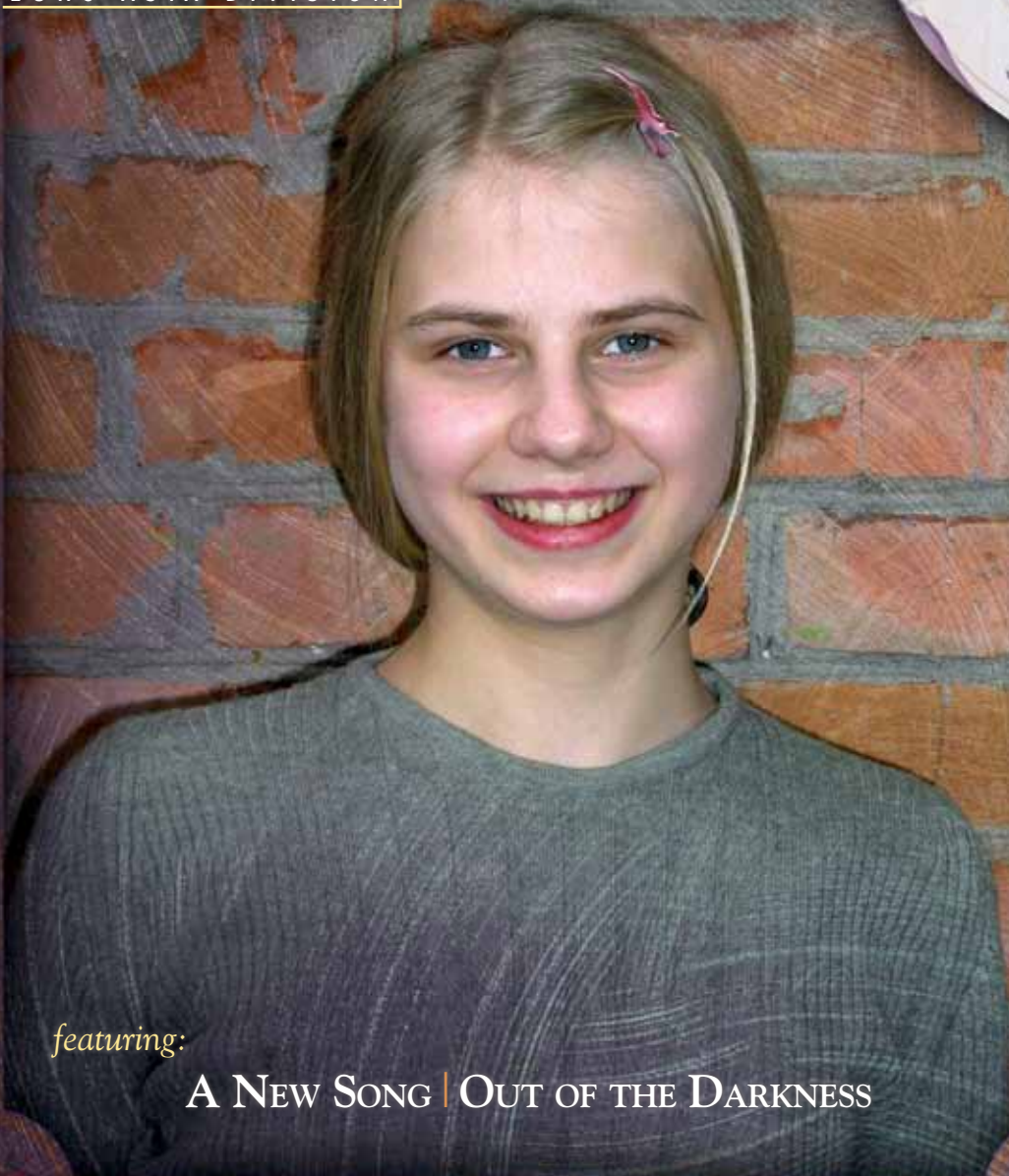


ADVENTIST
MISSION

YOUTH AND ADULT
MAGAZINE

QUARTER 2
2011

EURO-ASIA DIVISION




featuring:

A NEW SONG | OUT OF THE DARKNESS


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On the Cover: *Katya lives in Ukraine, one of 12 countries that make up the Euro-Asia Division.*

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SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH®

Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter features the Euro-Asia Division, which stretches almost halfway around the world and spans the distance from the polar regions of the Arctic Circle to the predominantly Muslim regions in the south. It includes the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The Challenges

These countries were part of the former Soviet Union, which for 70 years restricted freedom, especially freedom of religion. When Communism fell, the people in these countries rejoiced in the hope of new freedoms and greater individual prosperity. But for most of the people in Euro-Asia the promise

of prosperity has turned to ashes. Instead the people suffer through inflation and unemployment, and individuals struggle as hard today as they did nearly 20 years ago to meet their basic needs.

Today the countries of Euro-Asia Division are home to more than 279 million people but fewer than 140,000 Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for every 2,000 people.

Our focus this quarter is on Siberia, the Asian sector of Russia, where we can help believers in Krasnoyarsk and Tomsk build new churches; and on Azerbaijan, where believers have purchased a building that our offering will help remodel into a church. A special children's project will help provide Sabbath School lesson material to the children of the Trans-Caucasus region, which includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Yours for the kingdom,



Charlotte Ishkanian
Editor, *Mission*

OPPORTUNITIES

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build:

- churches for existing congregations in Krasnoyarsk and Tomsk in Siberia, Russia
- a church for an existing congregation in Baku, Azerbaijan
- CHILDREN'S PROJECT: Sabbath School lesson material in the local languages for children in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia



A NEW SONG



April 2 | Edgar Gyanjulyan

Edgar sat in the hospital waiting for results of his medical tests. *It's nothing. I'm just tired. I have been working too hard,* he tried to reassure himself. But his efforts could not quell the uncertainty. Something was wrong.

At age 27 Edgar already was a well-known composer and performer in his homeland of Armenia. He had begun composing music when he was 21. In 2002 he composed a piece of music to honor those who had died in the terrorist attacks on the United States on 9/11. The music was performed in New York on the first anniversary of the attacks. His fame grew, and he performed his own compositions in the most prestigious halls of Armenia. Sometimes he felt guilty about how well his life was going.

Then he began to feel weak and tired. He tried rest, but the weariness didn't go away. Finally he went to the hospital for tests.

"You have leukemia," a doctor said as he looked at Edgar's chart. Edgar forced himself to breathe as he repeated the word in his mind. *Leukemia. That's like cancer,* he thought.

"It's treatable," the doctor added. Edgar tried to hear what the doctor was saying, but his mind raced. *Cancer! Cancer! People die of cancer.* Edgar saw his dreams spiral into the darkness, replaced by hospital rooms and IVs and fear.

Light in the Darkness

Edgar traveled to Germany for treatment. He tried to hope, but despair seeped into his soul when two fellow patients in his ward died. The disease seemed so strong, and he felt so weak.

Then one night he dreamed that he was in a dark room looking at people on the other side of a glass door. He became aware of a presence in the room. "You will live many more days," a voice near him said. Edgar turned toward the voice and saw a young man dressed in white looking at him. Edgar felt a peace flood over him. He sensed that this presence was God.

The next day as he waited for results of a bone marrow test, he no longer felt fearful. He knew that his life was in God's hands. The doctor came into the room looking puzzled. "Your bone

marrow is clean,” he said. “There’s no sign of leukemia.”

Relief flooded Edgar as he recalled the voice in his dream. *You will live.* Edgar had no doubt that God had performed a miracle for him. He wanted to return home to Armenia, forget the rest of the treatments, and find God. But the doctors urged him to finish the treatments, so he stayed.

