

THE LITERATURE EVANGELIST

april-june 2018

COMMUNISM
IN RUSSIA

MY
GUARDIAN
ANGEL

SEASIDE
SELLING
conduct sales
by the beach



Behind the Veil

THE LITERATURE EVANGELIST

contents



- 3 REACT
- 4 EXPOSE
Stephen Apola
Behind the Veil
- 6 INFORM
- 8 HIGHLIGHT
Pavel Mikityuk
Communism in Russia

- 10 INSPIRE
Josef Hurta
My Guardian Angel
- 12 PROSPER
Elena Pop
Seaside Selling
- 14 GROW
Jaromir Loder
Canvassing During Communist Times

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WRITE TO US

We welcome your literature evangelism testimonies as well as your opinion about the magazine and response to articles. If you'd like to contribute in another way, contact us for more information.

RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION

THE FACTS

40%

OF COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD SUFFER HIGH RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



ABOUT 4.1 BILLION PEOPLE SUFFER HIGH SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION



IN 146 COUNTRIES THE GOVERNMENT INTERFERES WITH WORSHIP



83% OF COUNTRIES HAVE INITIATIVES TO REDUCE RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS



ENFORCEMENT OF RELIGIOUS NORMS IS PRESENT IN 73 NATIONS



54 COUNTRIES REGULATE RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS



Data retrieved from the PEW Research Center.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

1. What kind of restrictions (if any) do you encounter in your day-to-day work?
2. What are some ways God has intervened on your behalf?
3. How would you encourage someone who has given up due to such restrictions?

Behind the Veil

The story of human determination against God has always ended up one way. God overcomes!

From scriptural accounts to the annals of history, human effort to subvert divine presence and will has never prevailed. The use of government and instruments of power that embrace philosophies and policies that restrict and even ban the gospel as an “opium of the people”; the restriction of borders and extreme security measures with use of lethal force; the banning and burning of all material that professes God. Yet, in all the accounts, God not only overcomes but uses agents and agencies within the same ranks that subvert Him to accomplish His purposes, with or without their knowledge.

Many of these accounts are unknown to many because they transpire behind a veil. In places that seem to flourish without acknowledging Him, one needs only to have a closer look at happenings behind the scenes to see God’s hand. What might seem like an “iron curtain is pervious to His authority and biddings. However difficult and constrained the situation, God has always found a way out to preserve a knowledge of Himself for His people.

However, for this knowledge to spread even in the most stringent of situations, God has always raised and depended on a group of men and women committed to His cause. Seemingly desperate times awaken a deep sense of duty and courage among those with a deep sense of conviction and devotion toward a God they’ve come to know and love. It is this deep sense of conviction

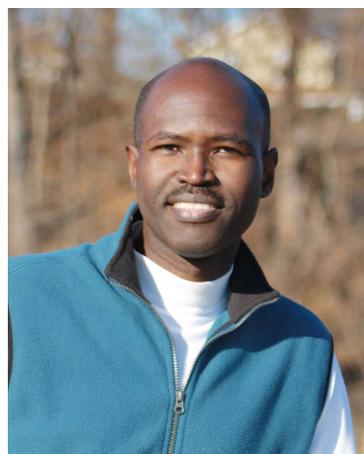
and love for God that establishes a trust and faith in His ability to deliver. These same strong convictions and trust propels them to a life of sacrifice. A total abandonment of oneself to the possibility of imprisonment or even death, if only to share this knowledge.

Scripture teaches that such scenes as seen in history past and as recent as in our own lifetime, will revisit us. As we head towards earth’s final days, the stories of these courageous men and women serve to convict and encourage us to stand with the same faith and conviction. He still works behind the scenes, even behind “iron curtains.

As He told Elijah to encourage him when he thought he was alone: “Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18, NIV).

Steven Apola is a General Conference Publishing Ministries associate director.

*Photo: East Side Gallery. A remnant of the Berlin Wall and monument to its fall and peaceful negotiation of borders.



1. **Literature ministry in China** had a new beginning in 2016. After years of effort, the Signs of the Times Publishing Association (STPA) and many of our publications acquired CIP and ISBN registration from the Chinese government. Receiving these codes allow the public sales of our literature.

The Chinese Union Mission (CHUM) and STPA conducted an intensive weeklong literature evangelism training program in one of the largest cities in China. About 45 young people, most of them seminary students from Liaoning and Yunnan provinces, participated in this weeklong intensive training program.

After training, all the students went into the streets to sell books and pray with the people they met.

Fifteen students from China came from Taiwan Adventist College and joined the summer student literature evangelism program as part of their graduation requirements.

