

Adventists Everywhere



13th SABBATH | December 27

Jonaton

Jonaton couldn't seem to get away from Seventh-day Adventists. Originally from Ecuador, he had never met an Adventist before moving to Chile as a teen. But after his arrival, Adventists seemed to be everywhere.

Now, Chile doesn't have an overwhelming number of Adventists. The Adventist Church has about 106,000 members in the country of nearly 20 million people. That's about one Adventist for every 88 people.

But everywhere Jonaton turned, there seemed to be Adventists.

In Ecuador, Jonaton grew up in a Christian family that rarely went to church. His parents were not very religious, but Jonaton had always believed in God and often talked and prayed to Him.

When he was a teen, two uncles who lived in Chile invited him to move to the country to work and study. Jonaton thought it was a great opportunity. He arrived in Chile a month before the country closed down during the Covid epidemic.

With the lockdown, Jonaton couldn't work.

He couldn't study. He was stuck at an uncle's farm in the south of Chile, and he wasn't sure what to do.

As the weeks passed, Jonaton learned that his uncle's farm was adjacent to a Seventh-day Adventist campground. Two Adventist campground caretakers befriended him. Every Friday evening, they offered him delicious food and treats. Jonaton started to understand that Friday evening was a special time. The caretakers told him that it was the beginning of the Sabbath. But Jonaton wasn't interested in learning about the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Around the same time, a man bought another piece of land beside the uncle's farm. He introduced himself and asked Jonaton, "How's your spiritual life?" He also was a Seventh-day Adventist.

Every day, the man visited with Jonaton and told him about God and the Bible.

Jonaton listened courteously but wasn't interested.

Soon he learned that the man's favorite



Story Tips

- Show South America and Chillán, Chile, on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Jonaton at: bit.ly/Jonaton-SAD.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.

Bible verse was Joshua 1:9. Whenever the man faced a challenge, he claimed the promise of the verse. Then the man began to ask Jonaton to repeat the verse whenever they met.

Jonaton quickly memorized the verse and repeated it for his neighbor, saying, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (NKJV).

Before long, the Bible verse became Jonaton’s favorite verse. It was the only Bible verse that he knew by heart.

Then Jonaton’s second uncle in Chile called to tell the teen to get ready to go to the university.

Jonaton asked which university. Would it be at a good university in the capital, Santiago?

But the uncle had already made up his mind.

“You will study at the Seventh-day Adventist university,” he said.

Jonaton was surprised. He thought to himself, “Adventists again! They are everywhere!”

But he didn’t share his thoughts with his uncle. Instead, he asked, “Why a Seventh-day Adventist university?”

“They are more kind to immigrants and will help with your visa,” the uncle said. “The university also has a good Christian environment.”

Covid restrictions were still in place, so Jonaton started classes online at Chile Adventist University.

Quickly, he realized that life at the university was different. Everything seemed to be centered on faith. The teachers prayed before every class and gave worship talks. Jonaton liked everything that he saw and heard. But he wasn’t interested in learning more about the Adventist Church.

The next year, Covid restrictions were lifted, and Jonaton moved into the men’s dormitory on campus. Life suddenly became very different. There were rules in the dormitory. Usually, Jonaton played soccer or

went out shopping on Friday evenings. But he couldn’t engage in those activities at the university, and he couldn’t understand why.

New Adventist friends opened their Bibles and explained the meaning of the seventh-day Sabbath. They showed how God rested on the seventh day of Creation in Genesis 2:1–3 and how God reminded His people to observe the seventh-day Sabbath in the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8–10.

Jonaton began to understand what the two Adventist caretakers had been trying to teach him on his uncle’s farm. Without realizing it, he began to copy his friends’ behavior and keep the Sabbath.

Then he met a girl. Jonaton saw that she was very focused on God and wanted to become a missionary. To get closer to her, he decided that he needed to know more about her beliefs and habits as an Adventist. So, he began to take Bible studies.

As Jonaton dug into the Bible, he sensed that it was wrong to study the Bible in order to pursue a woman. He decided to forget the woman and focus instead on knowing God. He rationalized that human relationships are fleeting but a relationship with God is eternal.

One Sabbath, a preacher at the university church challenged the students to look for indications that God was calling them to follow Him.

Jonaton wondered if God had called him.

Then he remembered the Adventist caretakers who had befriended him at his

uncle's farm. He remembered the Adventist man who had taught him Joshua 1:9. He remembered his uncle sending him to Chile Adventist University.

At that moment, he realized that there could only be one reason that he always seemed to be surrounded by Adventists: God was calling him.

Jonaton gave his heart to Jesus and was baptized.

Today, he is 19 years old and serving God with all his heart. He still loves the promise of Joshua 1:9.

“My favorite Bible verse and the first Bible verse that I ever memorized is Joshua 1:9, which says, ‘Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go,’” he said. 🌐

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, will go toward two projects at Chile Adventist University in Chillán, Chile. One project will expand dormitories to allow 50 more students, like Jonaton, to study on campus. Currently, the university has about 3,000 students, the vast majority of whom are not Adventist and live off campus. The new dorm rooms will be open to all but are especially needed by Adventist theology and education students who come to the university from far-off places and are studying to work in Adventist churches and schools. The second project is

Before 13th Sabbath

- Remind everyone that our mission offerings are gifts to spread God's Word around the world, and that one-fourth of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, will help three projects in the South American Division. The projects are listed on page 3 and on the back cover.
- The narrator doesn't need to memorize the story, but he or she should be familiar enough with the material so as not to have to read it. Alternatively, children and adults can act out the story.
- Before or after the story, use a map to show the places in the South American Division — Brazil and Chile — that will receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

to open a new Adventist Volunteer Service center that will send 30 missionaries into the world every year. The center will have five classrooms for training students to be missionaries and an auditorium with 250 seats. This quarter's other projects are 100 children's Sabbath School classrooms in low-income churches across Chile, and a new church on the campus of Pernambucano Adventist Academy in Brazil. Thank you for your generous offering.

Next Quarter's Mission Projects

The South Pacific Division will be featured next quarter, and the special projects will include:

- Center of influence, Wallis Island, New Caledonia
- Omaura School of Ministry, Kainantu, Papua New Guinea
- Children's health project, Solomon Islands
- Children's health project, Vanuatu