

Revival & REFORMATION

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I have Connections!

By Andrew McChesney

When Sonya finished high school, she wanted more than anything to study medicine at a prestigious college. But to enroll at the college, she would need to pay a big bribe. Nowadays, bribes are not necessary to enter schools in Sonya's home country of Uzbekistan. But life was different when Sonya prepared to go to college.

Sonya told her father about her desire to study medicine at the college. Immediately, he declared, "I will not give a bribe."

Nevertheless, Sonya filled out the college application forms, hoping for the best. As her high school graduation approached, she shared her dream with relatives, friends, and teachers. They all seemed to ask the same question, "Have you gathered the money for a big bribe?"

Sonya grew worried. She knew Father's mind was made up. Furthermore, he didn't have money for a bribe, and he wasn't making any effort to borrow money from relatives or friends. He only was praying for God to help her study medicine. Mother, who worked as a schoolteacher, was also praying.

Sonya wasn't sure what to think. She had worshipped with her parents at a Seventh-day Adventist church since she was young, but she wasn't convinced that God was real. Was it enough to only pray and wait?

Mother had an idea. "You need to prepare for the college entrance exam, and we'll keep praying," she said. Sonya was surprised. Mother seemed to be saying that prayers needed to be combined with some effort on her part. She began to study. But the date for the exam was unclear. When she turned in her college admission forms, she learned that the date had not been set yet.

"We'll call you," a college administrator said. Sonya graduated from high school and kept on studying for the exam. One month passed. Two months passed. Sonya's parents prayed as she studied. No one called from the college. Finally, near the end of the summer, Sonya called the college to ask about the date.

"You need to come in, and we'll talk about it at the college," said the person who answered the call. Sonya and Mother arrived at the college at 10 o'clock in the morning. A guard stopped them at the front gate.

“All of the entrance exams are over,” he said. Sonya was shocked. Then she grew indignant. She had turned in the application on time, but no one had called to give her the date as promised. She felt like she had wasted the whole summer studying for the entrance exam. Mother saw Sonya’s distress.

“Has the college released the results for the entrance exams?” she asked the guard.

“Yes,” he said. “Go over there, and you can see the list of students who have been accepted.” Mother went over to look. Sonya followed close behind. As they looked down the list, Sonya suddenly spotted her name.

“Look!” she exclaimed. “I’ve been accepted!” Of the many students who had applied, she had been accepted without a bribe or even an entrance exam.

All of her doubts about God disappeared immediately. Before college started, Sonya gave her heart to Jesus in baptism. “The experience taught me that God is real,” she said. But that was not the end of the story.

After classes began, fellow students asked Sonya how much extra she had had pay to enter the college. “Nothing,” she said. “I didn’t even have to take the entrance exam.”

Astonished, they asked, “Then how did you ever end up becoming a student here?”

“I have connections,” she replied.

Later, as the students got to know one another better, they learned that Sonya’s connection was God. Several wanted to know more about her beliefs, and Sonya formed a Bible study group. Three classmates gave their hearts to Jesus and were baptized.

Today, Sonya seeks opportunities every day to share her faith. “God is real,” she said.

Andrew McChesney is editor of Adventist Mission.

World Church Prayer Requests

October 13 - 19, 2023

- Pray for our Division leaders as they return home from meetings here in Maryland and prepare for their own Year-End meetings. Pray for wisdom and Holy Spirit power to be upon them as they call members to embrace the “I will Go” focus.
- Pray for ways that you can get involved, if you aren’t already, in sharing Jesus with the broken and hurting around you, or even with your neighbor down the street.
- Pray for Riverside Farms Institute in Zambia, and other church supporting ministries, health, and educational programs around the world.
- Pray for the spread of the new “Back to the Altar” initiative. Pray that church members worldwide will learn afresh what it means to rebuild their broken altars and worship God. (To learn more, visit: <https://www.backtothealtar.org>)