A New Hope

In the hospital Edgar had lots of time to think and pray. He thought of his aunt who had read the Bible to him when he was a child. He remembered listening with excitement as she told him Bible stories. But as he entered his teens, he forgot about the Bible stories, forgot to pray. He never doubted God’s existence, and now he wanted to return to God and learn again about this God

who had not forgotten him. He spent hours in the hospital talking to God.

During this time Edgar wrote his first spiritual song. As he prayed and praised God in music and words, his faith grew.

Then a life-threatening blood clot formed in his neck. Edgar was told that any sudden movement, even a cough, could cause the blood clot to break off and cause a life-threatening stroke. Edgar called his aunt and asked her and her church to pray for him. Still the blood clot hung like a sword over his head. Doctors said it would never dissolve, but it might harden and become less dangerous.

But when doctors ran tests on the blood clot, they found it was gone. Once more doctors were astounded at the test results, but Edgar knew that God had saved his life once more.

A New Ministry

At last Edgar returned home to Armenia. He took with him a new faith. Soon after his return he met a Christian young woman, and they studied the Bible together. They both became convinced that the Adventist Church was the true church of God. They were baptized in autumn of 2006. A few months later they were married.

“I don’t ever want to forget what God has done for me,” Edgar says. “Jesus has brought a new song into my life and given me a new ministry. Now I’m living to serve God.”

Our mission to the world is to tell others about our amazing God. Our mission offerings help raise humanity out of the depths of spiritual darkness and give them a new song, a song of hope and faith. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- Armenia is the oldest Christian country in the world. Almost 3 million people live in this small country that lies between Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Mount Ararat, believed to be the possible landing site of Noah’s Ark, stands on the border between Armenia and Turkey.
- Armenia is a landlocked country with many mountains and lakes. It was part of the Soviet Union for almost 70 years, and it gained independence in 1991.
- People in Armenia have their own language and their own alphabet.



My Vow



April 9 | Gayane Sarukhanyan

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

A few years ago a family crisis changed my life forever. My nephew was born two months early and developed a lung infection. Doctors feared for his life.

I was a nominal Christian, and I prayed fervently for God to save my nephew's life. I promised God that I would serve Him the rest of my life. My vow to God surprised even me, for I had never prayed like this before. But God answered our prayers, and my nephew lived.

The Invitation Card

I had made a vow to God, and I intended to keep it. But how? For several months I prayed that God would show me His true church and protect me from false religions.

Then one day my mother showed me an invitation for Bible lectures that had been left on our apartment doorstep. I read it and decided to attend. My mother nodded; she knew about my vow to God.

My family had planned to sacrifice a lamb in thanksgiving to God for

saving my nephew's life. This is traditional in our family faith. But my vow had been to give *myself* to God as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The Lost Invitation

The invitation gave the address and date, but no telephone number, so I couldn't call to find out just where the meetings would be held. And when I went to check the invitation once more to be sure of the time and place of the meetings, I couldn't find it. I asked my mother where it was, and she told me that she had thrown it away. She didn't realize I still wanted it.

I was upset, for I knew that Satan was trying to keep me from these meetings. I went to several churches to ask whether they were sponsoring the meetings, but no one knew anything about them. I had already arranged my schedule so I could attend the meetings, and now it seemed that I couldn't go. I was so upset that I cried.

My nieces saw me crying and asked what was wrong. I told them about the lost invitation. "Wait!" one girl said.

“I saw that invitation lying outside the door of some empty apartments in the complex!” The girls ran to get me an invitation while I waited at home. *Is it possible that there might still be an invitation in the building?* I wondered. *Surely by now someone would have thrown them away.* Soon my nieces returned carrying the invitation. “Here it is, Auntie! Here it is!”

I nearly cried for joy as I clutched it! “Thank You, God,” I whispered. I knew that God had preserved this invitation just for me.

Thwarting Satan’s Plans

Then on the day that the meetings were to start, I told a classmate about the meetings. “How do you know this church isn’t a cult?” she asked. “They could tell you lies and make you kill

yourself!” She was so intense that I didn’t know what to do. I returned home confused. Then I showed a neighbor, a young man, the brochure and asked about the meetings. He offered to find out about the church.

I remembered the brochure offered a free Bible to anyone who attended every meeting. I wanted a Bible, and I wished I hadn’t let my friend discourage me from going. I missed two meetings before my neighbor told me that he had found the church and was going to attend the meetings with me. Quickly I dressed, and we hurried to the church.

When we arrived at the church, I realized that I had been in this church two years earlier for some health lectures. At the time of those meetings two other friends had convinced me that this church was a cult and frightened me into not going. Suddenly I could see Satan’s attempts for what they were. As I listened to the programs I became convinced that God was leading me to this church. I wasn’t going to let anyone frighten me away from this church again!

I studied the Bible lessons thoroughly and told my family what I was learning. I was on fire for God. I was baptized a few months later. Satan isn’t done trying to discourage me, but my faith remains strong. I try to share my growing faith with my family, but so far they haven’t come to church with me or asked to know more about the Bible. But I’m not going to give up. I’m determined.

Your mission offerings help the church in Armenia and other struggling countries to grow stronger. Thank you for sharing so that people such as I can hear God’s Word and find hope and freedom in Jesus. 🌐

FAST FACTS

- Armenian families hold fast to their cultural traditions. Much of their food and music are similar to nearby Middle Eastern countries.
- The people of Armenia love traditional folk music and circle dances. But their favorite sports are popular around the world—basketball, soccer, and tennis. They also like to play chess and backgammon, both board games.
- A terrible earthquake rocked northern Armenia in 1988, killing some 25,000 people and destroying huge portions of major cities and towns where people already were struggling during difficult financial times.



TWICE A SOLDIER



April 16 | Vartan Grigorian

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

I awoke feeling sicker than usual. I tried to get out of bed, but I couldn't even roll over. *This is it*, I thought to myself. *I'm dying*.

I had been an alcoholic for years, and my doctor had told me that if I didn't stop drinking, the alcohol would kill me. But I still couldn't stop. As I lay in bed that day I thought about how the path of my life had led to this point.

A Loner's Life

I was 10 when my mother died. My father and I weren't close, and I felt like an orphan. I quit school at 16 to work, and was drafted into the army when I was 18. I lost contact with the few friends I had at home, and I became a loner. Then I discovered a new "friend"—vodka. I spent many nights alone with a bottle of liquor.

After I finished military service, I returned home. But I couldn't find a job, so I rejoined the army. I was sent to an isolated military post, where I met a young woman and got married. The next year we had a son. My life should have

been happy, but alcohol still ruled my life.

I was transferred to a new post. Because I was an officer with a family, I was told to find a house in the nearby village. The only available house was run-down and needed extensive repairs. But I convinced the owner to let me fix it up and rent it, and he reluctantly agreed. I made the repairs and sent for my wife and son. We could be a family again.

From Despair to Hope

Our neighbors welcomed us and seemed sincerely friendly. They were Christians, but they didn't push their faith on me, and I didn't ask about their beliefs. They knew that I drank, but they didn't lecture me about it. Over the next several months we formed a strong friendship.

One day some soldiers under my command were caught off base without permission. In order to save their lives I told my commanding officer that I had given them permission to go. My men were released, but I was sentenced to

seven years in jail for my actions. This thought sobered me up, and I had time to think about my life. I sensed the errors in my life and tried to pray, but I didn't know what to say to God. Still, I felt a measure of peace.

