

GLOBAL MISSION

Frontline

STORIES AND NEWS FROM OUR PIONEERS | VOLUME 23 • NUMBER 2

God Was Here First



The following stories were written by a frontline worker in the Middle East and North Africa Union.



We began praying for God to show His power, but God was years ahead of us.

When my wife and I first received our assignment as Global Mission pioneers in a dark region of a closed country in the Middle East, we knew the work would be challenging. But it was harder than we expected.

Realizing it was humanly impossible for us to make any impact, we began praying

for God to reveal Himself through signs and wonders. We knew only He could open the people's tightly guarded hearts and dispel their misconceptions and fears. We didn't know about Asli's dreams.

Asli had told her husband and daughter that she had been having dreams in which Jesus appeared to her and invited her to follow Him. Concerned, they took her to every kind of spiritual teacher they knew but received no answers. Every medical doctor they visited had their own diagnosis, each one identifying a different prob-

lem in her brain. The dreams continued for five years.

In one dream, Jesus asked Asli, “Do you love Me?” In response, she asked to see His face. Asli noticed that He was smiling at her. In another, Jesus said, “Come to Me,” and she ran to meet Him. In another dream, Asli saw two churches with Jesus standing between them. She saw Him point to one of the churches, indicating which one she could attend. Asli understood clearly that Jesus was inviting her to become a Christian. When she had a dream of Jesus reading the Bible and inviting her to join Him, Asli began researching Christian faiths online. In her search, she came across our Instagram, where we post our travels and family happenings. Asli felt impressed to contact us. As we visited, I realized she was

on a spiritual search and sensed the Lord had sent her to us. I didn’t hesitate to invite her to our Sabbath house meeting.

I don’t know why I was surprised when Asli showed up at our house church with her husband and a bouquet of flowers for my wife. It was clear she assumed she was at the end of her search.

“I’m so happy to meet you. It seems I have finally found my family—people who can understand me,” she announced. It was the most natural thing to suggest we begin Bible studies together. She was ready to start the following day. Our first study was on Creation; she appeared satisfied with what she was learning. The next day, I received a message from her:

“I have been researching tithing. I know God requires it from us, but because I’m not following His instructions, it seems so much of my money is being wasted.” She wanted to know if I could answer some questions she had about tithing. I was shocked because, in the surrounding culture, tithing can be one of the hardest truths to embrace.

We had a Bible study with Asli on tithing that same day. Knowing the hurdles, I asked her to pray about her decision and ask God to guide her in what she should do. She contacted me the next day, informing me that she understood from her Bible what God was inviting her to do, and she would begin returning her tithe to the Adventist Church. In her words, “You treated me so well, and I feel part of this family. I want my tithe to help this ministry and the work you are beginning in our city.”

In answer to our prayers, long before we prayed them, God was working in Asli’s life. No one was near to explain; no one was available to guide her. But He kept near her as He waited for someone to tell her more. This region has not been sold to the enemy. These people are being preserved for God.

“I don’t know why I was surprised when Asli showed up at our house church with her husband and a bouquet of flowers for my wife. It was clear she assumed she was at the end of her search.”

Praise God, No Internet! Sometimes, our inconveniences are God's opportunities.

My husband slipped his computer into his backpack and sighed. "Let's try the coffee shop." With no internet in the apartment we'd just moved to as Global Mission pioneers in a closed Middle Eastern country, the coffee shop was the closest free internet access where we could contact our families and send in our monthly report.

We set up in a quiet corner. Within a few minutes, we heard someone slowly, loudly repeating sentences in English. My husband and I exchanged knowing glances. A young man nearby, huddled under bulky earphones and leaning into his computer,

was obviously absorbed in an online English-language class.

We were surprised when he stopped at our table as he was leaving and asked in heavily accented English if his voice had disturbed us.

"No, of course not," my husband responded, inviting him to sit down. We learned his name was Selim. He was a civil engineering student at a nearby university. We could tell Selim welcomed the opportunity to practice his English. We made plans to meet for conversation time.

Before the scheduled date arrived, though, we happened to meet again at the shop, all of us still looking for internet. But that day, the coffee shop's internet was down too. With nothing else to do, we invited Selim to join us at a nearby



restaurant for lunch. As our habit is even in public, we bowed our heads over our food to say grace.

Selim was full of questions. "Did you pray before you eat? Are you saying a Christian prayer?"

"Yes, we pray many times during the day, and yes, we believe in Jesus," my husband explained.

"I have never met a Christian before in real life," Selim observed. When my husband asked Selim what he knew about Christianity, he responded honestly, "Only what I've seen in the movies."

That was our opportunity to explain that we are Christians but different from anything he had seen in a movie or a television series; we are careful about how we live, what we eat, and how we worship. Selim's surprise turned into a confession as he opened his heart about what he saw as inconsistencies in his religion.

"I'm even thinking about becoming an atheist," Selim admitted. My husband challenged him to research other options before deciding and to keep practicing his English with us.

Each time we met with Selim, our conversations deepened from everyday topics to personal life to faith. One day, he disclosed that he was thinking about learning more about religion and felt an emptiness in his heart. As I prayed, my husband quietly asked Selim if he wanted to learn more about Jesus.

"Yes. But I would like to do my own research," was Selim's measured response.

My husband pulled a New Testament from his jacket pocket. "This is the best place to begin learning about Jesus," he said. Selim accepted the little book reverently and agreed to read it. We assured him we would be praying for him as he did his research.

Please help Global Mission pioneers reach the 66 percent of the world's population who haven't had the opportunity to experience Jesus.

Ways to Give



ONLINE

Make a secure donation quickly by scanning this QR code or visiting **Global-Mission.org/giving**.

PHONE

Call 800-648-5824

MAIL

In the United States:
Global Mission, General Conference
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6601

In Canada:
Global Mission
SDA Church in Canada
1148 King Street East
Oshawa, ON L1H 1H8

Please remember us in your will and trusts. Visit **Global-Mission.org/PlannedGiving** or call 800-648-5824.

My husband and I continue to meet with Selim for English conversation. We continue to pray. He says he is reading the book we gave him.

Soon after having that first lunch with Selim, the company showed up at our apartment to turn our internet back on. We still frequent the coffee shop, though, because Selim is still learning English, and God is still working!



GLOBAL MISSION

General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Global-Mission.org
800-648-5824

Now available in 4 languages!



issuu.com/advmission

