the translated files for *Patriarchs and Prophets*. After the government agents left, the computer easily turned on, and they were able to print the book in the regional language.

"It would have been very expensive to publish," Gahida recalled, "but we didn't have to pay anything. The chief editor told us, 'This a great work that you are doing—we can't take any money from you.'"

Gahida is thankful for the special ministry that God has opened up for her through writing as well as translating books. "Many are very grateful to receive these materials—to read and to share," she said, "and Ellen White is my very best friend." 🌍

From Cigarettes to Castles, Part 1

VINNYTSIA, UKRAINE | Sept 6

Ruslan



I grew up in a non-religious home in Ukraine. My father told me that in the year 2000 the world was going to end. As a child, I believed him, and was certain there was no hope for the future.

I have two older sisters, and since my parents seemed to always be giving more attention to them, I felt free to do whatever I wanted to do. From a young age I was constantly smoking, drinking, and trying different drugs. Life for my parents became very hard, as I started stealing within the family as well as outside our home. My parents became deeply concerned.

When I was away for military service, an evangelistic series being run by Adventists came to Krasiliv, Ukraine. My father was baptized in 1994.

When I returned home, I started living a wild life even more intensely than before. My mother became so ill with

rheumatoid arthritis that she became an invalid. On top of this, my parents' lives became a nightmare because of me.

My father asked the church to pray. They would fast and pray. I could even hear my mother, who wasn't a church member, praying for me in another room. Since the church didn't have a place of their own, they would often gather in my house. During the service I would leave.

But little by little, my interest was awakened. And after some time these people were no longer afraid of me, and they started talking to me. Then a group of young people—literature evangelists (LEs)—were invited to our city to distribute Christian books. My father invited me to come see these visiting young people. There were hardly any young people in my father's church.

I had the concept that only old or crippled people who didn't have any

purpose came to church. Besides, the New Year's holidays were coming up, so for nearly a month I was drunk. But afterward, I felt some sort of emptiness within my heart.

So, with my father's invitation, I decided to check these young people out. I imagined that they would be crippled, mentally crippled or lacking something. But when I saw them, I saw nice, strong, healthy-looking young people who were smiling and happy. I saw happiness in their eyes. I saw cleanliness of speech; they were not cursing. Suddenly I realized—it isn't them who are not fitting in, it's me.

I could clearly see two groups of young people in my mind: one group included my old friends who were always cursing, drinking, smoking. And then I saw another group who were pure and honest, who did not curse or swear, who didn't drink. I could say only positive things about them.

The LEs even invited me to distribute literature with them, although I had cigarettes in my pocket! They teamed me up with a responsible man, and when we went door to door, I sometimes walked away to smoke, and wouldn't open my mouth because I didn't want anyone to smell the cigarettes. But even though I didn't say anything, I could still be a silent prayer partner.

I started coming to church every Sabbath. Sometimes my new friends invited me to youth meetings in other cities, and as my vision broadened, the warped picture I'd had in my mind earlier was completely destroyed.

One day at church I heard the invitation for an upcoming baptism.

Whoever wished to be baptized were given sheets to fill out, including a review of the church's fundamental beliefs.

This whole experience happened very rapidly—in less than two months. With cigarette in hand, I began filling out the baptismal request form. As I continued reading, I came to the point about abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. I couldn't figure out how I was going to quit. Although I had left my old group of friends, they would still come and invite me to go with them. But I firmly decided that I wasn't going to go there.

So in February of 1997 I was baptized. While I was able to stop drinking right away, I still struggled with tobacco. I tried everything to quit smoking—down to one cigarette a day, eating candies, chewing gum . . . but nothing worked. Finally I prayed honestly to God, asking Him, "Lord, please take it away from me." And in a miraculous way He did.

