

WEEK 11 • MARCH 18, 2023

Portugal: Goats Make Friends

1 John 5:13—“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, [a]and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

Christof’s family had grown tired of city life and moved to a small mountain-top village in Portugal to be closer to God and one another. Their new home has a garden and lots of room for Christof and his brothers to play.

The family didn’t speak Portuguese when they first arrived, so Christof and his mother decided to get acquainted by helping their neighbors. Soon they were learning their language and could talk to their neighbors.

Christof met a neighbor, Antonio, the goatherder. Christof asked Antonio if he could help take care of his goats. Antonio agreed and began to teach Christof how to care for the playful animals. When Christof learned that Antonio could not read or write, Christof offered to read to his friend. The next time Christof visited Antonio, Christof brought his Bible.

Antonio listened as Christof read stories from the Bible. Antonio was happy to have someone read the special messages from God. He told Christof that he believed that there is a God in heaven and that years ago his grandma had believed in the Sabbath as God’s day of rest and worship. Christof was happy that he had found a friend that he could share God’s stories with.

Christof invited Antonio to church, but the nearest Adventist church was too far and the roads too rough for Antonio’s old bones. So, Christof’s family came to Antonio’s home to worship and read the Bible with him.

Word spread through the neighborhood that Christof was reading the Bible to Antonio. Others wanted to join. Antonio invited those who wanted to join them to come to his home and study the Bible together. Soon several people from the village joined Christof’s family in worship. More and more came and found God’s love. Throughout the mountains of central Portugal people are hearing God’s message because a young boy shared God’s love with a goatherder.

Our faithful Promise offerings, given as regularly and systematically as the tithe and distributed as suggested by the Combined Offering Plan, introduce people who live in mountain villages and large cities to Jesus. The Combined Offering Plan proposes that 50 to 60% of your Promise offerings should help support the missionary work of your local church, 20 to 30% should support the regional missionary endeavors of your conference, and 20% always supports the World Missionary Fund (or World Budget), which supports overseas missionaries, missions, programs, projects, and institutions focused on preparing more missionaries. Let’s give faithfully so God’s work can be finished and we can meet again in heaven.

