

The Black Cover Blessing

BY SHILOH HOWARD



Matthew and his fellow teachers entered the classroom, eager to meet their new students. During introductions, they learned that this class of adult English learners was special. Every person worked for the government, studying and writing journal articles about every religious group within the country. Each employee had a different speciality that they studied. One studied Catholicism, another Islam, others Hinduism or Protestantism. Each person reported what they studied to the government and published their articles in a book similar to a scientific journal. Some among the teacher team were alarmed to learn this, knowing that this country restricted many religions. However, they chose to continue with the classes, trusting that God had a reason for connecting them with the group.

The class studied English using a website that covered many topics from adventure stories to Mozart. Several months later, one student brought up the fact that because they all studied different religions for work, it would be nice to study a religious topic. While the English learning website did not have an article on such a topic, the teachers decided to prayerfully write their own. They kept it general, a 700 word article answering practical questions about the Bible: Who wrote it? How is it organized? What does it talk about? When was it written?

The students loved learning about the Bible from such a practical standpoint and were eager to look at the copies of the Bible that the teachers had brought with them. One copy in particular raised special interest. This Bible was bilingual, English on one side and the local language on the other. After class, one of the teachers suggested bringing extra copies to sell at a discounted price.

The next week, Matthew helped pack the box of Bibles. He was disappointed to find that while they did have enough copies of the bilingual Bible for all the students, only two of the black bound books were in simple, easy to understand English. The other gray bound copies were a much more complicated English, not suitable for those just learning the language. However, knowing this was all they had, they packed the box, hoping for the best.

Matthew and another teacher went together and began the class. At the midway point, Matthew opened the box. "If you're interested in purchasing a Bible," he said, "we have some." He withdrew the various copies of the Bibles that they had packed, explaining the difference between each. "The local language is the same between these two," he explained, "but the English is very different. I would recommend the black one if you were to choose one."

The students took a vote and decided that all of them wanted to buy a Bible. "Oh no!" Matthew thought. "I only brought two copies of the simpler English Bible!" He opened the box and began pulling them out. The first person received a black cover Bible. Then the second person received a black cover Bible. Then the third person received a black cover Bible. Without even realizing what was happening, Matthew handed each student a black cover Bible! "Huh, that's weird. I thought the teacher had put in two black cover ones and the rest were gray. Maybe he found some extra black cover ones and switched them out before I left," Matthew thought. Without thinking too much more about it, he finished class and left for the day.

The next morning, Matthew spoke to the teacher who had helped packed the box. "Everyone wanted a Bible! I'm so glad you were able to find more of the black cover ones with the easy English!"

"What?" the other teacher responded. "No, you were there when I packed it. We only had two of those, and the rest had the gray cover, the ones that are hard to understand."

"No, you must have found more, right?"

"What do you mean?"

"Yesterday, every student wanted a bilingual Bible and every student received a black cover Bible."

The other teacher stared at Matthew. "But I only gave you two of those, and the rest were gray."

This miracle led Matthew and the other teachers to their knees in praise, joyful that God was leading their work with the class. Every student now had a Bible in their home, and time alone would reveal God's results!

Shiloh Howard is a recent graduate of Weimar University and volunteers with the Revival and Reformation prayer ministry initiatives.

World Church Prayer Requests

SEPTEMBER 13 — 19, 2024

- 1. Dominica:** Pray for Calvary SDA Church, a very small congregation of 10 members, that has started again after having been closed for the last seven years. Pray they will be witnesses in the community as they give studies to individuals, share meals with the needy, and hold prayer meetings in individual homes.
- 2. Philippines:** Please pray for the Adventist youth in Ticao Island that they will have the strength to face daily struggles. Pray also for the local layworkers and church members.
- 3. Botswana:** Pray for the Molapowabojang Adventist Church as they seek to train and mentor new members of the church family.
- 4. South Africa:** Pray for a group of families in a small country town who are seeking to impact their communities for Christ. Pray that the Lord will guide them through the Holy Spirit to fulfill their mission.
- 5. United States:** Pray for Atlanta Belvedere SDA Church Community Service's ministry as they seek to feed over 200 community and church members monthly. Pray they will have additional equipment, additional storage space, and cool storage for the pantry.
- 6. Uganda:** Pray for Grace of God Children Ministries as they seek to educate over 100 underprivileged children in their community. Pray they will have the resources to provide school fees and basic healthcare. Pray also that they will be able to provide additional shelter in the schools for the large numbers of children that they minister to.