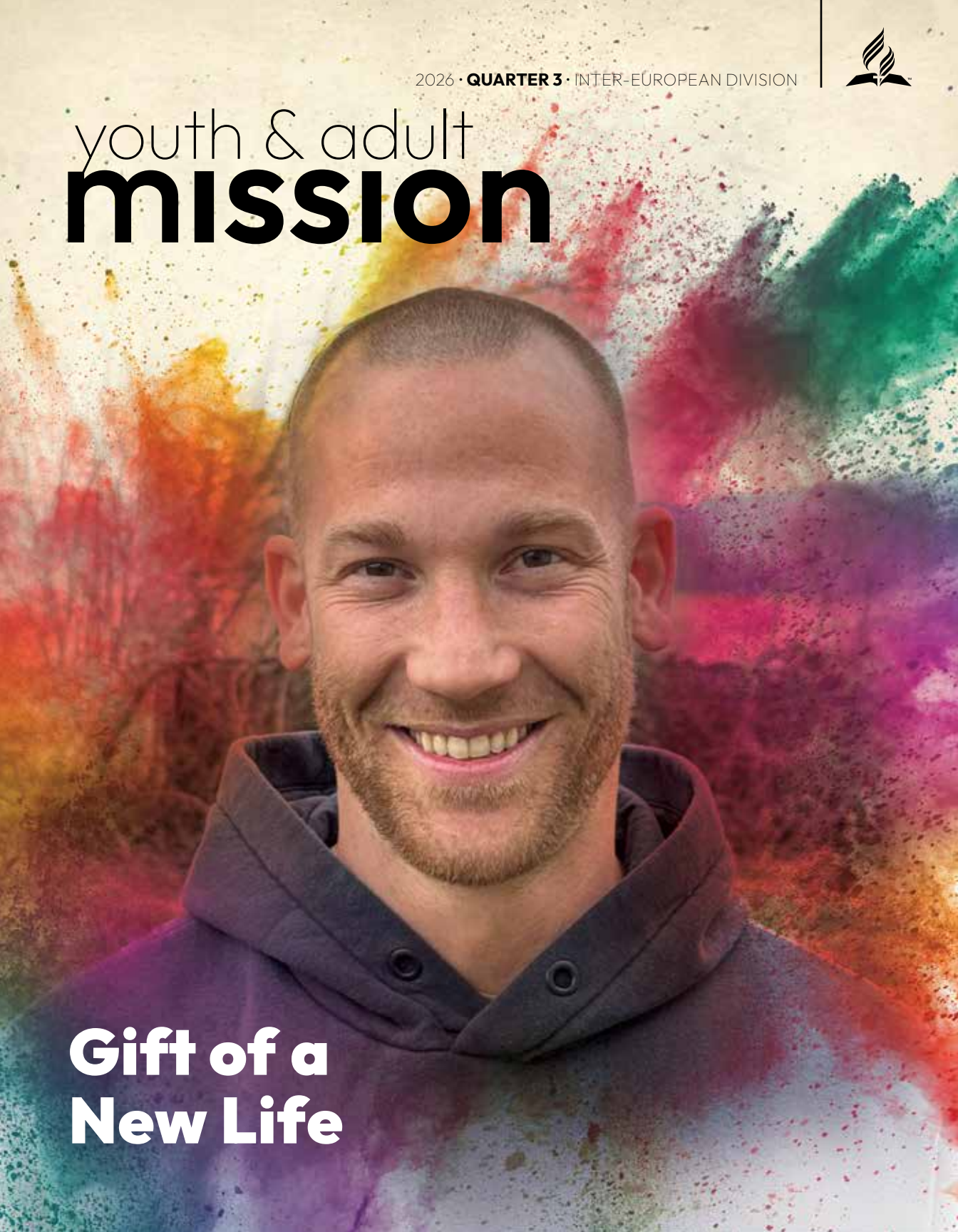
2026 · **QUARTER 3** · INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

youth & adult
MISSION



Gift of a New Life

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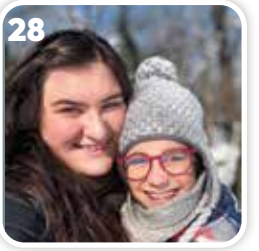









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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH®

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T = *stories of special interest to teens*

Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter we feature the Inter-European Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in 20 countries and territories: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and Vatican City. The region is home to 343 million people, including 182,411 Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 1,880 people.

Funds raised by this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, will support five projects in four countries:

Opportunities

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, aims to reach and influence new generations for mission in the Inter-European Division through the following projects:

- Kindergarten, Sofia, Bulgaria
- Site for youth camp, church camp, and training center, Belgium
- Dormitory, Italian Adventist University Villa Aurora, Florence, Italy
- Schools in Macea and Peretu, Romania

Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, and Romania. You can find more information about the projects in the sidebar on this page.

Special Features

To make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer photos, videos, and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story. For photos of tourist sites and other scenes from the featured countries, try a free photo bank such as pixabay.com or unsplash.com. You could show the photos on your computer or mobile device while you read the mission story, or you could print the photos to decorate your Sabbath School room or church bulletin board.

In addition, you can download Inter-European Division facts and activities at bit.ly/eud-2026 and a PDF version of the youth and adult *Mission* quarterly at bit.ly/adultmission. Follow us at facebook.com/missionquarterlies.

Be sure to download your free *Mission Spotlight* video featuring video reports from around the Inter-European Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

Please keep in mind that you do not need to read the story exactly as it is published. These stories are meant to be adaptable to your culture and Sabbath School class, so feel free to tell the story as you see best for your audience.

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!

Gift of a New Life



AUSTRIA | July 4

Juergen

Editor's note: This week's mission story features Bogenhofen, a Seventh-day Adventist campus in Braunau, which includes an elementary school, high school, and seminary. The school received part of a 1986 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

Juergen had a bad attitude, and it caused him to be expelled from high school in Austria.

Only a year before his scheduled graduation, Juergen was asked to leave school after receiving a failing grade for his behavior. Austrian public high schools graded on conduct, and he flunked because he had a problem with authority and frequently skipped classes.

Juergen tried to enroll in another school, but it didn't work out. However, the high school principal was sympathetic.

"Try Bogenhofen," he said. "They might take you."

Juergen and his parents went to Bogenhofen, a Seventh-day Adventist school campus. Coming from a non-religious family, Juergen was surprised to learn that this school encouraged students to develop a relationship with God. He didn't really want to attend, but his father urged him to give it a try.

Juergen agreed to stay.

Although he could have entered the twelfth grade, he chose to repeat the eleventh grade. During his two years at the school, his life changed in many ways. Without even realizing it, he stopped eating pork and drinking alcohol. He wasn't sure how it happened—it just did.

Though he attended Bible classes, Juergen didn't think much about God in high school. But after graduating, he enrolled in a one-and-a-half-year health training program at Bogenhofen. As he learned the principles of good health, he began to wonder, *What do these Adventists really believe?*

He found a Bible and, for the first time, read it from cover to cover. The experience left him with many questions, and he accepted a classmate's offer to study the Bible together. The two young men began with the prophecies of Daniel.

Juergen was amazed. He saw how all the dates aligned and that every prophecy—except those predicting the second coming of Jesus—had been fulfilled. Everything made sense. He thought, *The Bible must be true!*

It was an easy next step to accept the existence of a Creator God. Even though his family wasn't religious, he had never fully accepted evolution. He gave his heart to God and was baptized.

Some relatives mocked Juergen when they learned he had become a Christian. They taunted him, asking whether he planned to live like a hermit or move to the countryside without electricity and electronics. But when they saw the change that Christ had brought to his life, their attitude changed.