My aunt, who lives in another village, invited me to come help her around the house for a week. There was only one store in her village where one could purchase cigarettes, and it was not close. When I arrived, I told my aunt that I was now a Christian and was no longer the person I used to be. But she didn't know I still struggled with smoking. Every day she gave me work to do. Four days passed without cigarettes. The fifth day I came back home, and hadn't smoked a cigarette in five days. When looking back, I can see that being at my aunt's was like being at a rehab center. I was amazed at God's wisdom and how He had found a way for me to quit smoking. 🌍

To be continued next week.

From Cigarettes to Castles, Part 2

VINNYTSIA, UKRAINE | Sept 13

Ruslan and his family



When I was planning to be baptized, my sisters told me that I should ask my parents for forgiveness. Both of my parents were crying with happiness. And that's when I realized that you can have all sorts of victories with God.

One thing that amazed me was that as we started to build a church, people brought such offerings to the church as gold and jewelry, and they would commission me, knowing my past, to sell it. I was amazed and touched with that kind of trust. And I was very responsible with it, always looking for the best price and doing my best to get every penny for the donated item.

I'm just amazed at how God was able to turn me around and give me this life that I never even dreamed of.

Later I became a literature evangelist (LE) and a youth leader. It was during a gathering of LEs that I met my future wife, Bogdona!

We now have three lovely daughters, and I've been elected an elder in our church. I'm just amazed at how God was able to

turn me around and give me this life that I never even dreamed of. In a way my dad was right: the end did come in 1999—the end of my former life.

A Message for Young People Today

There is one thing I regret—the years of my youth. I regret it because that time was spent in vain. They were completely

empty years of my life—no purpose, no meaning, no satisfaction, no direction. I understand now that it is better to live with God. You can have all kinds of victories in your life when you're with God, when you pray sincerely to Him.

Whenever I have a problem or difficulty in my business or family or raising my children, God reminds me of the first steps of faith. Then I remember that when you pray, it's not you but God who does it. But it has to be your decision and your request first.

Bouncy Castle Business

I'm now a small business owner. I sell toys, and I have some bouncy castles that are set up in various spots around Vinnytsia. Every client that comes to our business receives a free Adventist newspaper filled with good health and spiritual information.

The most popular days for people to go to the park is Saturday and Sunday. The central city park belongs to the city administration, so when I do good business, they receive a good percentage. But the challenge is that I don't work on Saturdays. In the beginning we had some challenges with the city over that. They tried to force me to be there, but I was firm—either I don't work on Saturdays, or I don't work at all. They could see that I was firm, and they could see that we worked properly. They appreciated our work, and they knew that we were people of principle.

At the Cemetery

Sometimes I visit the cemetery where my mom is buried. As I walk past the graves, I see the names of some of my friends who are buried there.

I'm especially sad when I see three specific names, because when I became a Christian, I talked with those guys. I invited them to come to church and to follow the path that I had taken, but now their names are at the cemetery.

The last time I was home, my wife was given the opportunity to see the horrendousness of my former life. As we walked through the cemetery, some of my old friends were there, sitting on a bench. When one of my old friends saw me, he ran toward me, fell on his knees, and started crying, "I'm tired of the life I'm living."

I told him that not long ago, on that very spot, I had told our friend, who was now in the grave, to go to church. And now I was telling him, "Go to church!" But he wouldn't listen to me either. He said, "I'm going to have the same fate as the guy in the grave."

I pleaded with him: "It is much easier to go to church than to the cemetery. Look at me now, and my wife and children."

He looked at them as I assured him, "You *can* start a new life. You can have all the things that I have." But he just turned back to the old friends, back to drinking. He didn't have a family. He didn't have anything. He just spent every day looking for another bottle of booze.

As we walked away my wife whispered, "Now I see what you used to be in the past." "Yes," I acknowledged, "and I was the worst one of them all."

Ruslan and Bodgona's children, Sophia, Nadya, and Polina, are looking forward to studying at the new Adventist school in Vinnytsia. Thank you for helping to make this school a reality by giving generously to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. 🌍



Saved In The Sky

Pastor Nikolai Zhukaljuk

Editor's note: Pastor Nikolai Zhukaljuk has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church for more than 40 years as a pastor, writer, publisher, and president of the Ukrainian Union Conference. In this story, he shares a pivotal moment from his time in the Soviet military.