Then miraculously, I was released. But instead of changing my ways, I returned home and got drunk. Two months later I awoke so sick I couldn't move. I realized that I might die. I lay in bed for two days unable to get up. During this time I prayed for forgiveness and help. I really wanted to change.

I sensed the errors in my life and tried to pray, but I didn't know what to say to God.

I grew strong enough to get out of bed. I saw my liquor bottle and turned away in disgust. I knew I needed God's help to overcome alcohol, but I didn't know Him yet. I told my wife of my desire to know God, and together we visited our Christian neighbors. They listened without judgment and offered to study the Bible with us so we could meet God. That's when I learned that they had been praying for us since the day they had met us.

A New Chance at Life

As I studied the Bible I fell in love with Jesus. Soon I asked to be baptized. But my wife wasn't so sure. She worried when I decided to tithe my income, but I wanted to follow God's plan. I rented some land and farmed to repay a large debt I owed. As I worked I grew stronger physically. Soon my wife realized the blessings of tithing, for we had more money than we ever had before.

I was so excited about my new life in Christ that I told everyone I met what Jesus was doing in my life. My wife saw it too and soon asked to follow God in baptism.

I wanted to serve God full-time, so when the church asked me to serve as a Global Mission pioneer, I gladly accepted. I realized that I was leaving the army of Armenia and joining the army of God. We were called to work in my wife's hometown. In one year eight people have joined the church there, and more are studying with us. God rescued me from my addictions and put me to work in His service. Now my family and I are reaching out to others with God's love.

Your mission offerings are helping reach people for God in Armenia, where fewer than 900 Adventists live. Thank you for your help. 🌐

MISSION POST

- About 3 million people live in Armenia. The country was the first to adopt Christianity as the official religion in A.D. 301. About 95 percent of Armenians belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church, which is similar in many ways to the Catholic Church.
- About 875 Seventh-day Adventists worship in 30 churches and small groups in Armenia. That's one Adventist for every 9,500 people. There's a lot of work to do to reach people in Armenia with the Advent message.



PASSING ON THE GIFT

April 23 | Sergo and Dodo Namoradze

As Sergo walked down the street in his native Georgia, he saw a group of people standing near an old man who held up a copy of the Ten Commandments. Intrigued, Sergo stopped to listen to what the man was saying. But the man's words were drowned out by angry voices from the crowd. Still the old man didn't raise his voice. Sergo stepped closer so he could hear. When Sergo tried to defend the man, the man gently told him, "Be at peace." Eventually the crowd dispersed, and Sergo was able to talk with the old man in peace.

"My name is Alexander," the old man said. "I'm an Adventist, and I'm holding meetings near here every day. You're welcome to come and listen." Sergo attended Alexander's meetings, and over the next few days the two men became friends.

Soon Sergo had to leave town, but he wanted to know how he could share what Alexander had taught him with his neighbors back home. Alexander gave Sergo the address of the little Adventist church in Tbilisi [tuh-BLEE-see], where Sergo lived. Sergo

was surprised to learn that there was an Adventist church in the city, for he had never heard of Adventists before he met Alexander.

Don't Bother Me

When Sergo arrived home, he told his wife, Dodo, about Alexander and his unique messages about God. Dodo wasn't interested in this strange religion. "How do you know it's not a sect?" she asked Sergo. "I have my church; I don't need anything else."

But Sergo wanted to visit the church. He searched for the Adventist church for three weeks before he found it. But it was worth the effort. He felt God's presence and love as he entered the simple worship hall to sing and pray and listen to the pastor's sermon.

Sergo described the wonderful worship service to his wife. But she turned to him and said, "I'm too busy to think about church, but you can take our son."

Sergo took the couple's son to church. Again he tried to tell Dodo about the worship service. "It opened a whole new world for me," he said, smiling at

the thought. “Faith is a gift from God,” Sergo tried to tell Dodo. “We must accept it.” Still Dodo wasn’t interested.

Sergo and his son continued to attend the Adventist church, and he often told a reluctant Dodo what he’d learned that day. Then one Sabbath Sergo returned home and said, “We don’t need to eat pork or drink wine anymore.”

My problems are just beginning, Dodo thought. Week after week Sergo enthusiastically told her what he was learning. Finally Dodo agreed to visit the church, just to see what her husband and son were learning there.

Reluctant Accompanist

Sergo and Dodo are both accomplished musicians. When Dodo entered the church, she cringed at the music. When someone invited her to play the piano for worship, she reluctantly agreed. Delighted, Sergo joined her on his viola, and their son played the clarinet. The next week they were asked to play again.

Dodo didn’t plan to attend church every Sabbath. She had other things to do. But when members begged her to play for worship, she felt it was her duty to do so. That meant that she heard the sermon each week. She wasn’t sure if everything she heard was true, so she started studying the Bible texts to be sure that the pastor and Sabbath School teacher were teaching the truth. Soon she realized that she was falling in love with Jesus. Eventually Sergo and Dodo were baptized, and a year later Dodo’s mother was baptized, too.

Sergo retired from the Georgia National Opera, but Dodo continued to perform, and her new faith caused

problems with her work schedule. Eventually she left her job and went to work as a volunteer for church outreach.

New Work, New Outreach

Sergo realized that his pension would not support them, so he found work as a mail carrier. As people got to know him, they told him about their problems and special concerns. “God will help you,” he assured them. He gives people literature and prays for them. Often he invites them to the couple’s small group Bible study meeting in their home. Several of Sergo’s friends have accepted the invitation. And when the church held evangelistic meetings, Sergo and Dodo invited their new friends to these meetings as well. Several attended the meetings and gave their lives to God.

Fewer than 500 Adventists live in the country of Georgia, but our mission offerings help the believers share their faith in this little corner of the world. Thank you for giving to mission. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- Georgia is a small country that lies along the eastern shore of the Black Sea. Beautiful mountains form the northern border of Georgia.
- Among the favorite foods in Georgia is *khachapuri* [hach-a-POO-ree], a round, cheesy bread that’s often served hot from the oven for breakfast. Another favorite is honey-coated walnuts.
- The people of Georgia enjoy soccer and basketball. Because of the nearby mountains, skiing is also popular.



THE SEEDS OF FAITH



April 30 | Rozina Imanova

Rozina [roh-ZEE-nah] worked in a school of technology in Azerbaijan. A young man came to the school asking to study. He had no parents and no money, but Rozina helped him enroll. He was a good student and did well in school. But some staff members at the school became angry because they thought Rozina had taken a bribe to help the young man and then had not shared the bribe with them.

Rozina insisted that she had not taken a bribe, but she was asked to leave the institute. Rozina was heartbroken that her kindness was being repaid with cruelty.

Unanswered Prayers

Rozina was a religious woman, and the next Friday she went to a nearby cemetery to pray. “Why are You punishing me for doing good?” she demanded of God. “Where are You in my trials?”

For three years Rozina prayed, seeking comfort and peace. But she found neither comfort nor peace. Then one night she had a dream in which a man told her, “Don’t go to the cemetery to

pray. Look instead for this door.” The man pointed to a door that opened, and she saw a small group of people inside.

The Little Group

The next Saturday Rozina went to the bus stop and found a number of people there talking amongst themselves. She heard them mention God, and she listened. Then she asked them, “What do you know about God?”

One of the women pointed to a little house near the bus stop. “Every Saturday we have a time of worship in this house,” the woman said.

Rozina followed their gaze to the little house and recognized it from her dream. “May I join you next week? I want to find God.” A girl wrote down the address of the house and the time that the little group met for worship.