His father never regretted sending him to Bogenhofen, calling it the best decision of Juergen's life. Today, Juergen's mother is part of a Seventh-day Adventist Bible study group.

Now 36 years old, Juergen is grateful he attended the Adventist school.

"When I was a student, I didn't realize what a privilege it was," he said. "Now I do. I'm happy that I studied at Bogenhofen. It changed my life."

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, which is helping lead people such as Juergen to Christ. Bogenhofen, located near Braunau, Austria, received part of a 1986 offering to open a girls' dormitory. This quarter's offering will help support mission work across the Inter-European Division, which includes Austria.

Story Tips

- Show Austria on a map. Then, show Braunau near the border with Germany in the north, where Bogenhofen is located.
- Pronounce Juergen as: YOUR-gen).
- Watch a YouTube video of Juergen at: bit.ly/Juergen-EUD.

Mission Post

- Austria has 60 churches, 9 companies, and 4,419 members. With a population of 9,188,000, that is one church member for every 2,079 Austrians.
- Some 80 percent of Austrians are Christian, with 80 percent of these Catholic, 7 percent Orthodox Christians, 6 percent Protestants, and 6 percent other denominations. Around 8 percent are Muslims, and nearly a quarter of Austrians do not belong to any religion.
- In 1895, missionary L. R. Conradi conducted the first Adventist baptismal service in Austria-Hungary at Klausenburg (now in Romania).
- The first Adventist church was established in Ratzersdorf, Austria, in 1903, by L. Mathe, a German-American pastor.
- Mathe's life was threatened on several occasions by local Christians, so he moved to nearby Vienna, where he performed the first Adventist baptism in Austria on July 1, 1903.
- In 1909, the first native Austrian Adventist minister, Franz Gruber, was ordained in Vienna. The church worked hard to train local missionary workers because foreign pastors were in constant danger of being deported for "disturbing the peace."
- The Bogenhofen Seminary and Senior High School are at St. Peter am Hart in Austria.



Tea and Cell Phones

AUSTRIA | July 11

Yvonne

Editor's note: This week's mission story took place inside a building constructed with the help of a previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering. The story happened in the girls' dormitory at Bogenhofen, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Austria.

Yvonne, a girls' dean at Bogenhofen, appreciated a rule that limited teenagers to 45 minutes of cell phone use each day. She had seen how addictive cell phones could be, and she noticed that the rule encouraged students to spend more time together—talking, laughing, and doing fun activities such as rowing boats on the campus stream.

But she also knew that whenever there were rules, there were students who would try to break them. She suspected that some girls in the dormitory owned second phones, hidden away after they turned in their first phones. But as long as she didn't see anything, she couldn't do anything.

One day, several girls were sick in their rooms. That evening, Yvonne brought them hot herbal tea. When she brought tea to one girl's room, she felt that something wasn't right.

To enter the room, Yvonne had to pass through two doors—an outer and an inner door. She knocked on the outer door and opened it. Behind the inner door, she heard the sound of something moving and paused, wondering what was going on. When she opened the inner door, she found nothing unusual. The 16-year-old girl was lying in bed. She thanked Yvonne for the tea and asked, "When are you going to bed? Are you going to check up on me again?"

Yvonne thought to herself, *What interesting questions.*

She finished checking on the other girls and, about 10 minutes later, returned to the 16-year-old girl's room unannounced. She knocked on the outer door, and when she opened the second door, she saw the girl quickly tuck something under her blanket.

Now, Yvonne was convinced something was wrong. What should she do?

That night, in her home, she prayed, "Lord, help me to help this girl."

At 4 o'clock in the morning, she awoke with a strong impression to return to the girl's room. She thought, *Why? She's sleeping. You'll just wake her up.* Then another thought came: *Maybe she's sick.*

Yvonne went to the girl's room and opened

the outer door. A light was shining under the second door. She opened it and saw the girl was in bed, looking at her cell phone.

Quietly closing the door, Yvonne went to her office and knelt to pray. "Lord, what should I do?"

This time, she felt impressed to speak with the girl. Yvonne returned to the room and spent the next two hours talking with the student. At the end of their conversation, the girl said, "You know, I didn't want to give you my second phone, and I've been using it all this time. But now, it's easy to give it up because I know you really care."

Yvonne was overjoyed. The girl realized that she wasn't trying to be unkind but to help her overcome an addiction to electronics. In the early hours of that morning, the girl made God the Lord of her electronics.

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, that leads people to the God Who empowers us to overcome addiction. Bogenhofen, located near Braunau, Austria, received part of the 1986 offering to open the girls' dormitory where this story took place. This quarter's offering will help lead more people to God throughout the Inter-European Division, which includes Austria.

AMsda.org/A2632

Story Tips

- Show Austria on a map. Then, show Braunau, near the northern border with Germany, where Bogenhofen is located.
- Know that Yvonne Seidel has been an important part of Bogenhofen's history. A native of Romania, she has served not only as girls' dean but also helped open the elementary school on the campus when she was 22 years old. The school has grown from an initial six students to more than 100. Yvonne also has served as a chaplain at Bogenhofen, which includes a seminary. In 2017, she helped launch a school of education to train teachers to teach at Adventist schools.

Fast Facts

- About a quarter of the Austrian population lives in Vienna.
- The official language in Austria is German.
- Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, introduced Christianity to the region when he conquered it in 766.
- Austria is called the birthplace of classical music and was home to Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert.
- More than half of Austria's electricity is produced by hydropower.
- Popular Austrian foods include Sachertorte (a rich chocolate cake), Apfelstrudel (a flaky pastry filled with apples), and Weiner Schnitzel (breaded, fried veal cutlet).
- Winter sports, particularly alpine skiing, are popular in Austria due to the mountainous terrain.
- Forests cover two-fifths of Austria, making it one of Europe's most densely forested countries.
- Wild animals in Austria include brown bears, buzzards, cranes, eagles, falcons, owls, swans, and storks.

Match Made in Heaven



SPAIN | July 18

Albert and Ligia

To the Sabbath School superintendent: Ask two people, a man and a woman, to share this week's mission story. They can take turns relating the experiences of Albert, 40, and Ligia, 39.

Ligia: I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist family in Venezuela and grew up exposed to teachings and experiences about God. But when I was 22, I left the church and entered the world of show business and fashion. For years, I modeled in beauty pageants such as Miss Venezuela, Miss Hawaiian Tropic, and Miss Hispano. I worked on television, in movies, and in theater. I appeared in magazines and fashion catalogs. I owned businesses. My life looked perfect on the outside, but I felt empty inside.

Albert: I was raised in a small city about 75 miles (120 km) from Barcelona, Spain. My family had a certain religious background, but because faith wasn't a central part of daily life, I grew up in a more agnostic environment. I always had deep questions about life and death. I searched for answers in various world religions, but I never imagined that the truth I longed for could be found in the Bible.

I loved architecture, culture, traveling, discovering the world, and history. But my life was full of parties and meaningless relationships that left me unsatisfied.

Ligia: I traveled the world, too. Even though I was far from God, deep down in my heart, I felt like I didn't belong in the world of show business. I knew God was protecting me, but I thought that going back to Him was impossible. My weekends were filled with events, and my lifestyle was far from what God wanted for me.

After many failed relationships, including one that was particularly painful, I made a radical decision. I left my career. I dropped everything, including my businesses. My identity had been rooted in show business, and now I had no idea who I was. I was living in Spain at the time. I became very sad and started looking for answers in self-

help books. During the process, I made a list of non-negotiables for my future husband. The first item on the list was that he had to believe in God.