My time for mandatory service in the Soviet army was nearly finished. One of my responsibilities was to serve as a journalist for the military newspaper. My superiors were pleased with my work and wanted me to continue as senior editor. They offered me an apartment in Leningrad, which during that time was very difficult to obtain. There was just one condition—I would have to become a

Communist, and that meant denying my faith in God. During Soviet times, a person couldn't work in such positions without being a Communist.

In a few days I was invited to meet with the general. He told me, "You can continue with military service. We'll give you officer rank, and you can stay with us. You will have business trips, travel to different places, and work with the military district. You can stay in the army and work here."

So now I had two proposals—to become a chief editor or a military officer. This was a great temptation—I was thinking of what it would mean to become an officer, and of all the things I would get. On the other hand, to have an apartment in Leningrad? This was

"I realized that the worst thing I had ever done was deciding to leave God."

a dream for me! I seriously considered accepting one of these offers, even though it would mean renouncing my faith in God and becoming a Communist.

The Last Jump

At that time I also served as a military skydiver and had participated in about 80 jumps. One day, as we prepared for another jump, the chief commander told me, “I’ll go first, and you will be the last one to jump. We will have 15 soldiers in between.” The parachutes of all the soldiers ahead of me would open automatically, but I would need to open mine manually. I thought this would be fine—I’m brave, I’m very experienced, and I’ve done this many times before.

I jumped last. After a brief free fall, I pulled the rip cord. Nothing happened. Trying not to panic, I reached for the emergency cord and pulled. Again, no parachute appeared. Nothing but blue sky above and the ground coming up fast below. I understood that this was the end. The feeling that overwhelmed me at that point is something only someone who has been in the sky can fully understand.

I opened my heavy coat and tried using it to break my free fall. Then I began praying the most earnest prayer I have ever prayed, believing it was probably going to be my last. “God, there’s nothing I can do to save myself, but I really want to see Your hand at this moment.”

I realized that the worst thing I had ever done was deciding to leave God. What would happen to me now? An apartment in Leningrad and all the military honors in the world didn’t matter anymore.

Looking below, I could see the open parachute of my commander. All of a sudden, some wind came and pushed me

right into his parachute!

But you can’t stay on top of a parachute for long. As I slid off, my commander grabbed me with his strong hands and held on with an iron grip! We were falling fast, and he told me how to hold my feet so we could land as safely as possible. After landing, we were taken to the hospital with only minor injuries.

The next day a story appeared in the newspaper about this extraordinary experience. Everyone recognized that things like this just don’t happen. It was a miracle.

The Decision

From then on my prayers were different from what they had ever been before. Two weeks later, when I had my appointment with the general, my answer was ready.

As I walked into his office, he looked at me and smiled. He was quite sure that I would agree right away to his proposal.

“Sir,” I told him, “I have thought about your generous offer, and I have decided not to stay in the army.”

Shocked, he asked, “What will you do?”

“Well, sir, I will follow the call of the party. I’m going to go to new places and cultivate new territory.” At that time, the Communists were wanting to develop land in Siberia and were encouraging people to settle there.

The general stared at me. “Well, soldier, I’ve seen many crazy people, but *you* are the craziest of them all!”¹

After his time in the military, Pastor Zhukaljuk secretly worked as a pastor and organized the underground work of publishing religious books and materials for the Adventist believers in the Soviet Union. He and his wife, Yevgenia, were imprisoned for this work and later released. They have been married for 60 years.

Thirteenth Sabbath Program

➤	Congregational Song	“A Mighty Fortress” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 506
➤	Welcome	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
➤	Prayer	
➤	Program	“Now Is The Time”
➤	Offering	
➤	Closing Song	“Go Forth, Go Forth With Christ,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 377
➤	Closing Prayer	

Participants: Five speakers—a narrator (man or woman), one woman, three men. [Note: participants should be familiar enough with their material so they can present it with appropriate emphasis.]