The next Saturday Rozina knocked on the door of the house. Someone opened the door and invited her in. She entered the room and felt sure that this was the place where she would find God. She sat and listened as the worshippers sang and prayed and studied the Bible together. She felt their love

and was inspired by the Bible study. When the worship service ended, Rozina knew that she would be back. Eagerly she waited for the next Saturday and the special worship service.

Rozina continued attending the worship services; she learned about God and about the Sabbath that drew these people together on this day. Sabbath became special to her.

Trials and Victories

Then she received a call from her former employer inviting her to return to work at the institute from which she had been fired. Rozina was thrilled to have her honor and her job back. But then the school changed its schedule, and Rozina was required to work on Sabbaths. Rozina resigned rather than work on the Sabbath.

Rozina knew the danger that could come from changing her faith, but she took her stand and was baptized into membership of the little Adventist church. She shared her faith with family members, and in time her sister and nephew became Adventist Christians too. Then her mother and father accepted Jesus as their Savior. But the rest of her family persecuted them for forsaking their family's faith.

Religious freedom is not widely practiced in Azerbaijan. People persecute others who belong to a minority religion or those who change their faith. Christians are looked upon as enemies, and families put great pressure on anyone who shows an interest in becoming a Christian.

Spreading the Seeds of Faith

But in spite of these difficulties,

Rozina continues to share her faith with friends and family. She gives them books as gifts, and tradition encourages them to accept these gifts. But she doesn't know whether they are reading them. "I just pray that God will remind them that the books are in their home and hold a blessing for them," she says. However, Rozina knows of one family who has become Christians because they read books she gave them. In fact, Rozina knows of some 20 people who have come to Christ because of her testimony. "These aren't many," she says. "I want to bring more."

Rozina, like many of the 720 or so Adventist believers in Azerbaijan, shares her faith under difficult circumstances. Our prayers and our mission offerings help these faithful believers reach their neighbors and their families for Christ. Thank you for sharing so others can learn that Jesus truly is God, and that He loves each of us. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- The Republic of Azerbaijan lies along the Caspian, sea South of Russia. About 8 million people live there. The official language is Azeri.
- Most of the people living in Azerbaijan are not Christians. Only about 720 Adventists live in the entire country. They worship in small groups and a few churches scattered in villages, but in Baku, the capital city, about 300 Adventist believers worship in several small congregations.



RUZALA'S REWARD

May 7 | Ruzala Alamdaroova

Ruzala [roo-ZAH-lah] sat on the hard pew listening to the pastor's stirring sermon. She struggled to keep her mind from the exam she was missing at school. She refused to break the Sabbath in order to take the exam, even if it meant not graduating with her class. Once again she placed the exam and her future into God's hands to work out. She didn't know that her decision to worship God that Sabbath might have saved her life.

Discovering "The Believers"

Ruzala lives in the country of Azerbaijan [ah-zehr-bai-JAHN]. Few in her homeland are Christians. Her father was a Christian, but he was unhappy with the church he attended and was searching for a church that taught according to the Bible.

Ruzala was 13; she remembered seeing people coming out of a church near her grandmother's home when she'd visit her. Ruzala told her father about the church and urged him to visit it.

Father asked some neighbors about the church near Grandmother's house. He learned that it was a Seventh-day Adventist church. The neighbors called

the Adventists "the believers." Father decided to visit the church to see what it taught. He was delighted to find a people that teach according to the Bible. Two weeks later Father invited the rest of the family to go to church with him. Ruzala and her sister went with him, but Mother hesitated for many months before she joined the rest of the family.

Persecution and Blessing

Ruzala was baptized with her sister and father. When she entered high school, she found it difficult to defend her faith. Because there are so few Adventists in Azerbaijan, few people knew what they believed. Some teachers harassed Ruzala and her sister for refusing to attend classes on Sabbath. Ruzala's sister was expelled from the school for missing classes and exams, and Ruzala expected the same would happen to her. She wasn't expelled, but her teachers gave her lower grades because she refused to attend classes or take exams on Sabbaths.

Ruzala prayed every day that God would help her pass her classes without breaking the Sabbath. And God had blessed. But as graduation neared, her final exam schedule was posted. Ruzala

saw that one class exam was scheduled for Sabbath. *I won't go*, she told herself. And then she prayed, "Dear God, help me to honor Your Sabbath and still graduate."

The Explosion

On Sabbath, Ruzala worked hard to focus on the sermon. Then just as the pastor announced the closing song, an explosion ripped through the air, rattling the windows and shaking the people inside. A siren wailed in the distance.

Worship over, the congregation filed outside. Ruzala saw smoke that appeared to be coming from her school. Then she saw some classmates and hurried to ask them what had happened.

"There was an explosion at the school!" one girl said. "Someone said that the military teacher brought a hand grenade to school and left it in his classroom while students were taking

their test. Someone started playing with the hand grenade, and apparently the safety pin came out. The grenade exploded and lots of kids got hurt! I think one boy even died!"

Ruzala's heart pounded heavily as she realized that if she had gone to school that day, she would have been sitting in the classroom where the grenade exploded.

She hurried to the school to see for herself. A huge sob filled her body as she saw the hole in the building caused by the explosion. Injured students were still being treated and loaded into ambulances.

Saved by Her Faith

The Sabbath saved me, Ruzala thought. *I'm alive because I refused to attend class today.*

A teacher saw Ruzala and said, "You were lucky not to be here today," the teacher said. "Your faith has saved you."

"Yes," Ruzala answered. "My faith—and my God—saved me."

Several of Ruzala's classmates gathered around her. Some of them had asked her questions about her religion before, but on that day they had seen how Ruzala's God had protected her. They expressed their gratitude that Ruzala's God was with her.

Although the students' parents forbid them to attend a Christian church, Ruzala's friends know that her faith is placed in a loving and caring God.

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help the congregation in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan, renovate a building to provide a place to worship and a light to shine on people who don't know the name of Jesus. 🌍

MISSION POST

- About 720 Adventist believers live in the country of Azerbaijan. Some 300 live and worship in three congregations in Baku, the capital city.
- Believers in Baku have purchased a building in which they operate the Good News Café and hold training seminars for members. Future plans include an English-language school and small clinic. They hope that the outreach of this church will help them establish yet another congregation in this large city.
- Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help the believers in Baku finish their church.



A TIME TO SHARE



May 14 | Olesia and Luda

Luda and Olesia [oh-LEHS-ya] are best friends and sisters in Christ. When they prayed for a new ministry for God, He gave them more to do than they ever dreamed possible.

One day the women talked about how they could share their faith more effectively with their neighbors, families, and colleagues. Olesia suggested starting a small group meeting. “Let’s make faith fun!” Olesia said, smiling. “Let’s make a warm and friendly place to nurture people’s faith and teach them about God.”

Spreading the Word

Olesia works in a large company in Krasnoyarsk [KRAS-no-yarsk], a city in Siberia. For several years she has gently shared her faith with her colleagues. Some people listened, and others resisted. But Olesia didn’t give up, and gradually the barriers began to crumble.

So when the small group was ready to start, Olesia invited her colleagues, and Luba invited some neighbors. They began meeting at Luba’s home.

Two of the most important participants in the small group are Luba’s husband and son. Luba’s

husband, though not a church member, supports her and her church work with his artistic abilities. He attends the group meetings when he’s free, and he finds the friendship and sharing spiritually fulfilling.

Luba was nervous when the women first started the meetings. But her confidence has grown. “God has answered many prayers,” she says. “I couldn’t have done this without the prayers of our church friends.”

Ruslan

Two people who came to the meetings are Ruslan and Rita. Ruslan belonged to another faith, and Rita had no faith. The two work with Olesia and had heard her testimony many times. They were comfortable meeting together.

