

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official *United in Prayer* Weekly Blog and World Church Prayer Requests
www.RevivalAndReformation.org

August 6, 2021

Bible Only for Priests

By Angelo Pereira

My heart longed to study the Bible, but my church leader told me that the Bible was only for priests. Let me tell you what happened.

I grew up in a Christian family and always was active in my church in Kodo village, Timor-Leste.

When I was 23, I began to help lead the church's youth group. At the age of 27, I joined a mission initiative to go outside the village. Church leaders saw my enthusiasm and, when I was 31, asked me to lead one of my village's congregations. For 12 years, I led the congregation and preached every Sunday from a book of church teachings.

One day a Seventh-day Adventist Bible worker named Mario arrived in my village. He approached me as I worked in my garden and volunteered to help. As we worked side by side, he told me truths from the Bible that I had never heard before. I wanted to learn more.

My opportunity came at a large meeting of leaders from my church. When we were given a chance to speak, I suggested that each of us receive Bible lessons and a Bible to use in teaching our congregations.

"Sir," the presiding bishop replied, "we cannot teach you about the Bible because the Bible can only be studied by priests. We only can offer you a short lesson on our doctrines so that you can teach them to your congregation."

When the meeting ended, my heart was restless. "Why can't I study the Bible?" I wondered.

Praying, I asked the Lord, "Who is the true God? I need to know so I can teach my congregation about Him."

Returning home, my heart remained uneasy, and I sought out the Adventist Bible worker. "Can you give me Bible lessons?" I asked. "I am ready to study the Bible with you for a whole year." Mario and I opened the Bible together, and studied the 28 foundational biblical doctrines as understood by Seventh-day Adventist Church.

When we finished several months later, he said, "Now you know the pure truth. Please do not continue to teach false truths to your congregation because, if you teach that which is not true, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

I knew that Mario spoke the truth. I had read Jesus' words to His disciples, "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19, ESV).

I wanted to be called great in the kingdom of heaven, and I felt sad and guilty about my past. I immediately stepped down as the leader of the congregation, but it didn't seem possible to leave the church. For six years I struggled, praying, "Lord, when will I be able to join Your people?"

One day, as I was passing my uncle's house, I saw him talking with Mario. An irresistible desire filled me to be baptized into the life of the Savior whom I had befriended in the Bible studies.

"When will there be another baptism?" I asked Mario. "Can I get baptized?"

Mario straightaway contacted an Adventist pastor and, after they made special arrangements because of COVID-19 restrictions, I was baptized, together with my wife's parents, in 2020.

I am very happy to be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide church. Please pray that my wife and children will also want to follow God's truth.

Angelo Pereira is happy member of the Seventh-day Adventist church in a village in Timor-Leste. This story is shared with permission of Adventist Mission.

World Church Prayer Requests

August 6 - 12, 2021

- Pray for those attending the ASI (Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries) convention that is taking place in Orlando Florida this weekend. Pray for the many self-supporting ministries and workers in our church, and that more would feel the call to "I Will Go" and serve.
- Pray for those who have recently lost loved ones, either via Covid, fires, terminal illness, or other unfortunate incidents. Pray that God would comfort His children and that we would continue to look up, rejoicing in the Blessed Hope.
- Pray for believers in Myanmar. Conditions are still deteriorating! The military has released 23,000 prisoner and given them money and to terrorize the general population to bring them into submission to the military in control.
- Pray for the Sunda people. Farming in an area known as the "rice basket" of Indonesia, the 38,495,000 Sunda in West Java are an open and friendly people. However, less than 0.5% are Christians. Join with us in praying that this large group of people will come to know of Jesus and His love for all.