

WEEK 5 • FEBRUARY 4, 2023

Cyprus: Befriending a Shoe Shiner

Proverbs 11:24-25 (ESV)—“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”

Yulian hurried to a busy corner in the city of Nicosia, Cyprus, where he set up his shoe-shine stand. He had come from Bulgaria 10 years earlier in search of work. But cigarettes and alcohol consumed most of his earnings. When he lost his job, his family told him to leave his home. Although he worked long hours as a shoe shiner, he could barely support himself.

One day, Filip, a Global Mission pioneer also from Bulgaria, greeted Yulian and asked if he needed help. Yulian was surprised. It was nice to hear someone speak in his native Bulgarian and take an interest in him. Yulian offered Filip a shoeshine.

While Yulian shined Filip's shoes, Filip told him that Jesus loves us, no matter who we are. The mention of Jesus grabbed Yulian's attention.

The next day, Filip returned and asked if Yulian needed any help. Filip didn't need a shoe-shine, so the two men just talked for a while and looked through the books that Filip had brought. Filip stopped by often and read the Bible to Yulian.

Filip's eyes filled with tears as he offered his new friend hope for a better life in Jesus. Soon Yulian gave his life to God.

Yulian had drunk and smoked for years, but he decided to give up alcohol and tobacco. His family welcomed him back home, and now Yulian tells everyone who will listen about his love for God.

Filip, a Global Mission pioneer, leads a Bulgarian-language Bible study in Nicosia. Several people have been baptized through Filip's work, a significant number for a country where the Adventist Church has only about 100 members in a city of more than one million. Filip spends his time mingling with people, making friends, and introducing them to Jesus.

Every faithful Christian returns a tithe of income after every payday. But God asks us to do the same with our offerings, giving a regular offering beyond the tithe, a percentage of our income to support God's work around the world. We give in faith, knowing that God will supply our needs according to His riches, not ours (Phil. 4:19).

Let God challenge your heart to determine what percentage of your income your Promise offering will be, knowing that God will see that your every need is supplied when you trust and obey Him.

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