“I’ve known Olesia for three years,” Rita said. “I could see that her life was different from other people I know. “She never judges or criticizes others, and she has a peace about her that draws me to her. When I asked her what made her different, Olesia told me it is God. So when she invited me to the small group, I wanted to come and learn more about this God who gives such peace.”

Ruslan was having difficulties in his life. Olesia often talked to him about God, but he resisted her testimony. Olesia didn't give up but gently mentioned God every time she could. When Luba and Olesia invited him to the small group, he came. "I had a lot of questions about God and wanted answers," he says. "I felt that I was among friends and could ask any question and no one would judge me."

The friendliness of the group touched Ruslan's heart. "The first time I came to the meeting it was my birthday," he says. "The ladies had prepared a cake to celebrate. I was so touched!"

Rita

Rita has no family and only a few friends in Siberia. "Luba and Olesia have become like sisters to me," she says. "I had no spiritual foundation, and I was searching for something on which to build my life and teach my children. What we're learning in the small group

and at church has provided a strong foundation for my faith."

When Olesia and Luba invited their friends to attend some evangelistic meetings and then attend the Adventist church with them, Rita and Ruslan both went. The women had laid a strong foundation of faith, so it was an easy transition for Rita to make. Ruslan agrees. "Some friends invited me to their churches, but I found spiritual fulfillment in the Adventist church and this small group."

Today both Ruslan and Rita have become Seventh-day Adventists. They now share their faith with their friends and colleagues at work and have invited several to join the small group and attend Sabbath School. Ruslan, Rita, and Olesia spend Sundays visiting foster homes, where they offer counseling to the children. "It feels good to reach out to others with what we've learned," Rita says.

Life-changing for Everyone

"Working with this small group has changed my life," Luba says. "Preparing for the small group meetings forced me to study more, to pray more. And now I have more people to pray for, so I'm praying more. I'm learning how to talk to people and make friends for Jesus. So I've grown a great deal while trying to reach out to others."

Today the small group rotates among Luba's, Olesia's, and Rita's homes. Small groups such as the one Luba and Olesia have started is helping to grow the church in Krasnoyarsk. Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a church home for two of the congregations that now rent government halls for their meetings. 🌐

FAST FACTS

- Russia is the world's largest country in terms of territory. It is almost twice the size of Canada, the next-largest country, and more than twice as large as the United States, the third-largest country. It covers nine time zones and two continents—Europe and Asia. Yet its population is just 140 million. Most of the people in Russia live in the European part of the country, west of the Ural Mountains.
- Moscow, the capital city of Russia, has a population of about 10 million and is in the heart of European Russia.



THE MISSIONARY CAFÉ

May 21 | Anya Zaitseva

Anya's heart raced as she and her father stepped into the small café. This was it; could she ask a complete stranger to do a huge favor? She was glad her father was with her to support her.

The Dream

Anya remembered the day she and her teenage friends visited an Adventist church in a large city in Siberia. She was amazed to see the teens running a successful café outreach.

Anya, 17, and her friends returned home with a similar dream and asked God to help them start a similar outreach in their own city.

The youth met regularly to pray and plan for their missionary café. They studied city maps and made a list of possible locations. They planned the programs and shared their dreams with other church members.

Some church members tried to discourage them. "This will be expensive," one said. "No one will come," another added. "You're wasting your time," still another protested. But Anya's father, the pastor, encouraged the youth to let God lead and see what He had in mind.

The Question

Anya and her father stepped into the first café on their list as a possible site for their teen café. They greeted the owner, who invited them to sit at an empty table. "We have a proposal," Anya began. We are Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and our youth group would like to use your café one Sunday morning a month to host a Christian program. We hope to have about 30 people at the program, Anya continued. We will pay for food, but we can't pay rent.

There, now her dream had a voice. Anya held her breath waiting for the owner to respond.

"Business isn't good on Sunday mornings anyway," the woman said. "I can let you have use of the café for two hours. Just put things back where you found them and don't make a mess."

Anya couldn't hide the smile that spread across her face. She could hardly believe that the owner had agreed to her proposal so easily. Why, she didn't even have to beg! *God surely went before us and softened her heart toward us and the project.*

The Work Begins

Anya and her friends prepared advertising, planned programs, and solicited help for the grand opening of the café. The youth decided on a light breakfast of pancakes and tea. The program would include a drama or a short sermon and some kind of fun competition to get teens to return.

As opening day grew near, the teens prayed for a good attendance so many youth could encounter God's love. The doors opened, and people streamed in. Anya hoped that 30 would come, but 55 showed up, 15 of whom were not Adventists. *Thank you, Father*, Anya breathed.

Anya noticed that the café waiters and other customers were listening to the program too. She realized that their

mission field stretched beyond those they had set out to reach. *How like God to give us more than we asked for!* she thought.

Going Strong

A few months later Anya learned that a new owner was taking over the café. Anya wondered whether they would have to find a new place to meet. But the new owner invited the youth to continue meeting there and to meet even more often!

The youth invited the people who were attending Café Orange to join the youth meetings at Anya's church, and in time the youth planned evangelistic meetings and invited their new friends from the café.

Today the church supports the café ministry, though it is still operated by the youth.

"We're getting young people involved in outreach," Anya says. "We want others to know that Christians can have fun. Then we can help non-Adventist youth learn more about Jesus and give them a chance to become children of God."

"The Bible says: 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity' [1 Timothy 4:12, NIV]. That's our goal," Anya says.

The Adventist youth in Krasnoyarsk [KRAS-no-yarsk] are helping the church grow. But several congregations meet in rented halls. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a large worship facility for two or more congregations so that God's love can shine more brightly in this city of a million people. 🌍

MISSION POST

- Krasnoyarsk is a city of about 1 million people in central Siberia. Its location on a river makes it an inland port. It supports many heavy industries.
- Five Adventist congregations worship in this city, but only one has a church—a simple house-church style building. The other four congregations worship in rented halls, which is expensive and limits the time congregations can worship and fellowship.
- Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a large church on a main road. The church will house two separate congregations in their outreach ministries and will offer room to grow.



THE NEWSPAPER AD

May 28 | Alexei Gurkin

Alexei [ah-LEX-ee] eased himself into his favorite chair to relax after a day of hard work. Just then the phone rang. Alexei pushed himself out of the chair and hurried to the telephone. He hoped someone was calling about work. *Or maybe someone is calling about my other ad*, he thought.

The Advertisement

Alexei repairs and maintains people's homes and apartments in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk [KRAS-noh-yarsk]. He advertises in the city newspaper, so he reads ads for similar work to make sure that his ad is attractive and his prices competitive.

One day his eyes wandered to the religious section of the classified ads. The page was filled with offers to tell people's fortune, or predict the future. *So many ads for Satan, and not one for Christ*, Alexei thought. An idea grew in his mind: *I can be Christ's voice in the newspaper*. He picked up a pencil and wrote: "I will tell you about Christ." He added his telephone number. The next day he placed two advertisements in the paper—one for his work and one for Christ.

The day the ads appeared, Alexei received several calls. Most of the callers were those who had advertisements in the religious section of the paper. "What are you going to tell about Christ?" people wanted to know. Some of the advertisers used Christ's name in their ads, hoping to attract the people who didn't know Christ personally. Others were scoffers who argued theology or tried to make Alexei doubt his faith. Alexei began to wonder whether his advertisement would even reach someone who was truly searching for God.

The Seeker

Then the phone rang again. Alexei reached the telephone on the third ring and spoke a cheerful "Hello."

