

Mission Sonlight- 4th Quarter 2008 - Mongolia

Narrator: Welcome to Mission Sonlight, reporting from the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Today we visit the country of Mongolia, a landlocked country nestled between the countries of Russia and China.

The name Mongolia evokes exotic images of nomads, yaks and camels and the Gobi Desert as well as Ghengis Khan. Each of these play an important role in Mongolia's past and present day history.

Ghengis Khan is considered the founder of the Mongol empire and during his lifetime it stretched from the Sea of Japan to the Caspian Sea. He was able to amass such a GREAT empire by uniting the nomadic tribes of northeast Asia.

Today, Mongolia covers a vast expanse of territory with a land mass of 603,909 square miles, which is slightly larger than the state of Alaska. With a population of only 2.9 million, it is the most sparsely populated independent country in the world. Mongolia boasts a young POPULATION 59% of it's citizens are under the age of 30 and 27%, UNDER the age of 14.

MISSION SONLIGHT VISITED IN JUNE WHEN THE BEAUTY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE IS EXTRAORDINARY FOLLOWING SPRING RAINS. IT IS EASY TO SEE WHY IT IS KNOWN AS THE "LAND OF BLUE SKY". THOUGH TEMPERATURES IN JANUARY DROPPING AS LOW AS 22°F, DAYS ARE sunny on average over 260 days a year, producing blue, cloudless skies with no humidity and intense sunshine.

This can be seen in its major city, and capital, UlaanBatar. Following it's Communist occupation, Mongolians voted for a new constitution in 1992 and established

a multi-party political system as well as a market economy. This was followed by a period of high inflation and food shortages.

All of this sets the backdrop for the fledgling work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mongolia. The current outreach of the Seventh-day Adventist church was begun by Brad and Cathy Jolly just 15 years ago. There were no Seventh-day Adventist churches in the country in the early 1990's and their work was difficult and lonely. To reach the Mongolian people, they began with English classes and evangelism in small groups.

The first baptisms took place in 1993 and the first Seventh-day Adventist church was organized four years later. Today, there are 1,200 members who worship in BOTH churches and companies.

The members of the Seventh-day Adventist church worship in a number of different types of settings. The Ulaan Baatar CENTRAL church was built with funds from a previous 13th Sabbath offering. Today it is led by Pastor Bold, the first ordained minister in Mongolia.

Pastor Bold: (2:04-2:13/00:32-44) The 13th Sabbath offerings have helped us tremendously. In fact this church that we are using is built by the 13th Sabbath offering. Our church is very young in terms of membership. Almost 70% of our church membership is under 35, which mean we have many college students.

Narrator: Other members meet in churches such as the Amazing Grace church, which is housed in a Mongolia ger, a round tent which is a typical Mongolian home.

The Emmanuel Church meets in an old warehouse, which the members have converted to have space for their Sabbath services. Like many young churches around the world our Mongolian brothers and sisters struggle with finding permanent places to meet when they don't have a facility that they can call their own. In spite of these difficulties their courage is strong. Today the Adventist church is made up mostly of young people with ABOUT 70% of church members in OR NEAR their 20's. This group is more open to change than the older members of Mongolian society and they are eagerly learning about God and His plan for their lives.

Paul Kotanko: (5:10-5:36) Mongolian society itself is very young and young people tend to be more open to the gospel. They have seen that Communism has not really been the answer. It has failed. The traditional religions don't really offer anything so the young people are really open to Christianity and the message of God.

Narrator: When a young Adventist arrives in Ulaan Baatar to attend school, there is no infrastructure that allows them to have housing and a place where they can live with other Adventist young people. There are no Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions in Mongolia today

Paul Kotanko: (00:40-1:00 and 1:10-1:23) Mongolia people look Asian but their culture is neither Asian nor Western. The best way to understand Mongolian culture is understand it as a nomadic culture. Mongolians love freedom, especially the freedom of being out in nature and the outdoors. The Christian background of the students is really limited to maybe a few years or even less. The basic background is Buddhism, Shamanism and atheism.