Albert: I hit rock bottom after years of partying and looking for answers in the wrong places. I felt like my life needed a new meaning. I became deeply sad. My heart was ready for something new. And that's when our paths crossed.

When we met, our connection was immediate. To our surprise, our conversations naturally began to revolve around faith.

Ligia: On our second date, I shared music by a well-known Seventh-day Adventist singer in Spain. I had never done that with anyone. Albert was shocked and surprised at first, but he didn't say anything about it.

Our conversations grew deeper and deeper. Albert began discovering God, and I began rediscovering God from experience rather than tradition.

Albert: We spent nights crying, talking, and laughing—trying to understand how God had guided us to that point. For Ligia, it was like returning home. For me, it was the beginning of a new reality I never thought possible. Discovering the God of the Bible seemed crazy. But it turned out to be the most beautiful truth I had ever found.

Ligia: We realized that our relationship wasn't just between the two of us. It was between three: Albert, me, and God. From the beginning, God was at the center, guiding every step. When we realized that He had a purpose for us, we decided to get engaged.

Albert: We got baptized, and then we got married. We realized that everything we had experienced up to that point hadn't happened by chance.

Everything from our past had left us feeling empty, but now God was filling us with His love. He showed us that worldly success, parties, and shallow relationships could never fill the void that only He can.

Ligia: God rescued us from a world of superficiality. Now, we've dedicated our lives to working for Him, helping others find the same transforming love we found in God.

Albert: Today, we walk together in the belief that God is going before us and guiding us. Our mission is to share this message with people who, like us, are searching for the meaning of life.

Ligia: That's our story: from the world, straight into the arms of God.

Narrator: Today, Albert is studying for a master's degree in faith and science at Sagunto Adventist College in Spain, so he and Ligia can more effectively share God with secular people. Seventh-day Adventists from around the world have helped make Albert's studies possible. Part of a previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, helped expand the theology department where he is studying.

Thank you for your offering this quarter, which will support more projects that will spread the gospel in the largely secular countries of the Inter-European Division, including Spain.

AMsda.org/A2633

Story Tips

- Show Spain on a map. Then, point to Sagunto, near Valencia, where Sagunto Adventist College is located. The college received part of the offering for its theology department in the first quarter of 2020.
- Pronounce Ligia as LEE-hee-a.
- Visit Albert and Ligia's website at: elcieloalatierra.com.

Mission Post

- During the summer of 1903, brothers Frank and Walter Bond arrived from California and settled in Catalonia, and despite not knowing the local language (the people spoke Catalan), they went to work, using their meager knowledge of Spanish. They opened a school, and in June 1904, three people were baptized.

Enoc's Dream, Part 1



SPAIN | July 25

Enoc

Enoc felt like he was living a dream life in Spain. He co-owned a physical therapy practice with a business partner in Barcelona and had enjoyed his career for more than 20 years. His wife, Ingrid, worked as a physical therapist at a Seventh-day Adventist nursing home. They had two sons and a comfortable life.

So, Enoc couldn't understand why he kept feeling impressed to become an Adventist pastor. He didn't want God to think he was ungrateful for the successful career he'd been blessed with. He didn't want to say, "Thank You for everything You've given me, but now I want to become a pastor." So, he didn't pray to God about the desire, and he didn't even tell Ingrid.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic came, and he and his business partner had to shut down their clinic for about three weeks. When they reopened, Enoc's desire to become a pastor had grown stronger. He felt like he wasn't doing enough for God. He spoke about Jesus with some clients and prayed with them, but not all were open to hearing about God. Enoc longed to talk about Jesus all the time. Being a physical therapist didn't feel like enough.

The best moments of Enoc's day were with God. He loved morning devotions and personal Bible study. He noticed that whatever he read in the morning often turned out to be exactly what one of his clients needed to hear that day. Some even began asking him to pray for them.

Still, Enoc didn't pray about becoming a pastor. He thought, *I need to do God's will, and it was His will that led me into physical therapy in the first place.*

But every night, when he came home, he found himself telling Ingrid only about the spiritual conversations and prayers he shared with clients.

Finally, Ingrid said, "I must tell you something. God has put it on my heart that you need to go to Sagunto to study theology

and become a pastor."

Sagunto Adventist College is where pastors are trained in Spain.

When Enoc heard his wife speak the thoughts he had been keeping inside, the idea sounded even more impossible. He had a business. He and his wife loved Barcelona. Their sons attended an Adventist school there. He told her, "If it's God's will—and not just my desire—He'll let us know."

But Ingrid wouldn't let it go. Every week, she reminded him, "God keeps putting it on my heart that we have to go to Sagunto."

Each time, Enoc responded, "It's impossible. We need a house, jobs, and a new school for the boys. We shouldn't waste our time thinking about it."

One day, Enoc shared his feelings with his brother-in-law, who was a pastor. He hadn't planned to say anything, the words just came flowing out. His brother-in-law promised to pray, adding, "If it's God's will, He will let you know."

Then, Ingrid's father passed away, and the family started considering moving to be closer to her mother. Enoc and Ingrid prayed, "Should we stay in Barcelona, move to help Mother, or go to Sagunto?"

Ingrid sent her resume to several places in her father's city, but no one responded. Meanwhile, Enoc's physical therapy practice in Barcelona was flourishing, He and his business partner even arranged to buy an adjacent property to expand.

While they were finalizing the paperwork, the partner suddenly asked, "Why aren't you a pastor?"

Enoc was shocked. "What are you talking about?" he said.

"I see how you talk about Jesus with your clients," his partner said. "You clearly love it. So, why aren't you a pastor?"

Soon after, Enoc and his family were at Sagunto Adventist College—where he was studying theology to become a pastor. It hadn't been their plan. It had been God's.

Find out exactly what happened in next week's mission story.

AMsda.org/A2634

Story Tips

- Show Spain on a map. Then, point out Sagunto, a town near Valencia on the eastern coast. Sagunto received offering funds in the first quarter of 2020 to expand the theology department. Another previous offering helped construct a girls' dormitory.
- Pronounce Enoc the same as the biblical name "Enoch."
- Watch a YouTube video of Enoc speaking in English at: bit.ly/Enoc-E-EUD.
- Watch a YouTube video of Enoc speaking in Spanish at: bit.ly/Enoc-S-EUD.

Fast Facts

- Spain mainly became Christian under the Romans. Later, Germanic tribes from Europe invaded the region, and in 711 A.D., Muslims from Africa invaded Spain.
- In 1492, Christian kingdoms in northern Spain conquered the Muslims and spread the Catholic religion.
- The Sagrada Familia is a Catholic cathedral in Barcelona designed by the famous architect Antoni Gaudí. It has been under construction since 1882, but despite being unfinished, it has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status.

A previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, helped expand the theology department as Sagunto Adventist College, where Enoc currently studies. Another offering helped build the girls' dormitory, where Ingrid now works. Just as those offerings have made a big difference in the lives of Enoc, Ingrid, and others, your offering this quarter can help shape more lives for eternity. Thank you for your generous support of the mission projects in the Inter-European Division, which includes Spain.

Enoc's Dream, Part 2



SPAIN | August 1

Enoc

From last week's story: Enoc felt like he was living a dream life in Spain. He owned a flourishing physical therapy practice with a business partner in Barcelona. His wife, Ingrid, worked as a physical therapist at a Seventh-day Adventist nursing home. And they had two sons who enjoyed attending the local Adventist school. So, he couldn't understand why he felt impressed to go to Sagunto Adventist College and study to become a pastor. One day, as he and his business partner finalized papers on a major business expansion, the partner asked him why he wasn't a pastor.

That night, Enoc told Ingrid about the conversation. The next day, he was scheduled to sign the documents.

Ingrid, who had urged Enoc to become a pastor for many months, prayed desperately: "God, we can't make plans based on Your silence. We can go in any direction, but please make it Your will."

The next morning, Enoc woke up for his personal devotions. After reading the Bible and praying, he opened the *Adult Bible Study Guide* and turned to a study about Abraham's faith. He read how God had asked Abraham to leave his country and go to a place He would show him. Enoc prayed, "It's so easy if You speak like that. I think we all want to hear a direct command from You."

At 7 o'clock, Enoc's phone rang. It was the president of Sagunto Adventist College.

"I'm so sorry for the early call," the president said, "But I saw you were already active on WhatsApp, so I knew you were awake. I need to ask you something."

"What's going on?" Enoc said.

"Feel free to say no," the president said. "But I must ask something that God has placed on my heart. We want you and your wife to come to Sagunto. You would serve as boys' dean and your wife as assistant girls' dean. We will give you a salary and housing."

Enoc couldn't believe his ears. The president was speaking to him just like God had spoken to Abraham—directly.

When the president finished describing the jobs, he said, "OK, now you can tell me no. I know you have your own business, but I had to ask."

Enoc struggled to find his voice. Finally, he managed to say that he had dreamed of becoming a pastor for years, but it had always seemed impossible. Now, the president's invitation made it look like God was opening the door.

The president was astonished.

After the call, Ingrid asked what had happened.

"The president of Sagunto Adventist College just called us," Enoc said. "He wants us to come to Sagunto to work as deans."

Ingrid started to cry. Her prayer the previous night had been for God to reveal His will. But her personal desire since the recent death of her father had been to move closer to her mother.

"No," Ingrid said. "I want to go to my mother."

She told Enoc she needed a clear sign from God to move to Sagunto.

"You don't think what just happened is enough?" Enoc said.

"No, I need my own sign," she replied.

Enoc and Ingrid prayed. They reminded God that Gideon had received not one but two signs with the fleece in Judges 6, and they asked God to do the same for them.

The next morning, while driving to work, Ingrid prayed. She remembered a Bible board game she and Enoc had created during the COVID lockdown. They had submitted it to the youth department of the Adventist Church in Spain but hadn't heard back for months. She prayed, "If the youth director contacts me about the game, I'll take it as a sign that we should go to Sagunto."

Then she reconsidered. "That's too much to ask," she told God. "We haven't spoken in so long. I don't need him to call. I just need You to make it clear that this is Your will."

Thirty minutes later, the youth director texted her phone. He wrote, "I don't have anything concrete to tell you about the game. I just wanted you to know that we're still looking at it. That's all."

Ingrid called Enoc. "We're going to Sagunto," she said.

"What happened?" he asked.

"I'll tell you tonight at home."

Today, Enoc and Ingrid are living and working at Sagunto Adventist College. Their two sons are studying at an Adventist school on the same campus. Enoc, who sold his share in his physical therapy practice, is studying theology and joyfully speaking about Jesus full-time.

"We've decided to always be ready to listen to God's voice, His will, and whatever He asks us to do," Enoc said. "Our lives don't belong to us. God brought us here, and from now on, we'll go wherever He sends us."

Part of a previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, went to Sagunto Adventist College to expand its theology department, where Enoc is studying. Another previous offering helped build the girls' dormitory, where Ingrid works. Just as those offerings have made a life-changing difference for Enoc, Ingrid, and others, your offering this quarter can help shape many lives for eternity. Thank you for your generous offering to the mission projects in the Inter-European Division, which includes Spain.

Story Tips

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- Watch a YouTube video of Enoc speaking in English at: bit.ly/Enoc-E-EUD.
- Watch a YouTube video of Enoc speaking in Spanish at: bit.ly/Enoc-S-EUD.

Fast Facts

- Spain is the world's largest producer of olive oil, nearly 40% of the total global production.
- Spain is a country filled with traditions. One of those traditions occurs on New Year's Eve, when 12 grapes are eaten during the last 12 seconds of the year. This is supposed to bring good luck.

Elusive Building Permit



BULGARIA | August 8

Marian

To build any kind of building in Bulgaria, you need a building permit.

The building permit is issued by the city.

Because the Seventh-day Adventist Church planned to open a large church in the country's capital, Sofia, it needed to obtain a building permit signed by the city's chief architect.

To get the signature, you had to make an appointment to meet the chief architect in person. But he wasn't available every day. He came to his office to sign building permits one afternoon per month.

Furthermore, appointments could only be scheduled by phone. In-person scheduling wasn't allowed.

It fell upon Iva, the office secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bulgaria, to call the chief architect's secretary to request an appointment.

The task wasn't simple. When Iva called during the first month, the phone line was constantly busy. The second month, the line was free, but no one answered. The third and fourth months, it was busy again.

Finally, the president of the Adventist Church in Bulgaria went to the chief architect's office to explain the situation in person.

"You can't arrange an appointment by coming here," the secretary said. "You need to call."

So, the president called Iva from the chief architect's office and said, "I'm in the office. Please call his secretary now."

Iva called and called, but no one answered. The phone rang and rang. The president could hear it. The secretary could hear it. But no one answered.

Frustrated, Iva called the president and said, "Please call her yourself."

So, he did. Standing right in front of the secretary, he called her office line, but she didn't answer.

It was then that the Adventists began to suspect that someone else might want to buy their land. The property they had purchased for the Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church was prime real estate—right next

to the underground entrance of a subway station. On one side of the future church was a large shopping center. On the other side was a main tram line. Someone likely hoped the Adventists would give up and sell the land at a low price.

The Adventists began to pray earnestly for their church building. They prayed for 25 years. Finally, a new chief architect took office in Sofia, and he signed the long-awaited building permit. Construction of the church began in October 2024 with the help of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as a Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

"We are glad that our prayers for 25 years have come true," said Marian, head elder of the church.

The Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church is under construction, thanks to the support of generous donors from around the world who contributed to the first quarter 2020 offering. This quarter, you can help share the good news of Jesus' soon coming in Bulgaria. Part of the offering will support a Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten called Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) as it moves from rented facilities into its own building in Sofia. Thank you for your generous offering.

AMsda.org/A2636

Story Tips

- Show Bulgaria on a map. Then, point to the capital, Sofia, where the Sofia West Seventh-day Adventist Church property and Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) are located.
- Pronounce Tzventna Nadezhda as tsvet-na na-dezh-da.
- Watch a YouTube video of Marian at: bit.ly/Marian-EUD.

Know that the Adventist Church bought the land in 2000, but progress remained stalled until October 2024. During that time, the congregation worshipped in various rented locations. For a while, they shared a building with another Adventist congregation and rotated sanctuary use. Later, they moved to the second floor of a community center. Attendance steadily grew—including 40 children—and the congregation was thrilled to finally have a larger space to worship and serve the community through food and clothing ministries during the week.

Mission Post

- In the early 1890s, a group of German Adventists, who had emigrated from the German settlements in Russia and had settled in Romania, near the Bulgarian border, spread their beliefs among their Romanian and Bulgarian neighbors.
- In 1899, Ellen G. White's *Steps to Christ* was the first Adventist book translated into Bulgarian and published in Bulgaria.

In 1911, C. Motzer, a minister from Germany, organized the Bulgarian Mission. By 1912, a church of eight members had been organized in Sofia.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was not officially recognized by the Bulgarian government until 1990.

First Adventist Kindergarten



BULGARIA | August 15

Maria

Editor's note: This week's mission story is about a Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten called Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) in Sofia, Bulgaria, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

Maria's son was three years old, and she didn't want to send him to a public kindergarten in Bulgaria. But there were no options. There were no Seventh-day Adventist kindergartens, and she wasn't sure what to do.

Worries filled Maria's thoughts day and night as her maternity leave neared an end. Bulgaria had a generous maternity leave policy, and she was able to stay at home with her son for three years. But soon, she would need to return to her job at a financial institution. Although she liked her coworkers and her salary, she didn't feel comfortable sending her son to a public kindergarten.

Finally, in desperation, she turned to her husband one night and asked, "What am I supposed to do? I must go back to work soon."

He looked at her seriously and replied, "When are you going to understand that God wants you to do something yourself?"

His words surprised Maria. It was like hearing God's voice. She knew he was right. She needed to open Bulgaria's first Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten. But how? It was 2016, and there were no Adventist schools of any kind in Bulgaria.

As she shared her vision with church members, some expressed doubt that a kindergarten could succeed.

"Don't waste your time," they said. "It's impossible. All kindergartens and schools are free in Bulgaria, so who would pay to send their children to a kindergarten?"

But just three months later, the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten opened its doors.

It took six weeks to find a suitable location. With her three-year-old son in tow, Maria visited possible sites across Bulgaria's capital, Sofia. She searched everywhere except in her neighborhood. She wanted the location to be convenient for the team she had assembled, not simply an easy 15-minute walk from her own home. But no one wanted to offer her a lease. When building owners heard that she wanted to open a kindergarten, they shook their heads and said, "No." They didn't want little children ruining their buildings.

Maria grew desperate. She didn't understand God's will and why she couldn't find a place.

With just six weeks remaining until her target date, time was running out. Maria prayed again and told herself, "I'll start looking closer to my home as well."

Then, she saw an advertisement for a house just up the street. The moment she saw the building, she knew it was the place God had prepared. She prayed that the owner would feel the same conviction.

The owner seemed open to the idea, and Maria called her team to visit the house. They liked it, and the owner liked the team. The owner agreed to lease the house and even offered a generous discount, understanding that the kindergarten was a start-up project with little funding and no guarantee of profit.

Before signing the lease, Maria knew she had to tell the owner that the kindergarten would teach Seventh-day Adventist values. She wondered how the owner would respond. Some Bulgarians looked down on Adventists, considering them a sect.

On the day Maria went to sign the contract, she entered the house and saw the owner's husband sitting in an armchair, reading the Bible. She was shocked. It turned out he was a retired professor of religion and philosophy.

Then Maria sat down at a table. The owner looked over at her and said, "You're Seventh-day Adventist, right?"

Maria was even more shocked. How did she know?

The owner had found the kindergarten's social media page and learned that it was affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She had a very positive impression of Adventists. As a piano teacher, she had taught a number of Adventist students over the years. She said she was happy to entrust her house to an Adventist kindergarten.

The kindergarten opened on September 15, 2016. God blessed the venture, and two years later, a second kindergarten opened under the same name at a new location. Today, one kindergarten has 16 children and the other has 14.

To this day, Maria and the owner of the first kindergarten maintain a warm friendship. Every time they talk, the owner says, "You're very different. God is at work in your life."

Maria and her team pray regularly for the owner and her husband.

"They don't have children of their own," Maria said. "They say leasing us this building gives them a sense of meaning and fulfillment. They always support us. We know God has a plan for their lives through us, and we continue to intercede for them in our prayers."

Part of this quarter's offering will allow the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten to move out of one of its rented facilities into a building of its own in Sofia. Thank you for being part of this life-changing project in Bulgaria.

AMsda.org/A2637

Story Tips

- Show Bulgaria on a map. Then, point to the capital, Sofia, where the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten is located.
- Pronounce Tzventna Nadezhda as tsvet-na na-dezh-da.
- Note that Maria's son has since moved on to elementary school, but her 5-year-old daughter now attends the kindergarten.
- Watch a YouTube video of the kindergarten's founder, Maria, at: bit.ly/Maria-YA-EUD.

Fast Facts

- The Roman Empire conquered the region that is now Bulgaria in 45 AD.
- Christianity began to spread in the area in the fourth century. Boris I, leader of the first Bulgarian Empire, abolished paganism in 864, allowing Eastern Orthodox Christianity to flourish.

Sophia's Favorite Book



BULGARIA | August 22

Sophia

Editor's note: This week's mission story is about a Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten called Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) in Sofia, Bulgaria, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

Sophia was an intelligent, observant two-year-old girl in Bulgaria. She had never heard about God at home because her parents had no interest in religion. But her parents had heard good things about a Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, and they were sure that Sophia should attend.

Sophia immediately fell in love with the Bible stories she heard every morning at the kindergarten. She soaked up the stories and soon knew many of them by heart.

By the time Sophia was three, she was able to make connections between the Bible stories. One day, the teacher read the story of Samson and spoke about how the wicked Philistines had seized Samson and put him in prison.

"Oh, the Philistines!" Sophia said. "The Philistines are where Goliath came from."

And she was right! The Philistines who captured Samson were part of the same group of people that later gave rise to the giant Goliath in the time of King Saul and David.

Sophia's observation amazed her teacher. She truly was a remarkable little girl.

One day, Sophia's mother sent the teacher a photo of Sophia looking through a children's book of Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School lessons. The teacher was surprised because she hadn't given the book to the family.

"Where did you get that book?" the teacher asked.

It turned out that a stranger had given the book to Sophia at a shopping center.

Sophia liked the book of Sabbath School lessons very much. But her favorite book

was a children's Bible that the teacher had given her at the kindergarten. She took the Bible home and looked at its colorful pictures every day. As she flipped through the pages, she remembered the Bible stories she had heard at the kindergarten.

Then, one day, the teacher noticed that Sophia was walking around the kindergarten carrying another Bible—a small, red book—in her hands. She carried it all day long. Finally, the teacher asked, "Why are you carrying this Bible everywhere?"

"It's my favorite book," Sophia said. "I'm sad I don't have it at home. Now, I'll go to Grandmother's and have to say goodbye to this book."

The teacher was surprised. She knew how much Sophia loved her children's Bible at home. The small, red Bible had very small text and didn't contain pictures that were as nice as the children's Bible. But on this day, Sophia had decided that the red Bible was her favorite—and she didn't want to part with it.

When Sophia was leaving the kindergarten that afternoon, the teacher gave her the small, red Bible as a gift. Sophia was thrilled. She took it home and then brought it to her grandmother's house that weekend.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how Sophia develops," said her teacher, Maria. "She has a very profound connection with God. Just today, she prayed during our morning worship for our city and for the plants in our kindergarten."

Part of this quarter's offering will allow the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten to move out of a rented facility into a building of its own in Sofia. More than half of the children who attend come from families that aren't part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some don't believe in God. Thank you for your generous support of this life-changing project in Bulgaria.

AMsda.org/A2638

Story Tips

- Show Bulgaria on a map. Then, point to the capital, Sofia, where the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten is located.
- Pronounce Tzventna Nadezhda as tsvet-na na-dezh-da.
- Know that the photo on the opposite page shows Teacher Maria walking with Sophia.
- Watch a video of Teacher Maria walking with Sophia and another child after visiting a playground near the kindergarten: bit.ly/Sophia-EUD.