"I'm calling about your ad," the weathered voice began. "I want to know about Christ." The man's voice held no hint of sarcasm. Alexei spoke with the man for several minutes, and then the man invited Alexei to come to his apartment to talk more.

An elderly man answered Alexei's knock and invited him into his apartment. The man admitted his

surprise that such a young man would be interested in telling others about Christ. Then his voice grew serious. “I’m 93 years old, and I’m not well. I want to know about God while I have time,” he said.

Alexei opened his Bible and read several verses about God. The two watched an evangelistic video together, and then the man invited Alexei to return the next day.

For 10 days the old man and Alexei studied God’s Word and watched the evangelistic videos. Alexei’s new friend has accepted what he is learning and is eager to know more.

The Missed Call

On Sabbath Alexei’s phone rang several times. He hesitated to answer the phone, but when the phone rang again, Alexei thought, *Maybe it’s an emergency*. He answered the phone.

“Are you a Christian?” a young man’s voice asked. “What church do you attend?” Alexei answered the caller’s questions. “I’m Vitaly [vee-TAH-lee],” the caller said. “I just got out of prison, and I need to talk to you.”

Alexei and Vitaly worked different hours, and it was difficult to arrange a meeting. Finally Alexei offered to pick Vitaly up and take him to church on Sabbath. Vitaly agreed. As they rode together, Vitaly told Alexei his story. While he was in prison, an Adventist woman had sent him *The Great Controversy*. He had read it and wanted to know more about God. When he was released he found Alexei’s newspaper advertisement. It was an answer to prayer.

Vitaly is ill, but he attends the Adventist church when he can and is eager to know God personally. “I can see that Adventists base their beliefs in the Bible,” he says.

Accidental Ministry

“I’ve discovered an accidental ministry,” Alexei says, smiling.

“When I saw the newspaper advertisements for fortune tellers and palm readers but no ads that spoke for Jesus, I realized that God was calling me to fill this gap. People who read these ads are searching for spiritual insight. I want to give them an opportunity to meet Jesus.”

God can use something as simple as a newspaper ad to lead others to Jesus. God delights in using small things to bring people to Himself. Our prayers and our offerings strengthen God’s work around the world. Our own ministry strengthens God’s work at home. What ministry has God given you? 🌐

FAST FACTS

- Siberia is the Asian portion of Russia that lies east of the Ural Mountains. It stretches from the Arctic Ocean to China, Mongolia, and the hills of northern Kazakhstan.
- Siberia has long, cold winters that last for seven or eight months, and even longer in the northeast. Summers are short and moderate. Siberia receives little snowfall.
- Much of Siberia is covered with forests. Russia contains about one quarter of the world’s forested area. Lots of wild animals make these forests their home, including the famous Siberian tiger.



HOMES OF HOPE

by Hans Olson

June 4 | Evgeny and Angela

Endless Siberian grasslands spread in all directions. Small towns dot the landscape. In one of these towns stands a small log house that has become a home of hope to many. The house, now home to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, is the dream of Angela and Evgeny (Eugene), a young couple who have dedicated their lives to helping people find God and freedom from their addictions. Angela and Evgeny know firsthand what drugs can do. They both have been addicts.

Angela and Evgeny

Angela began using drugs when she was 17. “Eventually drugs and alcohol sucked me in,” she says, “and I was no longer able to live a sober life. One day I saw an invitation to evangelistic meetings, so I went. I fell in love with God. I asked Him to deliver me from drugs, and He did. I joined the Adventist Church. Then God gave me a dream to help others who suffered from alcohol and drug addictions.”

Evgeny started using drugs at 14 and soon was hopelessly addicted. He

went through several rehabilitation programs, but his addictions still held him in their grasp.

Evgeny met Angela, who urged him to trust God to free him from his addictions. Evgeny agreed to try one more rehab program. Angela prayed for him, and when Evgeny was released, he was determined never to take drugs again.

He attended church with Angela, and eventually Evgeny was baptized. Soon after, the couple was married.

Evgeny and Angela shared with their pastor their dream to help other addicts find freedom in Christ. The church offered them the little house it owned. With the help of church members, they repaired the run-down house, and today the rooms are filled with people who want to find freedom from drugs. More important, the couple is helping them find freedom in Christ.

Today, less than three years after the little house opened its doors to addicted residents, more than 100 people have found freedom from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. In addition, some 20 people have given their lives to Christ and have been baptized.

Alexander

Alexander had been a slave to alcohol and drugs for more than 10 years. One day a friend urged him to visit the Adventist rehabilitation center. Alexander entered the rehab program and met Evgeny and Angela.

Days were filled with manual labor, Bible study, and counseling with Angela and Evgeny or with the pastor. This was Alexander's first introduction to God and prayer. One day Alexander learned that the police had a warrant for his arrest. The group prayed that Alexander could remain at the center. When the authorities learned Alexander was in rehab, they dropped the charges, and Alexander was allowed to stay. During his stay at the center, Alexander accepted Jesus as his Savior.

Alexander was a natural leader. He completed his rehab with a desire to help others who were addicted. When the church decided to establish a rehabilitation center in another town, the leaders asked Alexander to operate

the new rehab center as a Global Mission outreach.

A Chance to Serve

Alexander accepted the challenge. His first job was to rehabilitate the run-down house to make it livable. Alexander's first three residents, all addicted to drugs or alcohol, worked with him to renovate the building.

Sergei had, by his own admission, hit rock bottom. Others had refused to help him, but Alexander welcomed him to the new rehabilitation center. The men worked together to prepare the building for service. And there Sergei met God. Today he is helping Alexander operate the new center.

Yuri was usually drunk and often was arrested for getting into fights. He couldn't keep a job and drifted from one place to another. Then an Adventist caretaker helped Yuri get into the rehabilitation center. "It was hard," Yuri admits. "I didn't know how to study the Bible, didn't know much about God. But Alexander taught me." Yuri found freedom from his addictions and acceptance in Christ.

Thousands in Siberia need to find freedom—freedom from addictions and freedom in Christ. Global Mission pioneers and volunteers such as Alexander, Angela, and Evgeny are working to meet the physical and spiritual needs of hurting, hungry individuals in Siberia.

Our mission offerings help establish and support outreach centers such as these in Siberia and around the world. Thank you for giving to mission. 🌍

Hans Olson is communication projects manager for the Office of Adventist Mission at the General Conference.

FAST FACTS

- Siberia is the Asian portion of Russia that lies east of the Ural Mountains. It stretches from the Arctic Ocean to China, Mongolia, and the hills of northern Kazakhstan.
- Siberia is sparsely populated, and most people live in the cities that lie along the Trans-Siberian Railroad.
- Since the 1600s Russians sent many criminals and political prisoners into exile in Siberia. During the 1900s many Adventist pastors and lay leaders were sent to this region to keep them from converting people to Christ.



OUT OF THE DARKNESS

June 11 | Vasily Vaibert

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

I flipped through the pages of my journal, pages filled with dark scribbling and depressing thoughts. I found a clean sheet and began writing. More dark thoughts spilled onto the page. *What's the use?* I wondered. *Nothing I do makes me happy, even for a minute. Death would be easier than struggling against this darkness.* But then another thought settled in my mind: *Death is for the weak.* I tried to pull myself together. It took all the energy I could muster just to go to class.

