A unique initiative called “ZaPaLiSe” (Fascinating Literature Week for Pastors) was recently held in Bulgaria. Twelve pastors gathered in the town of Silistra to participate in a literature evangelism campaign. They were joined by a team of 10 literature evangelists (LEs) and about 10 lay members from the local church. All of them had been previously trained for literature work. The group covered most of the town, two villages, and other regions from the district.

Inspiring worship services were held on Friday and Sabbath. Pastors shared personal experiences related to God’s call for them to serve Him through the literature ministry. Their stories were impressive, motivating, and provided new ideas for more effective mission service. Then from Sunday to Wednesday, the lay members, LEs, and pastors canvassed during the day and visited areas that had been assigned to them until evening. They gathered at the church at the beginning and end of each day—in the mornings they sang and prayed, and in the evenings they shared from the day’s experiences and thanked God for His leading. They had different experiences: from open hostility and indifference, to joyful acceptance of the truth from people who needed the gospel to be brought to them by the Lord’s ambassadors.

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The campaign finished with “The Day of the Book,” an event conducted in the village of Aidemir. The aim was to popularize villagers with the Bible and present books from the Bulgarian Adventist Publishing House.

As a result of this event, about 8,000 materials, brochures, and magazines were distributed free of charge, and nearly 2,000 levs (about US$1,360) worth of books were sold! Prayers were offered for people in their homes, hospitals, and wherever the situation permitted. About 40 contacts were created, and many addresses were gathered for Bible studies. The people who provided addresses will be visited in their homes by church members with lessons from a Bible correspondence course. Participants in this event praised God for the precious souls they reached, and for the privilege of working for God in this time of spiritual indifference.

Let’s praise God and pray that the mission flame burns bright in our hearts.

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A local elder in Spain attended a seminar for area pastors and lay members. When the leader presented the topic of Sabbath school action groups, a local elder spoke against it: “We have tried many things in our church, but nothing seems to work. Now you have a new idea for us, but it won’t work! We will not do this in my church.” The leader tried to reason with the man, but the elder did not listen.

Returning home after the seminar, his pastor spoke to the elder: “Our church is slowly dying as it is. Why don’t we just try the action groups? It won’t cost us anything. If it doesn’t work, we will have lost nothing. But if it does work, that would be great! We have nothing to lose. Let’s just give it a try.”

The elder finally agreed and the church members started meeting in small groups. They met Sabbath mornings, and again during the week at a home or somewhere else. Members started getting excited about the groups and invited neighbors to join them. Church attendance increased and visitors became interested in the church.

Before long the elder admitted, “I was wrong. . . . These action groups seem to be working!” Realizing the negative influence he’d had on all the others who attended the seminar when the idea was presented, the elder decided to visit the churches, one by one. He met with them and confessed that he had been wrong, and shared what difference the action groups were making in his church. He said, “The worship service and atmosphere at my church has completely changed! Attendance is up, and people are interested in our church.” He continued, “I don’t want to tell you what to do, but this was our experience. You might want to try it in your church!”

God can turn even the most skeptical critic into an ambassador for Him.*

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The Privilege of Prayer
by Ellen G. White

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. . . . Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. . . .”

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ‘The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.’ James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest” (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 93, 100).*