Fast Facts

- In 1925, Greece and Bulgaria were engaged in a conflict called "the War of the Stray Dog."
- Bulgaria has some of the richest biodiversity in Europe. The country has three national parks, 11 nature parks, 10 biosphere reserves, and 565 protected areas.
- Bulgaria is the largest producer in the world of lavender and rose oils, which are used for French perfumes.
- Bulgarian folk music has a distinctive sound and uses traditional instruments, such as the gadulka, gaida, kaval, and tupan. The gaida is a bagpipe and is Bulgaria's national instrument.
- Bulgarian cuisine is similar to that of other Balkan countries and was influenced by Turkiye and Greece. Some of the best-known Bulgarian foods are lukanka (a kind of salami), banitsa (a pastry), shopska (a salad), lyutenitsa (a vegetable relish), and kozunak (a sweet bread).
- The Danube River forms most of Bulgaria's border with Romania to the north.
- Bulgaria is one of the oldest European countries and is the only one that hasn't changed its name since it was founded.
- The Bulgarian motto is "Unity makes strength."

God Doesn't Make Mistakes



photo: Bigstock.com

BULGARIA | August 29

Gogi

Editor's note: This week's mission story is about a Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten called Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) in Sofia, Bulgaria, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

Teacher thought that Father and Mother might have made a mistake when they arrived at the Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten. Father seemed to be covered from head to toe with tattoos, and Mother resembled a fashion model or beauty queen.

Father and Mother were looking for a place to take their son, Gogi.

Teacher fought back an urge to say the kindergarten might not be the best place for their child. Silently praying, she firmly rejected her prejudices based on the parents' outer appearance. Then she told the parents that the kindergarten had Seventh-day Adventist teachers who taught children to love Jesus.

"Yes, yes," the parents replied enthusiastically. "We want to enroll our son here."

Gogi was developmentally delayed. When he arrived, he was unable to speak with the other children and could only make some sounds. His behavior was typical of children who are on the autism spectrum.

Teacher prayed for Gogi for many days and worked closely with him to develop his speech and social skills.

As time passed, Teacher learned that Gogi's mother was deeply dedicated to her son and very loyal to the kindergarten. She wanted to help in every way possible. To Teacher's amazement, this fashion-model-looking mom began going to supermarket sales to buy the best things at the best prices to help the kindergarten save money. Mother was also distressed about Gogi's development, so Teacher began to meet regularly with her to discuss her concerns and offer guidance on how to support him at home.

Over the months, Gogi began to speak

and made other improvements. Teacher and Mother developed a warm friendship. Teacher also learned that Gogi's father worked as a bodyguard for a Bulgarian gangster.

Teacher continued to pray for Gogi and his family.

One morning, Teacher received a video message from Mother. Gogi was sick at home, and in the video, he said, "Mommy, it's time for spiritual breakfast!"

At the kindergarten, Teacher referred to morning worship as spiritual breakfast. Now, Gogi wanted to have morning worship with his mother at home.

In the video, Gogi also sang a Christian song just like those sung during morning worship at the kindergarten. Then, holding his children's Bible—a gift from the kindergarten—he showed his mother the story that he wanted her to read.

Mother told Teacher she was delighted. Teacher was overjoyed, too. She realized that Mother was open to learning more about God, so she began giving her Bible studies.

Life changed in Gogi's home. Father stopped eating meat. At the kindergarten, the children were served healthy meals, and Gogi began refusing meat at home. So, the whole family stopped eating it. Mother said Father felt healthier without it. Then, Father quit his job as a bodyguard and enrolled in school to become a physical education teacher.

Later, the family moved to another town so Father could teach physical education. But Teacher and Mother kept in touch.

Today, Gogi is in the fourth grade and is a straight A student. Mother wants to be baptized, but first, she and Father plan to get married. They have lived together in a common-law relationship and now want to make their union official in the eyes of God and the government.

Meanwhile, Mother works as a cosmetician and openly shares her love for Jesus with her clients. The kindergarten has sent her many Bibles and other books to give to her clients. Her dream is to become a missionary.

Teacher now sees clearly: God didn't make a mistake when He brought Father and Mother to the Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten. He performed a miracle. The decision changed their lives forever.

Part of this quarter's offering will allow the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten to move out of a rented facility into a building of its own in Sofia. More than half of the children who attend come from families who aren't members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some don't believe in God. Thank you for your generous support of this life-changing project in Bulgaria.

AMsda.org/A2639

Story Tips

- Show Bulgaria on a map. Then, point to the capital, Sofia, where the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten is located.
- Pronounce Gogi as GO-ghee.
- Pronounce Tzventna Nadezhda as tsvet-na na-dezh-da.
- Know that the photo on the opposite page is a stock image that depicts a Bulgarian boy similar to Gogi.
- Watch a YouTube video of the kindergarten's founder, Maria, explaining the importance of spiritual breakfast, or morning devotions, to children at: bit.ly/Maria-C-EUD.

Fast Facts

- Weightlifting and wrestling are important sports in Bulgaria, but football (soccer) is the most popular sport in the country.
- Bulgaria was conquered by Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Ottoman Empire.

The Broken Cup



photo: Bigstock.com

BULGARIA | September 5

Dany

Editor's note: This week's mission story is about a Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten called Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) in Sofia, Bulgaria, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

Dany was only one year and nine months old when her mother brought her to the Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Mother was pregnant and about to give birth to a second child, and she needed someone to help watch little Dany. Though Mother wasn't a Seventh-day Adventist—she belonged to another Christian denomination—she trusted that the Seventh-day Adventist kindergarten teachers would help Dany grow to love Jesus.

Dany immediately fell in love with the teachers and the Bible stories that she heard at the kindergarten. Mother and the rest of the family also quickly grew fond of the kindergarten and its staff. Dany's parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts became the kindergarten's biggest fans on social media, always liking and commenting on its posts.

One day, Dany's mother came to the kindergarten with an unusual request.

"Could you help us find a place for Dany's birthday party?" she asked. "We need a large venue because we would like to invite many guests."

The kindergarten teachers agreed to help, and the family ended up hosting the party at the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bulgaria. Imagine that—a family of devoted Christians from another denomination celebrating their little girl's birthday in the conference room of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's national headquarters! The kindergarten teachers helped organize the special celebration and included many spiritual elements to remind the guests of Jesus' love.

All the children, parents, grandparents,

uncles, and aunts who attended were deeply impressed and happy.

Afterward, Dany's family began to read Seventh-day Adventist books, including *The Desire of Ages* by Ellen White.

Eventually, Dany grew older and left the kindergarten to begin first grade. Still, she and her family remained in close contact with the kindergarten and its teachers. They are studying the Bible and seeing it in a new light.

A year after Dany left the kindergarten, Mother called the kindergarten's founder at 10 o'clock at night with an urgent request.

"Dany broke her cup," she said. "She is devastated and crying. Can you help?"

Every kindergarten child receives a glass drinking cup with his or her name on it, along with a hand-drawn picture by the kindergarten's founder, Maria. The cups are treasured by the children, and when they leave the kindergarten, they take their cups home. Dany had broken her cup, the cherished item that kept her emotionally connected to the kindergarten.

Maria quickly sent a new cup by courier to the city where Dany now lived. She also included several Christian books in the package.

"We see the imprint that God leaves on children's minds," Maria said.

She can't wait to see what plans God has next for Dany and her family.

Part of this quarter's offering will allow the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten to move out of a rented facility into a building of its own in Sofia. More than half of the children who attend the kindergarten come from families who are not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some don't believe in God. Thank you for your generous support of this life-changing project in Bulgaria.

AMsda.org/A26310

Story Tips

- Show Bulgaria on a map. Then, point to the capital, Sofia, where the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten is located.
- Know that the photo on the opposite page is a stock image that depicts a Bulgarian girl similar to Dany.
- Pronounce Dany the same as the English name "Danny."
- Pronounce Tzventna Nadezhda as tsvet-na na-dezh-da.
- Watch a YouTube video of the kindergarten's founder, Maria, at: bit.ly/Maria-YA-EUD.

Fast Fact

- The capital of Bulgaria is Sofia.
- The official language is Bulgarian.
- The Bulgarian national anthem is "Mila Rodina" ("Dear Motherland").
- The Balkan Mountains run through Bulgaria from west to east.
- Bulgaria is Europe's fifth-largest coal producer.
- Meat consumption is lower in Bulgaria than the European average; Bulgarians prefer many different salads.
- Many Bulgarians shake their heads for "yes" and nod for "no."
- The Bulgarians were the first people to use the Cyrillic alphabet.
- The first group known to live in Bulgaria was the Thracians, a tribal society of artisans, farmers, and horsemen.

Teacher Who Wept



BULGARIA | September 12

Maria

This week's mission story is about a project that will benefit from this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

A Seventh-day Adventist woman called the founder of the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten in Sofia, Bulgaria, to recommend a teacher.

"If the kindergarten had an opening, she would be worth considering," the caller said.

Colorful Hope had more than enough teachers, but Maria—the founder—had learned over the years since opening the kindergarten that God never gives anything unnecessary. She had learned to listen to His voice and to seek His will.

So, she said, "We don't need an additional teacher right now, but I'd be happy to meet with Tanya."

During the job interview, Maria asked Tanya whether she was a follower of Jesus. Tanya replied that her husband had joined the Adventist Church a few months earlier and that she was furious about it. She didn't understand why he would spend Saturdays at church instead of with her—especially because his job kept him away from home much of the week. She had refused his invitations to read the Bible or attend church with him.

Maria told Tanya about the kindergarten, explaining that she founded it in 2016 and that it now had some 30 children across two locations in Sofia. She also described what the Adventist teachers believed and how they worked. She sensed Tanya was open to spiritual things.

The conversation then turned to the challenges the kindergarten had faced and how God had miraculously led. Feeling impressed to invite Tanya to teach, Maria offered her a part-time position.

Two days later, Tanya called to accept the job.

A month later, Maria learned the rest of the story.

Tanya told her that she started crying

uncontrollably after the interview. Her husband, Denislav, was waiting for her in the car, and she sat beside him, weeping for 30 minutes. He had only smiled, sensing that the Holy Spirit was working on her heart.

Tanya said that during the interview, a desire formed in her heart to live a life of faith like Maria. Then, as she left the kindergarten, she felt as if the sun was shining on her in a new way. For the first time in her life, she felt that God loved her.

When she finally wiped away her tears in the car, she promised Denislav she would go to church with him on Sabbath. She kept her promise.

Maria began giving Tanya Bible studies, and nine months later, Tanya gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized. Denislav was thrilled.

Much later, Tanya confided that she had kept part of her story to herself. Two days after the job interview, a former employer called to offer her part-ownership of a kindergarten. She would enjoy a high salary and complete freedom to hire her own team and shape its program. The offer had been tempting. But Tanya had weighed her options and realized she would lose something priceless if she accepted it. So, she called Maria to accept the part-time job instead.

Today, Tanya leads the kindergarten's second location, while Maria still leads the first. Additionally, Tanya and Denislav have become church planters. Seeing the need for an Adventist presence in an unentered district of Sofia, they launched an outreach program and planted a church there.

"It's so wonderful to know that you can't do anything by yourself," Maria said. "Jesus says, 'Without Me you can do nothing.' But when you rest in His hands and allow Him, He does miracles."

Story Tips

- Show Bulgaria on a map. Then point to the capital, Sofia, where Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) is located.
- Pronounce Tzventna Nadezhda as tsvet-na na-dezh-da.
- Watch a YouTube video of the kindergarten's founder, Maria, at: bit.ly/Maria-YA-EUD.
- Know that Tzventna Nadezhda always aims to have one teacher who is not a Seventh-day Adventist join its team. "Even though we work primarily with children and their parents, we also have one teacher on our team who is not an Adventist today," Maria said. "It is always like that. These teachers are also our mission."

Part of this quarter's offering will allow the Colorful Hope (Tzventna Nadezhda) kindergarten to move out of one of its rented facilities into a building of its own in Sofia. More than half of the children who attend the kindergarten come from families who are not members of the Adventist Church. Some don't believe in God. Thank you for your generous support of this life-changing project in Bulgaria and the other projects that will benefit from today's offering. The other projects in the Inter-European Division include two schools in Romania; a youth camp, church camp, and training center in Belgium; and a dormitory at the Italian Adventist University Villa Aurora in Florence, Italy.

Principal to Two Parents



ROMANIA | September 19

Camelia

Editor's note: This week's mission story is from the Seventh-day Adventist elementary school in Macea, Romania, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering.

Mother had her mind made up when she arrived at the principal's office at the Seventh-day Adventist school in Macea, Romania.

"I've come to take my son out of your school," she said. "I'm divorcing my husband, and I've already moved to another city. The daily commute from our new home to this school is too far."

Principal Camelia was sad to hear that Mother wanted to transfer eight-year-old Antonio to a public school. She felt impressed to ask a question.

"Can you bring your husband and come back to see me?" she asked.

Mother agreed and returned a short time later with Father.

"Getting a divorce would be a major loss," Principal Camelia told them. "Antonio would lose his parents, and he would lose his school."

Mother was very upset about the marriage, and she insisted on the divorce. Father, however, expressed a willingness to stay together.

Principal Camelia knew that neither of them attended church regularly, so she spoke to them from the Bible. She said God made marriage in the Garden of Eden and that He frowns on divorce. She quoted Jesus saying, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6, NKJV).

"Divorce isn't part of God's plan," Principal Camelia said. "It's Satan's plan because he wants to destroy families. He knows that a divorced parent will have an especially difficult time facing society's challenges alone."

Mother and Father listened attentively.

"I have an idea," Principal Camelia continued. "Instead of arguing, try telling each other something you appreciate about the other. Think about what you like about your wife. What good qualities does she have? What good qualities does your husband have? What do you like about him?"

Mother agreed to wait on making a final decision about transferring Antonio out of

the school. But a few days later, after another argument with Father, she stormed into Principal Camelia's office. She was determined to get a divorce and transfer Antonio.

"My husband is unemployed," she fumed. "He doesn't have enough money. He can't support the family. He isn't interested in us."

Principal Camelia sympathized with Mother's concern but urged her to have patience. Jobs were hard to find in that region of Romania.

Mother realized that Principal Camelia had a point. She began to warm up to the idea of not getting a divorce.

Then, after another argument, Father called the principal on the phone.

"My wife keeps telling me that I don't have enough money to support the family and that I'm not interested in providing for them," he said.

Principal Camelia urged him to keep looking for work.

"You need to get a job to show your wife that you're committed to your family," she said.

"So what?" he said. "Should I go to work just because she told me to?"

"Yes," she said. "Your wife knows your child's needs. Find a job. You have a child to raise. You are responsible for him."

And so, it continued. Every time they argued, Mother came to the principal's office, and Father called on the phone. The arguments were always about money and Father's unemployment. Principal Camelia kept encouraging Mother to be patient and Father to find work. In between the quarrels, the couple followed the principal's advice and found something kind to say about each other at home.

Then Father found a job in France. He moved away and began sending money back to Romania. Mother was satisfied, but she missed her husband. The man she had once wanted to divorce was now her good friend.

After two years, when Antonio was 10, Mother withdrew him from the school and moved to France to reunite the family.

While in France, the family kept in touch with Principal Camelia. Antonio missed her and insisted on calling her regularly. Principal Camelia learned that the family had found a church in France and started attending. They were growing closer—not just to each other, but also to God.

The family moved back to Romania in time for Antonio to enter sixth grade at a public school. He would have liked to return to the Adventist school, but it only provided education through the fourth grade.