STPA and Taiwan Conference use social media, street canvassing, and book booths to distribute many books. One of the groups set up a booth at the entrance of the Taiwan Adventist Hospital. They had the full support of the hospital administration.

This was certainly an eye-opening and unforgettable experience.

2. **For the first time in 59 years** the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba gathered dozens of literature evangelists (LEs) for a historic three-day congress in La Vibora Adventist Church in Havana, Cuba, earlier this year.

The event, themed “Bringing Hope,” was a step toward reshaping Publishing Ministries in Cuba from the ground up, said Erwin González, Publishing director of the Inter-American Division. LEs were taught God’s plan regarding publishing and their role as missionary messengers. Leaders and administrators were instructed on the process of structuring, recruiting, and preparing LEs. “This is extraordinary progress for the publishing ministry in Cuba,” said Pastor González, who led the congress in Cuba.

“House-to-house visitations for Bible studies and anything promoting religion and beliefs was not permitted, except for a 100-meter area surrounding a church,” explained González.

The publishing work gained strength in 2014 when 100,000 missionary books called *Mas allá de la imaginación* (*Beyond Imagination*) were ordered by the union and distributed. “Many members bought the books themselves and distributed them throughout the island,” said González.

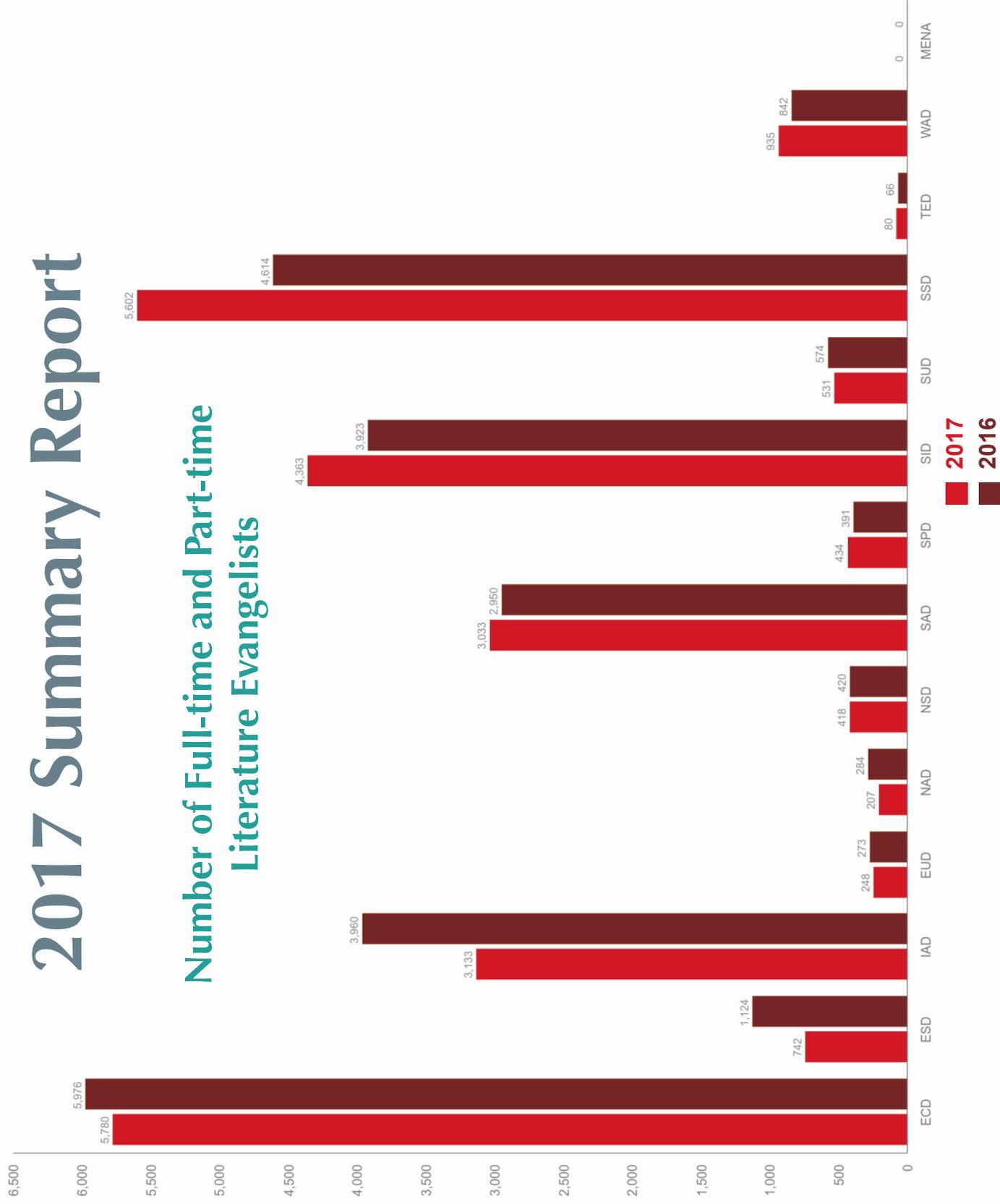
Risseldy Pillo, Publishing Ministries director for the church in Cuba, said that people are thirsty for new books. Many pastors from other denominations have bought boxes of Adventist books to distribute to their members. “Our goal is to have 50 full-time LEs by the end of the year and duplicate that amount by the end of the quinquennium,” said Pillo.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba has more than 33,500 church members worshipping in 457 churches and congregations.