I'm Vasily [vah-SEE-lee], a university student studying in Tomsk [tom'sk], Siberia. For the past several years I've led two lives. Most people thought of me as a kind and responsible person, active in sports, and a good student. But inside I was gloomy and depressed, and I felt alone. I tried to shrug off the depression with alcohol and later with drugs. I barely managed to keep my grades up and hide my addictions—and my depression—from my family. But it was hard. As I dragged myself out of bed each day I found myself repeating, *I just want this to be over.*

Light in the Darkness

"Good morning," Galina, the cleaning woman, said with a smile.

"Morning," I muttered, thinking, *Even the cleaning woman is happier than I am!* She was even happy when she was scrubbing filthy toilets! She befriended the students, and many had shared their problems with her. I'd heard her talking about God with them and knew she was a Christian. "Why can't I be happy like Galina?" I muttered to myself.

One day Galina gave me a Bible as

I realized that Galina's invitation was not a coincidence at all, but a call from God.

a gift and lent me some books to read. I wasn't focusing on my schoolwork, so I read the books instead of studying. I tried reading the Bible, but I became bogged down and set it aside. I returned Galina's books and tried to avoid her.

My depression worsened, and my wild behavior increased. My frustrated parents didn't know what to do. I stopped using alcohol and drugs and I

felt a little better. But the depression still had its claws in me. Thoughts of suicide were never far away. Some days it seemed the only way out.

Divine Invitation

Then I remembered Galina. Maybe she could help me. A few minutes later I met her in the hall. She invited me to her home that afternoon. I accepted, stunned by the timing of her invitation. I realized that Galina's invitation was not a coincidence at all, but a call from God. *God hasn't given up on me!* I thought. My heart felt almost light as I walked toward Galina's home.

As we talked I realized that Jesus was speaking through her to me. That day with Galina's help, I invited Jesus to live in my heart forever. As Galina prayed for me I

felt God's presence, and for the first time in years, I felt happy.

Galina invited me to church, and I went. There I discovered the joy of praying and studying the Bible. The depression wasn't entirely gone, but I knew that God was fighting that battle for me. I no longer wanted to die; I wanted to live and tell others about the joy in living with Jesus.

A Changed Life

When I told my parents that I had given my life to Jesus, they thought that I had lost my mind. But as they saw the changes in my life, they realized that God was living in me and that my life really was better. My mother began reading the Bible just to see what I was finding there. She even visited the Adventist church with me. My father respected my religion and acknowledged what God was doing in my life. I couldn't wait to tell everyone I met what God was doing for me.

Back at school I could focus on my studies. My grades improved, and I'm motivated to do my best. I still have crises, but God is near me and helps me through them. And when I become depressed, I know that God will lift me and carry me through the tough times.

Many people once thought that I was the black sheep of my family. But now I'm God's lamb, following my Shepherd, Jesus.

I'll graduate from university soon, and then I want to become a Global Mission pioneer. I want to work in an area where there are no Adventist believers. I want to bring light to other people's darkness, just as Jesus sent Galina to bring light to me. 🌍

MISSION POST

- Two congregations of believers worship in Tomsk, Siberia. One congregation has met for years in a house church, but the other rented space in the culture halls.
- For 10 years the second congregation has tried to find a permanent meeting place. The overcrowding in the church makes holding evangelistic meetings nearly impossible. When new interests attend church-sponsored small group meetings, they can't transfer to the church simply because there's no room to meet.
- Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide a church building on already-owned land so that the believers in Tomsk can worship and share their faith with others.



SISTERS IN FAITH



June 18 | Olga and Marina

Olga and Marina are sisters. They live with their families in Tomsk [TOM'sk], a city in the heart of Siberian Russia. They grew up as Protestant Christians, but without proper Bible teaching, their faith wavered when they reached their teen years.

Olga married and raised a family during difficult times in Russia. Then she became sick and learned that she had lung cancer. Everyone was surprised because Olga had never smoked.

An allergic reaction to medications the doctors gave her caused severe side effects. After several months of painful treatments, Olga decided not to continue treatment. Her doctors warned her that without treatment she had two months to live. Olga determined to make the most of those two months and make her life right with God.

Answers to Prayer

She began praying and studying God's Word. Two months later, when she was supposed to die, she felt stronger and healthier than she had in months. When her doctors examined her, they were amazed to find no evidence of cancer.

Overjoyed, Olga credited God and asked Him to lead her to a church that teaches according to the Bible. A few days later she answered a knock on her door and met a man who was selling books about health and faith. Olga asked the man what church he attended. He told her that he was an Adventist and keeps the Ten Commandments. He gave Olga directions to the church.

Olga bought several books and began reading them, comparing what they taught with the Bible. She was excited when she read that the seventh day was the Sabbath, and she went in search of an Adventist church. She was surprised to find not a grand church, but a simple house that had been converted into a church. But there she felt God's presence, and there she worshipped.

The church had no pastor when she first began attending, and members struggled to carry on the church's outreach programs without leadership. But eventually the new pastor arrived and organized evangelistic meetings. Olga invited family members to attend the meetings, and several came. Following the meetings, Olga,

her husband, and several other family members were baptized. But her younger sister Marina had insisted she had to work and couldn't attend the meetings.

Marina's Story

Olga often talked to Marina during her journey through cancer to healing and then to faith. Marina realized that God wanted to be a part of her life. She read the literature that Olga gave her, and she realized that she didn't want to die without Christ in her life. She began reading the Bible and praying for God's leading.

Marina loved her job with the weather station. Her schedule allowed her to work at a second job as well, which meant that Marina worked every day of the week. Olga urged

Marina to take one day a week to rest, and she encouraged Marina to attend Sabbath worship services with her. But Marina never had the time.

Then the weather station changed her work schedule, and Marina realized that soon she would be without the job she loved. Her second employer asked her to work for him full-time, and she agreed. But she decided that she wanted Sabbaths off for rest. Her boss resisted her request, but Marina stood firm. In time he agreed. When she asked for Friday evenings off as well, he balked. Marina prayed fervently that God would open this door as well if it was His will that she work for this man. At last her boss agreed to give her Friday evenings off as well.

Marina knew that her sister and her daughter, who had been baptized with Olga, were praying for her. Soon Marina chose to be baptized, too. "God has answered all my prayers," Marina says. "He has given me work with higher pay and more rest as well. And He's shown me His will for my life and my faith."

As she works in her boss's shop, Marina has opportunities to speak to customers about her faith. She offers them books or magazines and invites them to worship God with her on Sabbath.

But the little church where Olga, Marina, and their families worship is crowded. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath will help this congregation build a larger church to which they can invite their friends and family to find God. Thank you for your part this Thirteenth Sabbath in helping make this new church home a reality. 🌍

MISSION POST

- Tomsk is a city of a half-million people located in the heart of Siberia. Its location on the Tomsk River and the Siberian Railroad makes it a major distribution center as well as an industrial center. It is home to a world-class university and several technical schools.
- Some 180 Adventists live and worship in Tomsk. But the little house church seats only about 90 people. Even when chairs are set in every available space, only 120 people can squeeze in.
- The Tomsk congregation has purchased property on a main street on which to build a church. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build this much-needed church in the city of Tomsk.

THIRTEENTH SABBATH PROGRAM

OPENING SONG	“Soldiers of Christ, Arise,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 616
WELCOME	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
PRAYER	
PROGRAM	“Lift Up the Light”
OFFERING	While the offering is being taken, ask the children to sing one of the Russian songs they’ve learned this quarter.
CLOSING SONG	“Lead Them, My God, to Thee,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 653
CLOSING PRAYER	

Lift Up the Light

Participants and Props: Ask several people, including juniors and teens and perhaps one child from primary, to take the speaking parts below. They do not need to memorize their parts, but they should be able to read them clearly. If you have a small pool of participants, arrange for two or three speakers to rotate through the parts. A map of Euro-Asia Division would be helpful. Enlarge the one on the back of the mission quarterly or go to www.AdventistMission.org, click on “Resources” and “Mission Quarterlies” in the pop-up menu and download the map.