Narrator: These young Adventist Christians long for a way to worship and live together.

Enkhchimeg Enkhbaatar: (00:20- 1:15) I live in a public dormitory. Living in a public dormitory gives us a chance to share our beliefs with non-Christian young people but at first it was hard for me to share my beliefs with others. I live with three other girls in my room in a public dormitory. I think it would be better for me to live in a Christian dormitory. Living with non-Christian young people is sometimes hard and sometimes I am confused about my beliefs.

Pastor Ganaa Ganbapral: (will need a voice over 3:54-4:39 and probably longer)

Seventy percent of the members are under 35 and this makes for a very young church. Many of them have no Christian background. Working with the youth to help them understand Christianity is a very fundamental work. Every year a large number of students come from the countryside to study. I can see that it is easier for them to be strong when they are united and easier for them to keep their beliefs. I know many students who experienced abuse and other hard things when they were living in other places.

Narrator: This quarter's 13th Sabbath offering will provide funds to help build a dormitory that Adventist students can use when they travel from their homes to Ulaan Baatar.

Buiambasurem Dembelsurem: (1:22-3:53 You won't need that much footage but it is the length that particular clip of her interview runs. Will need voiceover) I am actually from the countryside and I came here to study. I have many troubles because I live with my relatives who are not Christians. They are Shamanists and they don't want

me to study my Bible or go to church. Sometimes it is hard. I think the dormitories will be good because we won't lose our faith. There are times when I don't even have bus or taxi money to go to church. If I am living in the dorm it will be much easier for me to study my Bible, worship and go to church. All of this will help me grow stronger in my beliefs.

Doljin EnkhTURE: (1:45- Many of our church young people will be happy that the dormitory is going to be built, because in the other dorms there are many difficulties, with things such as drinking and smoking. If we have a chance to live in a church dormitory we will have a healthier environment. We'll also have a chance to study the Bible and grow in our beliefs together.

Narrator: The dormitory setting includes organized morning and evening worship, leadership training courses, meals and a training ground to build solid church leaders who can plan and lead future church groups. Students will also have a place to have a social life where they can have clubs and outreach programs, which will help them keep their focus on their commitment to Jesus and not be lured to the many temptations in the city.

Pastor Bold: (00:46-1:24) We have many college students coming from countrysides, which means they have to find a place to stay. Sometimes the university or college dormitories are full and I think this will provide a very good place for us to bring the youth together and have different programs going and also for us instilling an Adventist lifestyle. So I think this dormitory project will help our young people to have this Adventist lifestyle built-in.

Narrator: In addition to the dormitory, the Adventist church is reaching into the population with an SDA English Language School. Elbert Kuhn serves as the school's director and believes that the program will enhance the work that will be done among students who live in the dormitory.

Elbert Kuhn: (5:28-6:11) We are offering scholarships right now for some of them. I'd say about 25 of these young students. We select the best ones because we want to have a pool of people for the future that we can have them ready to work for the mission if we need them. We are looking to prepare these young people to really become committed to the work of God. We also believe that if they go to work in a company, factory or any other organization they will be a good witness of their faith.

Narrator: Praying for the work in Mongolia is part of our mission outreach to this nation that is just learning of Christ.

Paul Kotanko: (3:52-4:16): If you'd like to pray for Mongolia, there are two things to pray for-first of all that the members will be well-grounded in the Biblical and an Adventist worldview and lifestyle. The second thing is for leaders. With the church growing fairly rapidly one thing that we really need is good leaders and leadership and leadership development.

Pastor Bold: (1:56-2:02/2:14-2:26) We are very thankful for the world church for the 13th Sabbath offering. We are very happy for the world church to help us in establishing centers that will help our Mongolian people to find God.

Narrator: The events of this world tell us that Jesus is coming soon. We don't know how long we will have to train our Mongolian brothers and sisters. What will your part

be in reaching a young Mongolian for Christ. Take time this week to plan your 13th Sabbath offering, for Sabbath, December 27.

Reporting from Land of the Blue Sky- Mongolia, in the Northern Asia Division, this is Mission Sonlight.