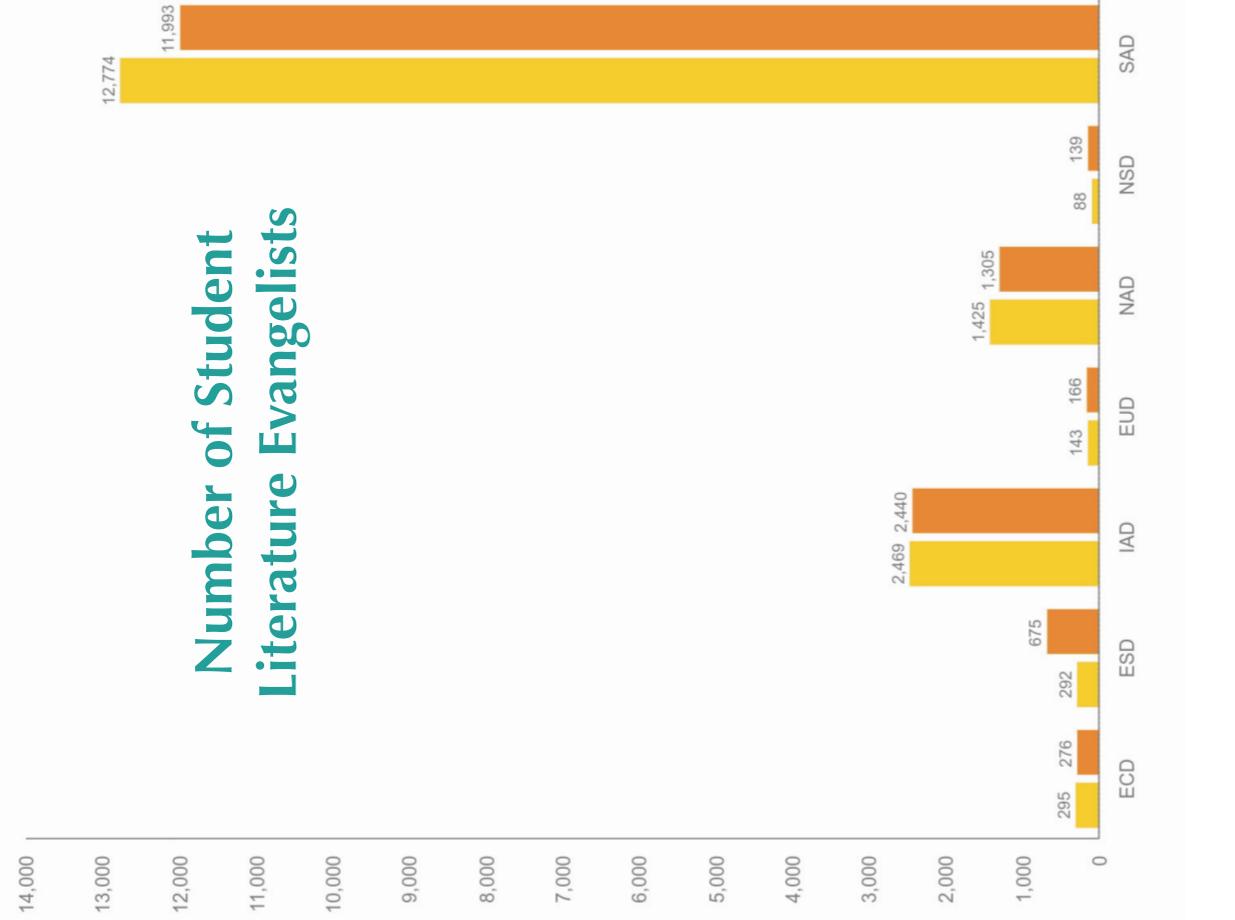
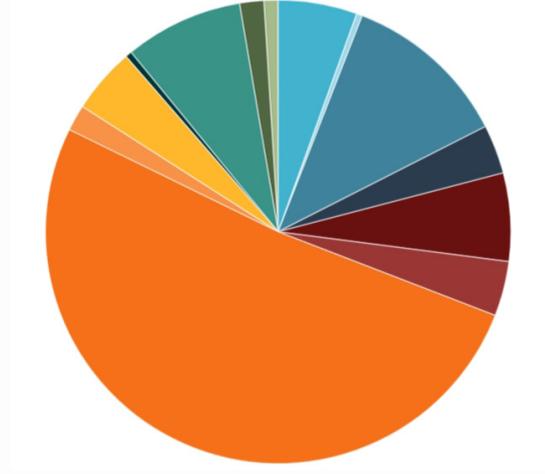
2017 Summary Report