Narrator: Today is Thirteenth Sabbath. This quarter we have featured stories from Armenia, Azerbaijan [ah-zuhr-BAI-jahn], Georgia, and Russia, four countries that are part of the Euro-Asia Division.

The Euro-Asia Division stretches across 11 time zones and includes a total of 12 countries. Russia is the largest country in the division and in the world. It covers nine time zones.

When it is 9:00 in the morning in Moscow, it is 6:00 in the evening on the easternmost coast of Russia.

Most of the people in Russia live west of the Ural Mountains in European Russia. The country has about 45,000 Seventh-day Adventist Christians. That is one Adventist for every 2,700 people. There is a lot of work to do to reach millions of people with the Adventist message.

Two of the Thirteenth Sabbath projects this quarter are located in Siberia, Russia. _____ [*Name of speaker*] will give us a short report on Siberia and the special projects featured there.

Speaker 2: The Asian part of Russia, the region east of the Ural Mountains, is Siberia. [*Locate Siberia on a map.*] Except for several large cities—most of which are industrial centers—Siberia is a vast empty land made up of grasslands and scattered stands of trees. It gets very cold in the winter, and life can be hard. During Communist times people who taught others about Jesus were often sent to Siberia. Today more than 10,000 Adventists live in the vast region known as Siberia.

Tomsk [tom-sk] is a university city with a population of about a half million. But just one house church, hidden away on a back street, represents the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this fertile city. The congregation can't grow because there is no room to grow. The little house church was established during Communist times when churches often had to meet undercover. The congregation has grown to where it fills the little church to overflowing, and there simply isn't room to accommodate any more believers. The congregation has saved money for several years to buy a piece of prime land on a main street. The members are working hard to build a new church, a church that will represent God's truths for the latter days to the thousands who pass by every day. With our offering today we can help our brothers and sisters in Tomsk build their new church and share their faith and, most important, grow.

The city of Krasnoyarsk [KRAS -no-yar-sk] has a population of almost 1 million. Five congregations worship here. One congregation meets in a small church, and the others meet in rented halls scattered around the city. In Krasnoyarsk, as in Tomsk, the believers have purchased land and have laid plans to build a church large enough to accommodate two congregations. The church that will be built on this land, located on a well-traveled road, will help the congregations in this large city to grow. Through our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering we can help them make their dream come true.

Narrator: Thank you, _____ [*name of speaker 2*], for that report. Now we will learn about another congregation seven time zones to the west, in Azerbaijan. Their challenges are vastly different, but their goals are the same—to share God's love with searching hearts.

Speaker 3: The country of Azerbaijan lies between the mostly Christian countries of Russia, Georgia, and Armenia, and the country of Iran. [*Locate Azerbaijan on a map.*] Almost 9 million people live in this country, but fewer than 5 percent are Christians, and only about 700 (one in every 12,000) are Adventists. They worship in 12 churches and companies scattered across the country.

The capital city, Baku, has about 300 believers. Recently the believers purchased a building that they hope can be registered with the government as an official church. Currently they are operating the Good News Café in this building, and they hope to add English-language classes and a small

clinic to attract many with the health message. Our brothers and sisters in Azerbaijan need our help. They need to know that the world church cares about them. Our offering today will let them know that we care.

Speaker 4: *[If possible, give this part to a primary- or junior-age child to emphasize that this is the children's special offering project. If you wish, ask several children to walk across the stage carrying a Bible or their Sabbath School lesson quarterly as the project is mentioned.]*

The countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia make up one region of the Adventist Church called the Trans-Caucasus [CAW-cus-us] Union Mission. *[Locate these countries between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.]* More than 16 million people live in these three countries, but just 2,000 of them are Adventists. That's one Adventist for every 8,000 people. Many whole villages have no Adventist believers and have never heard the Bible truths we love.

The children in these countries don't have access to Sabbath School lesson materials in their own language. The

only Sabbath School materials available to them are the teacher's lessons printed in Russian. While most adults still speak Russian, many children in this region don't. Therefore they must rely on their teachers to translate the lesson from Russian into their native language. They have no lesson quarterly to study during the week, and few of these children have Bibles in their own language either.

Adventist children around the world are giving their mission offerings today to help the children of the Trans-Caucasus region to have Sabbath School Bible lessons that they can study. Let's help our children help other children learn of God's love. Let's give a big offering today for the children of the Trans-Caucasus region.

Narrator: These are the projects for this quarter. Now it's our turn to give abundantly to help the Euro-Asia Division grow. As the children sing, the deacons will collect the offering. Ask God what He would have you give to help Euro-Asia today.

[Offering]

YOUR OFFERINGS AT WORK

Your mission offerings helped build several churches in the Euro-Asia Division three years ago. The believers in western Russia say a big thank you for their new church home.



LEADER'S RESOURCES

For more information on the culture and history of the countries of the Euro-Asia Division being featured this quarter (Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), check out the travel section of a local library or online. Type the name of the country you wish to study into your search engine.

Visit our website for additional photos, recipes, crafts, language pages, puzzles, and other activities that you can download and print to make mission more fun for children. Go to www.AdventistMission.org. Click on "Resources" and "Children's Activities" in the pop-up menu. Go to first quarter and select the activity you want.

Adventist Mission DVD is a free video that features stories from the featured countries as well as the worldwide mission of the Adventist Church. Ask your Sabbath School superintendent to make you a copy of it to share with the children. Or go online at www.AdventistMission.org to download one of the DVD programs.

MISCELLANEOUS

Embassies and Tourism Offices sometimes can provide interesting information on their country. In North America, contact:

Embassy of Armenia, 2225 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008. Phone: 202-319-1976; website: www.armeniaemb.org.

Embassy of Azerbaijan, 2741 34th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008. Phone: 202-337-3500; website: www.azembassy.us/new.

Embassy of Georgia, 2209 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008. Phone: 202-387-2390.

Embassy of Russia, 2650 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20007. Phone: 202-298-5700.

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. Explain that one quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is dedicated to the special projects featured this quarter. The remaining three quarters goes into the world mission fund with the weekly mission offerings.

FUTURE THIRTEENTH SABBATH PROJECTS

Next quarter the West-Central Africa Division will be featured. Special projects include a church on the campus of Valley View University in Ghana and a laboratory for students of medicine and nursing on the campus of the Adventist University of Cosendai in Cameroon. The special children's project will provide back-to-school supply packets for children to share with their friends and neighbors to encourage them to attend Sabbath School.

Fourth quarter will feature North American Division. Projects were not yet determined at press time.

ADVENTIST MISSION

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EURO-ASIA DIVISION

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EURO-ASIA DIVISION



UNION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERS	POPULATION
Belarus	76	15	5,151	9,670,000
Caucasus	128	61	7,956	18,050,000
East Russian	97	55	6,893	22,270,000
Far Eastern	58	25	3,543	7,950,000
Moldova	154	86	10,918	4,140,000
Southern	88	53	6,331	61,310,000
Trans-Caucasus	29	26	2,004	16,490,000
Ukrainian	919	327	61,644	46,030,000
West Russian	431	356	35,290	93,590,000
TOTAL	1,980	1,004	139,730	279,500,000

PROJECTS:

- 1** Church buildings for three congregations in Azerbaijan and Russia
- 2** CHILDREN'S PROJECT: Sabbath School lesson materials for children in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia

