

Revival & REFORMATION

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

December 1, 2023

Pleading for Father's Salvation

By Andrew McChesney

As a university student, Anush watched a Mexican film about a little boy who prayed for the conversion of his father. In the film, the boy said, "I believe that if I pray for my father every single day, he will by all means come to God." The boy prayed every day, and his father gave his heart to God.

Inspired by the story, Anush decided to pray every single day for Father to get baptized. She started praying four years before her own baptism. Two years after her baptism, she was still praying for him. She was sure that he would come to God. But when tensions began to simmer at home, she began to wonder how much longer she would have to wait.

After her baptism, Anush became very active in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She volunteered for church initiatives, sometimes receiving a small salary and other times nothing at all.

Father didn't complain because he had given Anush permission to go to church and get baptized. But Father wanted the best for his daughter, and he couldn't understand why she was working for so little. "The church is using you," he said. "You are talented, and they are using you without giving you what you deserve."

Anush began to sense tensions whenever she was at home, and she didn't like it. Whenever she was invited to participate in a church program, she asked Father for permission. Father allowed her to go but complained every time.

Anush decided to have a heart-to-heart talk with God.

"God, I know that Father will come to you, but I'm so tired," she said. "I'm giving You two options: either he comes to You or he comes to You."

Afterward, she told Mother, "Today, I'm praying earnestly to God. Join with me. We don't want this situation to continue. We want Father to go to church with us."

In Armenia, many mothers and children go to church without their husbands and fathers. Many families are comfortable with the arrangement as long as the men allow the mothers and children to go without persecution. But Anush was no longer happy with such an arrangement. She wanted Father to go to church, too.

Mother agreed to pray. Anush's hopes soared. She was sure that God would change Father's heart. She was confident it could happen at any time.

However, not long after father forbade Anush and Mother from going to prayer meeting at the house church in their town. When the pair protested, Father angrily aired frustrations that he had collected against Adventists. Anush prayed silently, "What should I say, Lord?" Every time Father spoke against God or the church, she prayed, "This is not addressed to me. This is addressed to You. It's Your responsibility to answer." She remembered Romans 2:4, which says, "the goodness of God leads ... to repentance" (NKJV). She sensed God was saying to extend a similar goodness to her father. She prayed, "There's nothing that I can do except love Father."

Father owned a small grocery store. When he left Mother or Anush in charge, they wouldn't sell alcohol or cigarettes. Now, as Father berated them, he felt condemned. "Do you think that I'm evil and you're good because I sell alcohol and cigarettes and you don't?" he said. "I'm a better Christian than you. I'm going to lead Sabbath worship services from now on. You can no longer go to church. I will lead the worship services."

That ended the conversation. Anush went to her room, and Mother followed. Both were shocked. "What will we do?" Mother said.

Anush suggested cooperating with Father as long as he didn't oppose the Bible. "He said we will worship at home on Sabbath," she said. "He didn't take away our Bibles. He even respects the Sabbath. Let's wait for the Sabbath. If he keeps his word, we will keep the Sabbath at home with him. If he forgets his word, we will pray and see how God guides us."

Father kept his word about organizing Sabbath worship services at home in Armenia. Having prohibited Mother and their daughter, Anush, from going to the Seventh-day Adventist church, he called them to the living room on Sabbath morning. For Sabbath School, they studied the *Adult Bible Study Guide* and prayed together. Then Anush preached a short sermon.

The worship services continued for months. Father, who had never visited an Adventist church, was so serious about the worship services that, if guests were visiting, he invited them to the living room, opened his Bible, and said, "Welcome to our worship service. Today is the Sabbath, and you can join us." This was not the Armenian way. In Armenia, hosts leave everything to entertain guests. Guests were shocked and wondered what was going on.

As the family worshipped together, Father realized that he didn't know the Bible. In Matthew 4, the family read how Jesus met every temptation by Satan with the words, "It is written." Father was impressed. He saw that he wouldn't know if Satan was tempting him if he didn't know the Bible. From that day, he began to read the Bible daily. As he read, he also sought answers to why he and his family were worshipping on the seventh day, Saturday, while many Christians in Armenia worship on the first day, Sunday.

Father had vowed that Anush and Mother would never return to the Adventist Church, and he wanted to keep his word. Anush very much missed church services, but she hid her feelings because she understood that her duty was to love her father and wait for God to bring him to repentance.

But when she learned that the Adventist house church in their town was preparing for a communion Sabbath, she asked Father for permission to go. “Would you allow us to take part in the communion service?” she said.

“Communion?” Father said. “You know, I can lead that ceremony, too.”

Nobody went to communion that Sabbath.

Then Father and Mother became grandparents. Anush had an older sister who had gotten married and left home, and she gave birth to a baby. Mother learned that the baby and the rest of the family had been lifted up in prayer at church. “They prayed for us in church, and I want to take something sweet to them as a thank-you gift,” she told Father.

Father’s heart was touched by the kindness of the church members, and he allowed Anush and Mother to return to church.

[Part Two of this testimony will be shared next week.]

Andrew McChesney is editor for Adventist Mission. These stories are shared with permission.

World Church Prayer Requests

December 1 - 7, 2023

- Please pray for the “Wellness on the Go” van in New York City, which is offering free massages, blood pressure checks and health coaching. Please ask God to impress those who have the greatest need and who are the most receptive to visit the van ministry for assistance.
- Please pray for Adventist Life Hope Centers around the world. Centers include Zionland in São Paulo, Brazil; the Banquet Table in Ruse, Bulgaria; the All-Generations Center in Taipei, Taiwan; and the Happy Hand in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Please pray that God will help us know how to effectively reach our loved ones, neighbors, and community with the good news of Jesus’ soon coming.
- Please pray urgently for the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are told, “When the church awakes to the sense of her holy calling, many more fervent and effective prayers will ascend to heaven for the Holy Spirit to point out the work and duty of God’s people regarding the salvation of souls” (1 Selected Messages, p. 116).