Number of Full-time and Part-time Literature Evangelists



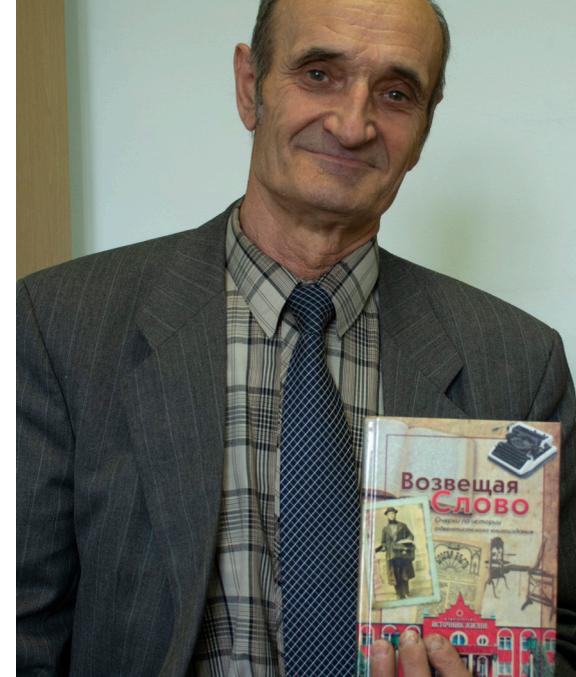
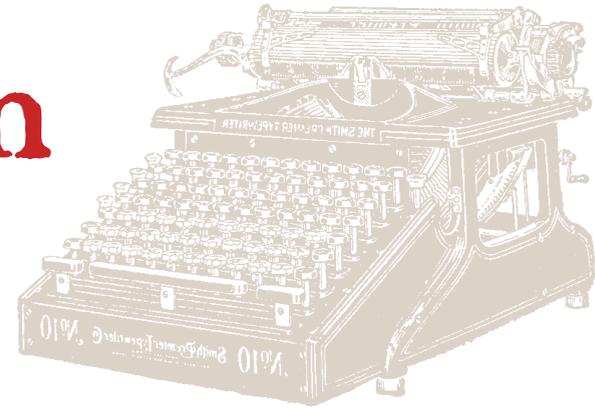
Total Sales for Full-time, Part-time, and Student Literature Evangelists

- ECD \$5,099,710.24
- ESD \$367,687.36
- IAD \$10,793,350.75
- EUD \$3,176,246.00
- NAD \$5,709,893.70
- NSD \$3,553,140.85
- SAD \$47,760,476.95
- SPD \$1,692,099.00
- SID \$4,249,904.61
- SUD \$414,604.00
- SSD \$7,654,181.17
- TED \$1,556,713.67
- WAD \$908,555.53
- MENA \$10,449.70



Communism in Russia

An interview with Pavel Mikityuk



How did you start your ministry as a literature evangelist?

I was baptized in 1966, and then was asked to work with the youth. In 1967 I joined the army. Keeping the Sabbath was rather difficult, and I was charged and jailed in Siberia for doing so. After the army, in 1970, while involved in a brass band, I was officially invited into the ministry by Alexander Parasey from Ukraine.

I have been connected with literature evangelism almost my entire life. In the past, sometime around 1965-1966, literature had a different form. Books were mainly rewritten or typed by hand using light rice paper. We had very few books made by typographical printing. One such book, called *The Ministry of the Kind Angels*, was printed in Riga, Latvia. We highly valued, read, and distributed this book. We also printed *Steps to Christ* in Ukrainian. We had one rule: since we received books at no cost, we also distributed them free of charge.

