

Revival & REFORMATION

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From Friendship, Prayer, to Baptism

By ChanMin Chung

Sunny and Salma met during orientation for first-year students at a university in the Middle East. Sunny, who is from Asia, is a Waldensian student — a young Seventh-day Adventist living, studying, and serving at a secular university in the Adventist Church’s Middle East and North Africa Union. Salma is a local student who grew up in a non-Christian family. The two young women instantly became friends. They shared the same major and lived in the same city neighborhood.

“We were glad to have a friend to ride with on the bus everyday,” Sunny said. Salma soon learned that her new friend was an Adventist Christian. She had been taught to be wary of Christians, but Sunny seemed so kind and honest.

As their friendship grew, Salma accepted an invitation to attend a Friday evening meeting in Sunny’s home. Salma met other young Adventists at the meeting, and she liked the friendly conversation. Soon she began to enjoy singing hymns and praying with the group every Friday evening. “I would have gone even if the group had met on another day of the week,” Salma said. “I didn’t want to miss any of their activities.”

Near the end of the first year at the university, Sunny invited Salma to visit an Adventist church where 95 percent of the members are foreign students. Salma faced harsh criticism from family and friends for going to church. “What did you do there?” one said. “Does this mean you have become a Christian?” asked another.

Family members warned that they all would be cursed if she became a Christian. But Salma did not stop going to church. She even joined the youth choir and participated in health seminars. Her Adventist friends prayed for her.

One Friday evening, the group watched a video about Jesus’s life, and Sunny noticed that Salma’s attitude began to soften. To Sunny’s surprise, Salma asked to study the biblical book of Acts. “I was surprised because Salma hadn’t been interested in Bible studies for about a year,” Sunny said. Sunny and another Waldensian student began weekly Bible studies, but Salma had no desire to be baptized. She was worried that her family would be cursed if she became a Christian.

One Sabbath, Salma participated in an activity at a women's ministries retreat where each woman had to select a heart-shaped card and meditate on a Bible verse written inside. She prayerfully chose a card and opened it. Inside, she read, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you and your household will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Salma immediately knew that was her answer. She did not need to worry about a curse falling on her family. She stood up and announced, her voice trembling, that she wanted to accept Jesus as her Savior. She was baptized.

"This is not the end but the beginning," Sunny said. "After I finish my studies, I plan to stay here to develop a lifelong friendship with people like Salma. That's about the only way that we can touch the hearts of many people who don't know Jesus Christ in this region. I pray that Salma will grow spiritually, and I pray for God to send more people like her to me."

ChanMin Chung is communication coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Union. Names in the story have been changed, and the name and location of the university is not being disclosed to protect Adventist work in the region.

World Church Prayer Requests

March 18-25, 2018

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the families of those killed in the recent lightning strike at the Gihemvu Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern district of Nyaruguru in the country of Rwanda. Pray for church members to have comfort and courage as they cope with this unexplained tragedy.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the many Waldensian students who serve in various capacities in the Middle East, that God will strengthen them, grow their friendships with those around them, and give them wisdom on how to witness in this difficult region of the world. There are many others, just like Salma, hungering for sincere friends, and longing to know truth.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the multiple Seventh-day Adventist world church media networks who broadcast the gospel throughout the globe. Pray especially for those seeking to broadcast the gospel into closed countries where missionaries are not allowed to go. Pray for special wisdom and protection for these avenues of communication, and that the message of hope will find its way to the right people.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please continue to pray for the upcoming Total Member Involvement events scheduled later this year in Japan (May 4-20, 2018), Zambia (June 8-23, 2018), and the Philippines (July 13-28, 2018). Continue to earnestly intercede especially for Japan as this is such a difficult territory, and we need God to work miracles if the work is to go forward there.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out during the upcoming 2nd Quarter day of Prayer and Fasting, which takes place April 7th, 2018. The focus will be on praying for our marriages, but singles have a special part as well. Pray that this special day would be life transforming for all who participate. (To access materials for this day, click here: <https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/prayer-and-fasting-days>)