



## Report

Data: 28 Feb. 2007

Project: 50 000 Steps to Christ in District Vidin and Montana

From: Pastor Hristo Velkov Genchev

Director of Literature Evangelism Department SDA Bulgarian Union  
President of the ZOV BG Foundation

ALL 50 000 STC MAGAZINE AND 350 000 BROCHURES WAS SPREADED  
ALL 272 TOWN AND VILAGES WAS VIZITED BY VOLUNTEERS  
ALL STC MAGAZINE AND BROCHURES WAS OFFERED PERSONALY TO EVERY HOME  
ALL 307,380 PEOPLE IN THIS AREA WAS REACHED  
APPROXIMATELY 80% OF HOMES ACCEPTED MAGAZINE OR BROCHURES

## God has helped us till here

The prophecy for the last time says: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). How will that preaching happen? There are many means for preaching today – personal contact, books, evangelizations, TV, internet and others. Classical means for that are the first two. The modern means for preaching cannot take the place of the books and also nothing can take the place of the personal contact. But the personal contact is not sufficient in the contemporary world of billions of people and almost one thousand times less Adventists. In the contemporary riches of methods the distribution of books takes a very significant place. It is true that more and more people use internet but appears that as a whole they prefer the books for getting more detailed information. That is because of overwork and long staying in front of the monitors. The investigations also show that today people read preferably short books, magazines and pamphlets. And each book that is bought is being read at an average by 7 people.

As we take that in mind, we can more clearly understand the calling in the Spirit of Prophecy: "Spread books as autumn leaves" ("Evangelism"). I had personal impressions about the influence of books. The father of an Adventist member said that he would never become a Christian. His son remembered about "the autumn leaves" and put Christian books around the apartment. One day he saw that his father is trying to read in hidden. Soon he got baptized and now he is an elder. My father purposely went in the garden when it was Saturday. But I saw him reading an Adventist book that I had borrowed. Several months later he started attending the church. The autumn leaves cannot be counted when they cover the ground and also because of the humidity they stick so stiffly that it is hard to be removed. The same is the influence of the Christian books upon the minds of people – strong, measurable and unforgettable. The comparison, given by the Holy Spirit through His messenger, is very precise.

I thought about these things and prayed and I believe that God helped me and gave me the idea for the distribution of the book "Steps to Christ" for free to every town and village, to every home and person. This was a dream but I knew that the Great Strategist wants and can do even much more. I shared this idea with colleagues, presented it on an annual meeting of pastors in September 2006, and looked for sponsors. And the help came – members of the church from abroad helped financing the project and the way to its realization was open. The work is enormous – I didn't understand how enormous the work is. God had showed me only the

perspective. But there was no way back, I knew that God wanted me to continue – and I continued and He also continued to do miracles – He broke obstacles, gave the needed funds and even much more than I wanted or thought.

The pilot project started in the municipalities of Montana and Vidin. There are 272 settlements with 307 380 people living there. Two thirds of the population lives in the big cities. In that region there are 11 churches with 7 ministers. We supplied for distribution 50 000 books “Steps to Christ” printed in the form of an advertisement magazine and 350 000 pamphlets with different topics from the Three angels’ message. We expected that the distribution will last a whole year and that only half of the people will respond positively. That region is a former fortress of communism with strong atheism and weak Gospel distribution. Many Christians there expected that almost nobody will accept the magazines, but they didn’t tell me that because not to disappoint me. And some colleagues from the western part of Bulgaria thought that there will be many magazines left which they will use for their churches.

To our amazement almost all the work was done in a month – between January 15 and February 15! The big cities Montana and Vidin were traveled over by a group of 12 volunteers for 6 days each. Of course the church members helped with that on Saturday and Sunday. The churches worked in the small cities and the villages. The work there is slower because the settlements are scattered but most of them were traveled over in the same period of time. Above 80% of the households accepted the materials, less than 1% refused. Each of the volunteers distributed 150-200 magazines per day and the same amount of pamphlets. Each of them received between 1 and 4 refusals. For comparison, two years ago in Montana I tried to distribute books freely – 1-2% acceptance. Now it was completely the opposite. In some of the settlements, Jehovah’s witnesses, evangelicals and Baptists had been putting brochures and materials in the post boxes and had evoked bad impressions. Nevertheless we were accepted by people from different ethnic groups and denominations, with various beliefs. Obviously God’s Spirit walked before us and influenced the hearts. That was the main reason for the success. God be the glory for everything!

Other reason for the accepting was the look of the magazine – it caught the attention immediately and many times people that passed by wanted to have it. Besides we didn’t put it in the post boxes. That is why we saw just 6-7 magazines that were torn or thrown, and the people didn’t think we were a sect. Many of them were moved by the jest, some cried, even men. Here is a negative commentary: “What have you done? My wife is reading that magazine all night!”

God did wonders! The biggest of all was the one in the hearts – the total acceptance from the community. The second miracle was the good weather – there wasn’t winter. In that northern region, where the winter is heavy, even not a splash got ice. While we were distributing the books it even didn’t rain. In Vidin one morning it rained, the volunteers gathered in the church, but instead to buy raincoats they told experiences how God had stopped the rain many times; they prayed and sung the song “Shiny sun”. When they went out there wasn’t rain any more, soon the clouds disappeared and the sun shone brightly till the end of the day. Another day I was traveling to Belogradchik, it was snowing and I was thinking about the distributors there in that cold town in the mountain. When I came near I was amazed because there was clear sky above the city and only there! When the volunteers finished working it started snowing. A group of people that worked in the villages in Montana district say that the rain always stopped when they entered the village where they planned to work and when they finished the rain start started again. God has given us that, not known in the history of meteorology winter, to succeed in His work. And as a gift for the faith and the work done He saved the crop – there wasn’t cold weather after that to destroy it.

The third miracle was with the dogs in the villages – God closed their jaws. A certain man came out of his house and wondered when he saw our sister in front of his house: “Why the dog isn’t barking at you? It bites! What people are you?” She answered: “We are distributing advertisement magazines for free”. “What is in them?” – he asked and she answered: “They speak about God”. “A-a, that’s why it didn’t bark at you!” – he ascertained.

Another miracle happened in Montana. Our church had been always in scratches, because on our street live people with peculiar characters. When we distributed magazines on that street there wasn’t even one person to refuse or throw a magazine. Nobody from that quarter came to the church but they accepted the materials in their homes.

There was one bigger miracle. It was the most important that we needed – God gave us courage and faith. One of the sisters (Radka from Silistra) told us about her life before and now. When she believed she was told that she is too rich for our church. At that moment she is a servant to God and people. She says that this is her debut in Gods work and it is the happiest period in her life. Before the church in Vidin she shared with tears in her eyes that these days in which she serves freely out of faith and love and found hospitality in the homes of other brothers and sisters, are the happiest days in her life. A brother (Plamen from Silistra) said: “I needed more rest before when I sold books. Now I am out for 6-7 hours and I’m not tired”. Another colporteur shared that “I returned to my first love!” In the municipality of Montana half of the magazines were distributed by non baptized young people. 120 000 sets of brochures were folded and prepared by the children in the church. The youngest participant was 3 years and a half old – Kalin from Montana; the oldest was 82 years old – Vasilka from Belogradchik. She has an illness on the bones of the limbs but she didn’t miss even a house in her town. In Montana was the youngest group, included in distribution – 10-12 years old.

So for a month the magazines disappeared as a rain in dry land. We instructed the people to say that the content of the magazine is spiritual in order that they may go where it is needed. But the people continued to take them, even more. A colleague of mine told me: “Tell all the men that if the atheistic people here accept, they will accept everywhere”. And colleagues started to pray for similar miracle in their regions also. The pilot project was successful.

Now we have to broaden our perspectives. 8 560 000 people live in Bulgaria in 5 345 villages and towns. We have Adventist members in 350 of them. It is necessary to inform every Adventist through meetings, letters, Internet, video clips and other means, in order that everyone may enter the campaign. We think for a total print of half a million copies. That way we will cover the whole country and the price will be less. Possible end date for raising the funds is 30 June, then the printing follows, and in September and on we can distribute in the whole country. We expect people lead by the Holy Spirit. This is a big plan, but we believe it is inspired by the Strategist of the victory, Who has much bigger plans.

We conducted meetings, of the elders from South and North regions of Bulgaria, in Plovdiv and Varna. A member of the church made a covenant to give funds for the project forever – part of the turnover of his company. Another member didn’t know about the meeting – he was told about it the same morning (of the meeting). On the meeting he took the materials and said: “I didn’t know about that. This morning Jesus told me to take more money – I took 3 650 levas and I give them for the project; I consecrate also myself to this project!” It appeared that these money were the exact sum needed for his region. This member prayed that Jesus meet him with people to speak with them – and he had worked with 10 people, 9 of them turks. In Bulgaria there are 1 200 000 muslims, 800 000 from them are turks. They need adapted edition of the magazine. In Varna SDA church the people discuss the idea that every member gives 100 levas – that way the money will be enough for the project. That is a great challenge because many are

pensioners with monthly income between 70 and 150 levas. Sevlievo SDA church immediately decided to provide the needed money for the literature for their region and to think about the possibility to help other region after that. God wants not only the rich to give. He expects everyone to give his part in sharing the gospel.

We would also need help from outside Bulgaria. There is another miracle connected with that – a member from abroad, who earns a lot, prayed and Jesus lead him to consecrate funds wholly for this project. I keep his letter in which he describes his prayers and work for God's work of distribution of books. Also he looks for and attracts to him more people, who will work gratuitous like him in the same direction, to spread books "like autumn leaves".

The written word is the blade of the missionary work. Let the books, like autumn leaves under the work of the rain of the Holy Spirit, print their indelible influence upon the minds of people! And let when Jesus comes, He finds prepared people!