What was your task in the publishing ministry?

At the time, I searched for materials for printing in Moscow, Riga, or Ukraine, where there were printing factories. We couldn't freely purchase paper or carbon copy paper. We especially tried to find copy paper made in Vietnam because it was high quality. We also did bookbinding and stitching by hand. My wife edited and typeset books, and occasionally I took part in editing several books. We worked together with Anatoliy Andreevich Dyman, who, by my count, translated 53 books from English.

Do you remember the first book you gave away?

It was the book *Steps to Christ* in Ukrainian. It is a fascinating and simple book, which brings a Christian closer to the nature and character of God in a delicate way.

Do you have any experiences when God helped you during difficult times?

There were many hard and difficult situations. We couldn't freely read and distribute our literature. We had to do it secretly. We presented our book to someone only when we felt that the person wouldn't do us evil or cause discomfort. My house was raided and searched, and I was arrested several times whether or not I had literature.

Which was the most memorable search of your home?

The most memorable search occurred in 1981. At that time I was arrested because of the book *The Secret of Health*, by Don Gulley, which had been published in the United States and was considered to be the best book about health. The book came to us in English, and was translated by Valeriy Ivanovich Ivanov. Then the book came to Ukraine, where we printed 3,000 copies of the book at a secular printing house. We managed to distribute 2,300 copies, and 700 copies were still at my house. Eventually a search was conducted, and the books were found. I was arrested and sent to prison, where I spent nine years in total: six years imprisoned and three years in exile.

How was your imprisonment and what helped you get through it?

I can honestly say that I considered it an honor to spend time in prison because of my faith, though I believe, as the apostle Paul said, that we haven't yet "resisted unto blood" [Hebrews 12:4, KJV]. I didn't express anger toward God or the people who imprisoned me, but saw blessings in it. When I was taken to my cell, I was shocked about how interested people were in God. There were 30 men in my cell who immediately knew about my faith and started to ask questions about the Bible. When I saw how strong their interest was in God and religious literature, I understood that God had led me to prison and that I was destined to be there.

The trial took place in three months. When my wife heard my sentence, she sank and fainted. I felt sorry for her, but we couldn't do anything about it. Then I was taken to a prison camp. I had my Bible with me, which was cut into three parts. I hid it so that it couldn't be found.

Although religious literature was prohibited and we had many problems trying to get any, these problems were like anti-advertising for true Christians, which often worked positively for us. I remember once when I was brought to the officer after several years of imprisonment. He said: "Pavel Ivanovich, you don't need to preach anymore. It is enough for you to merely walk from your cell to the workroom, and your sermon is done."

I think that we should live in such a way that even without preaching, merely by our appearance, we can show that we are true Christians. There isn't enough space to share all my experiences, but one thing I can say for certain: the literature never left the people unmoved.

How did the prisoners respond to God's message?

There were ministers and people of the upper class together with me in prison. Some of them have high positions today. We had some deep Bible readings together that truly satisfied me. I even made a bet with them that if they found that the Bible differed from my faith, I would give it up. They never did.

There were also addicts and killers. As you know, in such places there are no secrets. We all knew about each other and talked about life; the good, the bad, the advantages we each had in our life, and they in theirs. We were glad whenever they came to an understanding that God exists and that He is in control of our lives and future.

What happened after your discharge from prison?

After I was discharged, I came to live in Russia. Today I remember those difficult times, and I miss them—nobody searches my house, nobody confiscates my things. When you have difficulties and dangerous moments in life, you ask for God's help and experience Him more. God has always protected me, before, during, and after prison.

Which publishing ministry experience is fresh in your mind?

In 1975, when preparing for the General Conference session, Anatoliy Andreevich translated all bulletins into Russian, while my wife typed them. When our home was searched and the 700 copies of the book *The Secret of Health* were found, they also found and confiscated all the translated work. It was a lot of work and materials. All the bulletins consisted of 600 pages. The searchers mixed all the materials in a sack and brought them to the office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They looked at the manuscript from which my wife had typed and returned it to our house. When Anatoliy came to us and found out what had happened, he told my wife: "Sister Valya, don't be upset! We still have the most important thing, the manuscript!" Our Lord blinded the searchers from finding anything valuable in that material.

What book have you given or sold in the last month?

Lately I don't sell many books, but I'm always giving books away. Recently, when I traveled by train, I got acquainted with one man and gave him a gift. It was the book *Steps to Christ*.

Pavel Mikityuk is a former literature evangelist.