Props: A map of the Euro-Asia Division. (Scan the map on the back page of the quarterly or download it from www.AdventistMission.org and project it onto a screen.) A PowerPoint presentation listing each project as it’s presented will help listeners keep track of the projects they’re giving to.

Narrator: Today is Thirteenth Sabbath. Today we will meet leaders from Russia and Ukraine who are directly involved with our mission projects.

One of the Thirteenth Sabbath projects this quarter is to build a church and center of influence in the center of Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, a republic within the Russian Federation.

Let’s hear what Pastor Igor Krasilnikov, president of the West Russian Union

Conference, and Pastor Anwar Gindullin from Kazan have to say about this project.

Pastor Krasilnikov: We would like to build a church in many cities, but it’s very difficult to find a piece of land inside the city. If we build the church further out, then transportation becomes a problem.

Pastor Gindullin: That’s why we really wanted to find available land in the city of

Kazan. We looked all around the center, but any available land was too small or too far from the metro. We asked God to help us find some good land, and He answered our prayers! We found a perfect place, just 70 meters from a transportation center. With the help of the West Russian Union, the conference purchased it in 2013.

Pastor Krasilnikov: Kazan is a unique city; it's a place where Muslims and Christians live side by side in peace. It's very important for the church to have a good, attractive presence in this area. We don't know what will happen in the future—perhaps they won't allow us to build a church later. So, while we have the opportunity, we want to build it now.

Pastor Gindullin: We also want to have a place in front of the church for children to play, and for parents and others to rest. So we're planning on putting in a park-like children's playground.

Pastor Krasilnikov: There are many tall buildings in the area, with nowhere for children to play. When the children have the opportunity to play near our church, the parents can also visit. Our church will be a center of influence, offering many services.

Pastor Gindullin: We want to use this opportunity while God has opened the door, because tomorrow everything can change.

Narrator: Thank you, Pastors Krasilnikov and Gindullin. Let's now turn our attention to the country of Ukraine, where they are planning to build or expand four Adventist schools from the Thirteenth Sabbath Mission offering. Let's hear from Mrs. Elena Milnenko, the principal at the school in Vinnytsia, and

Mr. Alexander Koberniyk, the school director in Lviv. Mr. Koberniyk, please tell us about how the school in Lviv began.

Mr. Koberniyk: I am trained as a teacher, and I used to teach in a government-run school. After becoming a Seventh-day Adventist, it struck me how the school has a great influence on how children see the world—their worldview. Then one day I learned that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has an educational system, but that in Ukraine there were just two Adventist church schools.

I talked with our pastor and with the president of the Western Union Conference, and we decided to establish a school here in Lviv. We started small, with just three students, but from there it grew, and now we have 27 students.

Narrator: So where did the school meet?

Mr. Koberniyk: At first we met in a room at the church, but as we grew, the conference generously offered for us to use their office for the school, and they moved into another building. But we are growing quickly, and there have been many requests for us to offer education beyond the fifth grade. In order to do that, we need to expand the building.

Narrator: Why do you think the school is growing so rapidly?

Mr. Koberniyk: I have noticed that Adventist education, especially when we emphasize the Bible, has a good influence on children. Here, students learn how to pray, to trust, and to believe God.

Narrator: Thank you, Mr. Koberniyk. Mrs. Milnenko, have you had similar results at your school in Vinnytsia?

Mrs. Milnenko: Yes. We see the results in both students and parents. The children are very happy at our school. There are a lot of good, well-qualified teachers in the government schools, but they don't share the children's religious values, so they often twist it or force them to believe other things. Even little children must tell their teachers and their classmates that they don't come to school on Sabbath, and they must be firm in that position. And so children from a very young age are being isolated—they're not like everybody else, and that puts pressure on them and undermines their confidence.

