

Revival & REFORMATION

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Standing for Sabbath

By Andrew McChesney

Ana didn't want to become a Seventh-day Adventist. She loved the church of her childhood in the Philippines, and she didn't want to worship on Saturday instead of Sunday. She cried and cried. But as she studied the Bible, she grew convinced about the seventh day. She became an Adventist.

Then trouble flared up at work.

Ana was teaching math to special needs students at a public high school. It was her first year of teaching, and she was required to take Saturday classes to earn a master's degree in special education. Ana spoke to the superintendent of public schools for the city.

"I can't take those classes because I am a Seventh-day Adventist," she said.

"If you don't want to take those classes, then you will lose your job," the superintendent said.

Ana was scared. She was the family breadwinner. For a semester, she attended Saturday classes. But her conscience bothered her, and she finally stopped going.

"I can't do it," she told the superintendent.

To her surprise, the superintendent replied, "That's your decision."

Then she learned that she couldn't be fired. When she had first asked not to study on Saturdays, she had been on probation at work. But the probation period had ended, and she couldn't be fired. She promised herself never to break the Sabbath again.

Ana taught at the school for nine years.

While there, she faced a new Sabbath test when she applied through a job recruitment agency for a teaching job in the United States. A California school was interested in hiring her, but it wanted to conduct the job interview on Saturday.

"I can't do the interview on Saturday," Ana told the recruiter. "I need to go to church."

Ana decided that God must not want her to work in the United States. She told the recruiter, "I don't want a job anymore. Remove my application from your database."

A month passed, and the job recruitment agency called again. A school in Arizona was interested in hiring her.

"Can I have the interview on a day other than Saturday?" Ana asked.

"You can have the interview on any day of the week," the recruiter said.

Ana did the interview on a Friday, and the school offered her the job four days later.

Ana was astonished, and she praised God.

The superintendent was surprised when Ana came with her resignation letter. Ana later learned that the superintendent had applied many times to teach in the United States but had never been offered a job.

Ana sensed that God had honored her for honoring His Sabbath.

The Sabbath tests did not end in the United States. Shortly after she arrived in Arizona, the new principal told her and the rest of the teachers that they needed to attend special training

sessions on Saturdays. Ana prayed, "Lord, I'm here because I kept the Sabbath, and I know You will help me now."

She went to the principal. "I cannot do the training," she said. "I believe that Saturday is holy, and I need to keep it holy."

The principal refused to compromise. "If you do not go to the training on Saturday, I will fire you for insubordination," he said.

Ana stood her ground. "In America, we have religious freedom," she said. "I'm here because I have stood for the Sabbath."

Then she shared her story and gave the principal a short Bible study on the Sabbath.

The principal was upset. But he offered to excuse her from the training if the superintendent of public schools for their town gave his permission.

Ana spoke with the superintendent, and he signed a letter, granting his permission. "You can worship God on any day," he said.

Ana gave the letter to the principal. "You're excused," he said. "But find a way to do the Saturday training on your own."

Ana didn't know what to study, so she prayed. The next day, at the school, she saw the instructional coach responsible for the training at her school. "I cannot come to the training because I am Seventh-day Adventist and keep the Sabbath holy," she said.

"Let's go to the principal," the instructional coach replied. "I want to tell him something."

At the principal's office, instructional coach said, "I will have a training on Sundays just for Ana."

"OK, problem solved," the principal said. Turning to Ana, his face softened. "You are blessed because you are faithful," he said.

After that, something amazing happened. A warm relationship blossomed between the principal and Ana. He became like a father to her. He was sad to see Ana leave a few years later when she sensed God calling her to teach at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, located an hour's drive away.

Today, Ana is a special-education math teacher at Holbrook. She is happy to be a Seventh-day Adventist, and she loves teaching students about math and the Sabbath. "I stood for the Sabbath, and God has helped me," she said.

Andrew McChesney is editor of Adventist Mission.

World Church Prayer Requests

- Pray for the country of Israel and Palestine, and the many refugees struggling to find a place to survive. Pray for protection for church members and believers. Pray for peace.
- Pray for preparations for the *Back to the Altar* training taking place for leaders throughout the East Central Africa Division in May. Prayer that many church members will be revived and that God will work in a powerful way.
- Pray for church members in Zimbabwe. Pray for stability politically and economically.
- Pray for the large Total Member Involvement event taking place in Papua New Guinea April 24 – May 26th. Pray for the many meetings that are getting ready to take place.
- Pray for a revival of genuine godliness to sweep over our churches, and for us to experience lasting reformation.