MY GUARDIAN ANGEL

Josef Hurta

During Communist times the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Czechoslovakia had been under constant scrutiny. Special surveillance was executed by the State Administration (Department) for information. They zeroed in on the kind of literature the church was attempting to print. For that reason, the printing and distribution of material was difficult—and even dangerous.

The church managed to print books, magazines, various resource aids for children, and adult Sabbath school lessons. However, the next challenge was making deliveries. For that, I used my Skoda 1202, a spacious station wagon made in Czechoslovakia. The car was modified with reinforced suspension to carry heavier loads.

The printing facility was located at a church member's house in the northern part of Moravia, a north-central region of Czechoslovakia. On one particular occasion it was necessary to deliver the printed material to a church in southern Moravia. After prayer I took off. Everything was going smoothly; I was in southern Moravia and driving through a small town. Suddenly I noticed a man running along a sidewalk, seeking to wave me down.

Even though I was not in the habit of picking up hitchhikers, especially when I was carrying "special cargo," that evening I decided to pick up a stranger. As I was

slowing down, I noticed that the man was wearing a police uniform! Based on the number of stars on his shoulders, I knew that he was a high-ranking officer.

He told me that he was in a big hurry and begged me to give him a ride. During the ride we had a nice, casual conversation. We had not traveled far when suddenly I saw a police checkpoint up ahead. I could see that almost every car was being pulled over.

I became anxious. This was dangerous. The officer at the checkpoint asked me to pull over to the side and asked me for my documents. He didn't like something, and called over a commanding officer to assist him. They began to pepper me with questions: "Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you carrying in your car?"

My passenger observed the exchange for a while. Then he opened the passenger door, stood up, and said, "Gentlemen, that's enough! Leave us alone. We are in a hurry. And radio the other officers down the road to leave us alone as well. Do you understand?"

By now the two officers stood at attention, saluting him and saying, "Yes, sir! Yes, sir!" They looked terrified! They gave me back my documents, and we took off down the road. We faced two more police checkpoints, but even from a distance policemen directed us to go around and continue our journey.

As I was approaching my destination, my fellow passenger asked me if I would be willing to bring him home, a detour of about three miles (five kilometers). Of course I was happy to do it for him. As I dropped him off, he thanked me profusely. Then he smiled and said, "Today was fun, wasn't it?"—referring to the encounter at the police checkpoint earlier that evening.

I felt a comforting peace come over me as I slowly eased my car back onto the main road. In my mind's eye I could see the images of the frightened officers standing at attention and saluting my passenger in the police uniform. At the



thought of it all, I burst into laughter!

Yet I realized the soberness of what had happened that day. The enemy had been ready to get me. How did I manage to get through three police checkpoints unnoticed? It would not have been difficult to find out what I had been transporting. I would have been in big trouble. I would have had to pay a hefty price. That's what I had been heading toward, yet our loving God prepared a way of escape. He used a high-ranking police officer to become my guardian angel.

Josef Hurta is a lay member who used to work in Publishing Ministries.



SEASIDE SELLING

Elena Pop

“In the world-renowned health resorts and centers of tourist traffic, crowded with many thousands of seekers after health and pleasure, there should be stationed ministers and canvassers capable of arresting the attention of the multitudes.

Let these workers watch their chance for presenting the message for this time, and hold meetings as they have opportunity.”

—*Christian Service*, p. 127

Every year, during the summer vacations in Romania, when the resorts are crowded with beachgoers, we place book stands in every possible resort in the Black Sea under a national campaign called “Together for a Better Health.” We endeavor to be where the people are!

Tourists come from all over the country and abroad. From these resorts, our books often travel to unexpected places that would otherwise be inaccessible, reaching influential people in the political and artistic world. While on vacation, the people are relaxed and have time to talk with us. Some recognize us from interaction in previous years, from other cities, stands, and seminars. With the stands in the resorts, we get contacts and possibly leads for the future.

Besides the regular literature evangelists, upon registration we recruit and carefully select young volunteers who have the ability to attract clients through their enthusiasm, friendliness, honesty, a smiling disposition, and willingness to serve. They are then trained to spend the entire summer canvassing at the

resorts. On one occasion a local bank manager observed one of our teams for about a half hour. Impressed so much, he commended, “You make an excellent team! You work efficiently and relate very well with people. Congratulations!”

To make the best of the seaside opportunity, we place the stands in the most popular places: the seafront, beaches, access roads to beaches, water parks, treatment bases, etc. The services offered in each stand depends on the specific area where that the stand is located. During the day, on the beach; in the evenings and even at night on the seafront. We always ensure that we’re stationed in the brightest places with high traffic.