Narrator: Please tell us a little more about the Adventist school in Vinnytsia.

Mrs. Milnenko: Our school just recently started, and already we have 24 students in four grades, plus 15 more students in kindergarten. We are currently meeting in rooms at the church, and there are many more students who would like to come, but there simply isn't room where we are at.

Narrator: So that is why you are building a school?

Mrs. Milnenko: Yes. And so that we can also offer more grades—through high school. The parents are very excited about this, and so is our conference. We have some beautiful land in a forested area where the children can play outdoors. We have already started to build, and many parents and conference leaders have come out to the site to help us build.

Narrator: So how will the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering help with this project?

Mrs. Milnenko: It will help us greatly! Without it we wouldn't be able to offer

high school as well as the elementary level. This is very important for our students to be able to continue with an Adventist education. Because here they can be strengthened in their faith. We have worship, and when there are difficulties, the very first thing we do is pray. In every class teachers show how God is the Creator—that He is the one who loves them, who made them.

Narrator: If you could ask the world church to pray for something, what would it be?

Mrs. Milnenko: I'd like the world church to pray for Ukraine and for our education system, so that we can have many Adventist schools, and that this could be a missionary project—to impact our kids and their parents.

Narrator: Thank you very much to each of our guests today for sharing with us a little more about some of the wonderful Thirteenth Sabbath Offering projects. Unfortunately, we've only had enough time to hear about some of the projects. Please also remember the other special projects in the Euro-Asia Division this quarter, including two more schools in Ukraine, and a church/center of influence in Minsk, Belarus. Let's do all we can to help lift up the arms of our brothers and sisters in Russia and Ukraine as they seek to minister to the millions of people in their territories. Please give generously to this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Euro-Asia Division. Thank you.

[Offering]

Leader's Resources

For more information on the cultures and history of Russia, Tatarstan, and Ukraine, check the travel section of a local library or visit these websites: <http://www.infoplease.com/country/russia.html>; <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/584169/Tatarstan>; http://www.ukraine-insight.com.ua/interesting_facts_Ukraine.html

Children's Mission contains additional material that can add flavor to your mission presentation, including words and phrases in Russian, crafts, and recipes. Find the *Children's Mission* online at www.AdventistMission.org. Click on "Resources," "Children's magazine," then "Activities" on the left side of the screen.

Visit our Website at www.AdventistMission.org to stream or download the **Mission 360 DVD** that features stories from the Euro-Asia Division and the worldwide mission of the Adventist Church.

Remind members also that the ongoing work of the world church depends on the weekly Sabbath School mission offerings. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter and remind Sabbath School members to prepare their Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the next week.

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Next quarter the Inter-American Division will be featured. Special projects include:

- a youth camp in northern Belize
- an evangelistic center in Belmopan, Belize
- a health clinic at the Good Samaritan Inn in Jamaica
- CHILDREN'S PROJECT: To provide beds for the youth camp in Belize.

YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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Euro-Asia Division

ARCTIC OCEAN



ORGANIZATION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Belarus	65	29	4,058	9,463,000
Caucasus	130	78	7,610	18,252,310
East Russian	84	54	5,021	22,528,401
Far Eastern	50	20	2,306	8,035,608
Moldova	152	90	9,650	4,114,000
Southern	75	48	4,598	96,788,000
Trans-Caucasus	32	29	1,726	17,007,000
Ukrainian	900	299	51,683	45,513,000
West Russian	390	356	29,361	94,676,681
Total:	1,878	1,003	116,013	316,378,000

Statistics as of December 2013

PROJECTS

- 1 Center of Influence, Minsk, Belarus
- 2 Church in Kazan, Russia
- 3 Adventist school in Cherkassy, Ukraine
- 4 Educational complex in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine
- 5 Adventist school in Lvov, Ukraine
- 6 Adventist secondary school in Vinnitsa, Ukraine
- 7 Children's Project: Missionary playground on church grounds near city metro station.