Although getting an affordable license for these stands is always a challenge, year after year we see God’s providence in this tight struggle.

Services

In order to attract attention, we provide a simple quick medical test, then an interpretation of the results from the test. We present data that shows their parameters against the normal values. With the results, we offer some concrete plans of action on how to improve their health, mostly through our books. The discussions draw interesting and sometimes very profound conversations. This increases their interest in our books. For those interested, we also offer booklets with presentations on different books, which people have time to study on the beach.

Some of the vacationers visit us daily, monitoring their blood pressure, discussing their goals, choosing more books to buy, and engaging in deeper conversations. This gives the students opportunity to learn and develop their sales and soul-saving skills; many develop a personal relationship with God. They also learn crucial lessons in creating opportunities for providing very important and necessary services that lead to a knowledge of God!

Elena Pop is a call center operator at the “Life and Health” Romanian Publishing House. Previously she had worked as an LE for 15 years and as an LE coordinator in the Muntenia Conference, Romanian Union, for 10 years.

How to conduct beach sales



1. PARTICIPANTS

Recruit and carefully select experienced literature evangelists (LEs) to work with enthusiastic, outgoing, and committed students.



2. ACCOMMODATION

Find appropriate rooms through local churches or members to accommodate LEs and volunteer students during the summer/vacation period.



3. PERMITS

Secure permits from the local authorities to sell/conduct the medical tents in the public areas.



4. APPROACH

Set up simple booths to conduct blood pressure, body mass index, and cholesterol tests, etc. Discuss test results and present health books and their benefits.



5. EQUIPMENT

LEs use blood pressure, body mass index, and blood oxygen devices, etc. The equipment is simple to use and recognized by state institutions.



6. FACILITIES

Set up attractive tents with tables and chairs, and use banners to advertise. LEs should wear matching shirts/T-shirts and hats.



7. TIME

The best time to sell books at the beach is in the evening when people are relaxed and have time to talk.



8. BOOKS

Use health books to gain attention. Ellen White suggested two books that are of particular use in tourist areas: *The Ministry of Healing* and *Christ’s Object Lessons (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 84, 85)*.



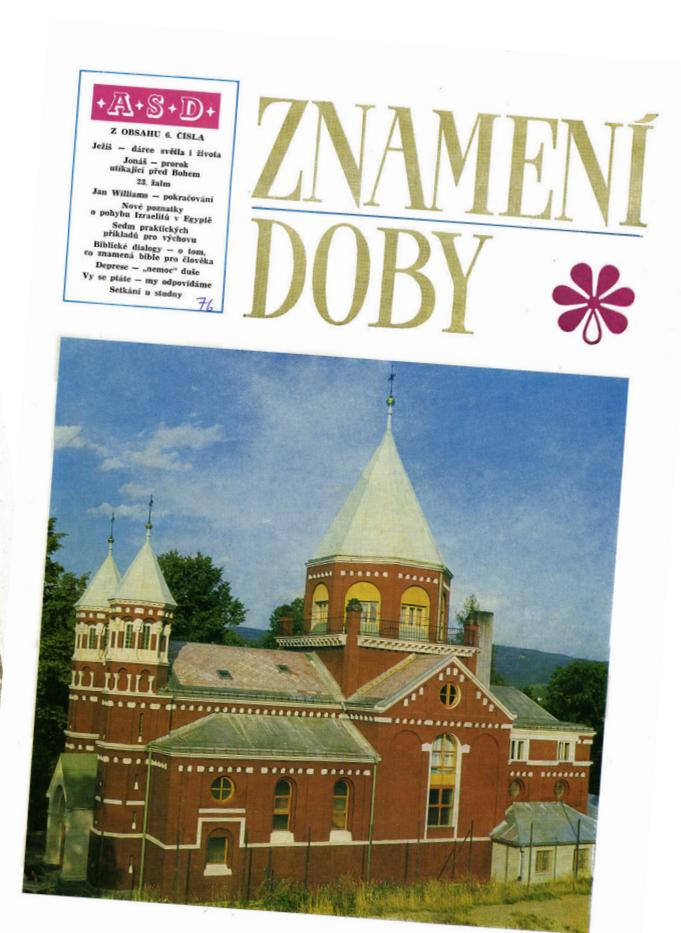
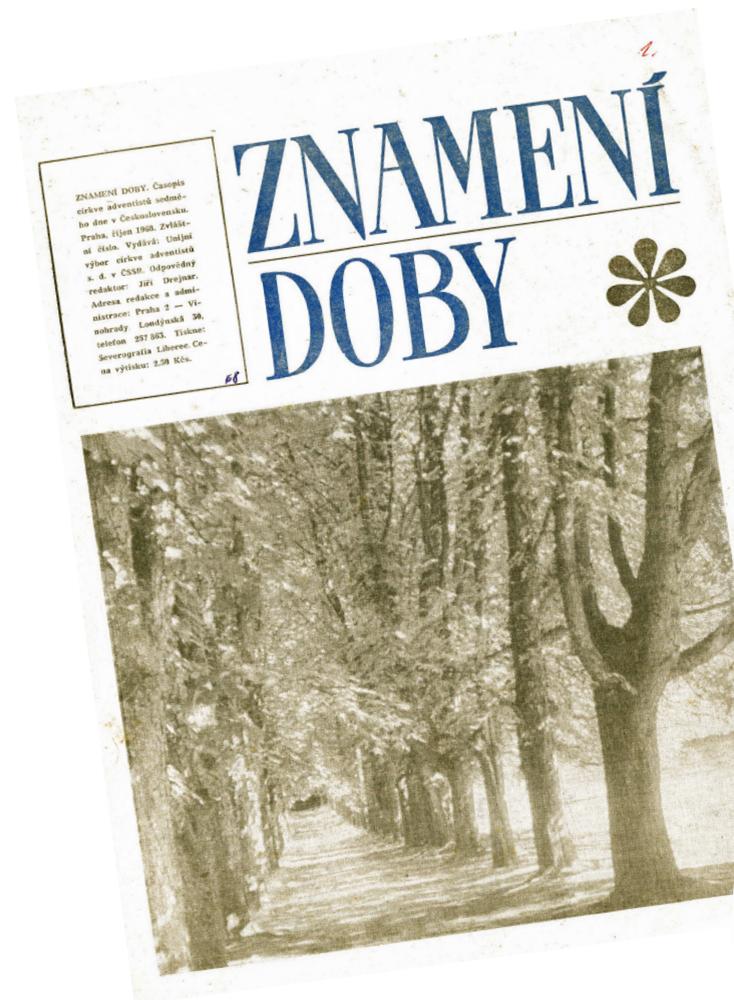
CANVASSING DURING COMMUNIST TIMES

Jaromir Loder

My dad, Jan Loder, liked to use his work as a means for sharing *Signs of the Times* magazines. Whether he worked as an electrical controller or sales representative, he always found a way to talk to others about his Savior and give them a copy of *Signs of the Times*.

When he worked as a sales representative selling paintings from 1963 to 1970, he very inconspicuously added how we are created in the image of God. From the business aspect of his work, he often pivoted to a spiritual application. And since he lived in a predominantly atheistic community, many people were astonished to hear him speak about his faith in a living God with such conviction. The Communist regime, however, didn't care for such faith-sharing.

Captions: Jaromir's parents, Jan and Marie Loder. *Signs of the Times* in Czech.



In many cases *Signs of the Times* magazines were offered to loyal members of the Communist Party. These people glanced through the content and wasted no time in going to city hall to report it, where a pile of magazines continued to grow and grow.

The Adventist pastor was contacted. Then the leadership of the conference was contacted, also, about their "literature evangelist." The brethren then asked my dad to be less enthusiastic about the magazine distribution.

The Communist Party even contacted the head of the department where my dad worked and asked him to get my dad in order. His boss simply replied: "Mr. Loder is among our finest workers. We won't give him any problems."

When the Communist regime collapsed and literature evangelism was reintroduced openly in our country, he joined the ministry full-time and became a hero of faith. My dad had many memories from working with our publications as a young man. He remembered how he had worked in the Catholic villages and was even chased around with a scythe

on one occasion! Still, God protected him. Until the very end of his life he stayed faithful to God's calling and worked with Adventist literature.

In 2007, when I was transferred to the church district in Bohumin, located in the north-central part of Czechoslovakia, I was warmly welcomed by a church member in a wheelchair one Sabbath morning.

As she greeted me she quickly pulled me aside and began to tell me a story: "One day a young woman rang the doorbell at our house. She offered us a Bible and other very special literature, which we purchased. She also arranged for us to receive Bible studies. Because of that visit, my entire family accepted the great Advent hope that Jesus is coming back soon. That hope has filled my life. One day I won't be dependent on a wheelchair. I'll be able to walk and even run. I have this hope because that young woman, your mother, came to visit us and offered us life-changing books!" Yes, my mother was a literature evangelist as well!

Jaromir Loder is a pastor in the Bohemian Conference in the Czech Republic.

2018

WORLD MISSIONARY BOOK