Principal Camelia remains a good friend of the family. Whenever she sees Father in town, he smiles and says, "Thank you, Miss Camelia. Because of you, I didn't lose my family."

Part of this quarter's offering will help the Seventh-day Adventist elementary school in Macea, Romania, expand so it can accept more children. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

AMsda.org/A26312

Story Tips

- Show Romania on a map. Then point to Macea, where the school is located.
- Know that the Macea school was founded in 2011 and had 72 students and preschoolers in 2025. It has seven full-time teachers.

Mission Post

- Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were first preached in Romania by M. B. Czechowski, a former Polish Catholic priest who had learned of the seventh-day Sabbath and Christ's imminent return while in America.
- Returning to Europe in 1864, he preached these doctrines in Italy and Switzerland. In the winter of 1868-1869, he came to Romania and preached in Pitesti. About 12 people accepted his message.
- Permanent Adventist work for Romanians began in 1904, when J. F. Ginter, an evangelist from Russia, settled in Bucharest.

Walking by Faith Not by Sight



13th SABBATH | September 26

Clara and Andreea

Clara is a lively student, full of bold and creative ideas.

Although she is only 11 years old, she confidently says that all her prayers are answered.

At the school where she studies, there was a need for a native English-speaking teacher. However, for various reasons, the school year started without anyone filling that role. Clara began to pray about it, fully convinced that the situation would be resolved.

Time went by, and no one seemed interested in the opportunity, but Clara didn't get discouraged—she kept praying about it.

On the other side of the world, in Australia, a young woman named Andreea was attending camp meeting. When a missionary family shared their experiences, she was deeply inspired. A thought came to her mind, but she decided not to act on it—it didn't seem like the right time.

She had just started a new job, was living on her own for the first time, had a mortgage, and was about to begin a professional training program. Clearly, it didn't feel like the right moment. Still, as she scrolled through VividFaith's* Instagram page, she paused to view their mission calls. Andreea clicked "like" and returned to everyday life, leaving those thoughts behind. But a seed had been planted in her heart.

Meanwhile, in Romania, Clara continued to pray and believe.

A few months later, while relaxing on the beach in Australia, Andreea was scrolling through Instagram when a VividFaith post struck her like lightning—an announcement for a missionary opportunity in Romania, specifically for a native English speaker.

She felt that the call was meant for her—a wave of conviction flooded over her, urging her to act. *This is crazy*, she thought. *It doesn't make any sense. I'm not ready. I'm not equipped or trained for this.*

Andreea and her family decided to fast and pray for two weeks, asking God for special guidance. This only deepened her belief that God was calling her to Romania. So, she submitted her application.

Two months passed—with no response. Andreea felt relieved, thinking she had dodged a bullet. She had done her part by applying, but no one had replied. Perhaps God was saying this was not the right time after all.

Then, in September, Andreea received an e-mail response to her application.

After an interview with the school administrators, Andreea could see that God was working behind the scenes. She believed He was in control and that it was best to follow His plan for her life.

However, she still worried about the many unknowns—what to do about her new job, the house mortgage, the living expenses in Romania, and her church responsibilities. The burden was overwhelming.

Through tears, she asked God for a sign that this truly was His plan. In that very moment, she felt a peace she had never known before—something supernatural. A peace beyond understanding. It was at this turning point that she surrendered all her doubts and accepted God's will for her life.

One month later, Andreea landed in Romania, where she would begin what she now calls: "The best time of my life." She learned that if you want God to work through you, you need to be willing, obedient, and joyful.

She often says: "God will never ask you to give up something without giving you something better in return."

For Clara, it was an answered prayer—a powerful reminder that even a child's faith can move hearts across the world. It was the kind of evidence that can strengthen a child's faith in God and confirm that God truly hears prayers, no matter what your age.

For Andreea, it was a commitment to follow God, who always has the best in

AMsda.org/A26313

Story Tips

- Show Romania and Australia on a map. Point out the distance between the two countries.

Fast Facts

- The capital of Romania is Bucharest.
- Romania derives from Latin romanus, meaning Roman or "of Rome."
- Most people wear modern clothing now. However, traditional garb can still be seen at festivals worn by folk musicians and dancers. Women's costumes are often heavily embroidered in largely geometric patterns. The embroidery is said to give a glimpse into the region it comes from through the colors and symbols used.
- Romanian cuisine has been influenced by German and Austrian cuisine and Balkan cuisines such as Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian. Rich soups and stews, known as Ciorbă, are popular, as are mititei (small rolls of ground meat), mămăligă (like polenta mixed with cheese), and sarmale (stuffed cabbage rolls).
- Six of the World Heritage Sites are located within Romania, and there are many castles, including Castelul Bran, known as "Dracula's Castle."
- Football (soccer) is the most popular sport in Romania, and tennis is the second most popular.
- The parliament buildings in Bucharest are the largest parliament buildings in the world.
- After World War II, Romania became a communist country until 1989, when the Romanian Revolution overthrew the communist regime.
- The Carpathian Mountains dominate the center of Romania.

store for our lives. We should follow His plans because, as Andreea says, "God knows better than us."

By Cristina Roșu

**VividFaith, a service of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is an online platform connecting people with service opportunities, including Adventist Volunteer Service. Use it to find or promote available positions at vividfaith.com.*

God was moving Andreea's heart on the other side of the world, as Clara faithfully prayed for a teacher to come to her school in Romania. This is where Andreea became Clara's teacher and friend.

Before 13th Sabbath

- Remind everyone that our mission offerings are gifts to spread God's Word around the world and that one-fourth of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering—also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering— will support five projects in the Inter-European Division. The projects are listed on page three and on the back cover.
- Before or after the story, use a map to show the places in the Inter-European Division—Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, and Romania—that will receive the offering.





Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

The Trans-European Division will be featured next quarter, and the special projects will include:

- Centers of influence at all Adventist schools, British Union Conference
- New church, Zagreb, Croatia
- Family mission center, Vantaa, Finland
- First Adventist school, Poland

Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free *Mission Spotlight* video featuring video reports from around the Inter-European Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

Online Information

Following are sources of information that may be helpful in preparing for the mission segment of Sabbath School. For more information on the cultures and history of the countries featured in this quarterly, visit:

Websites

Austria: government website	bit.ly/AustriaGovt
Britannica	bit.ly/BritAustria
Austria Info	www.austria.info/en-us
Bulgaria: government website	www.gov.bg/en
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LPBulgaria
Visit My Bulgaria	visitmybulgaria.com
Italy: government website	www.governo.it/en
Italia.it	www.italia.it/en
Fodor's	bit.ly/FodorsItaly
Romania: government website	www.gov.ro/en
Tourism Romania	www.romaniatourism.com
Wikitravel	wikitravel.org/en/Romania
Spain: government website	bit.ly/EspGovt
España	www.spain.info/en
National Geographic	on.natgeo.com/4jPmQXi

Seventh-day Adventist

Inter-European Division	eud.adventist.org
Austrian Union of Churches Conference	www.adventisten.at
Bulgarian Union of Churches Conference	www.adventist.bg
Italian Union of Churches Conference	www.chiesaavventista.it
Romanian Union Conference	www.adventist.ro
Spanish Union of Churches Conference	www.adventista.es

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering in some world regions, which may use an offering goal device to help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving: Determine a goal for your class's weekly mission offering. Multiply it by 14, allowing a double goal for the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Remind the listeners that their regular weekly mission offerings help the missionary work of the world church and that one-quarter of the offering will go directly to the projects in the Inter-European Division. Report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage the listeners to double or triple their normal mission giving on the upcoming Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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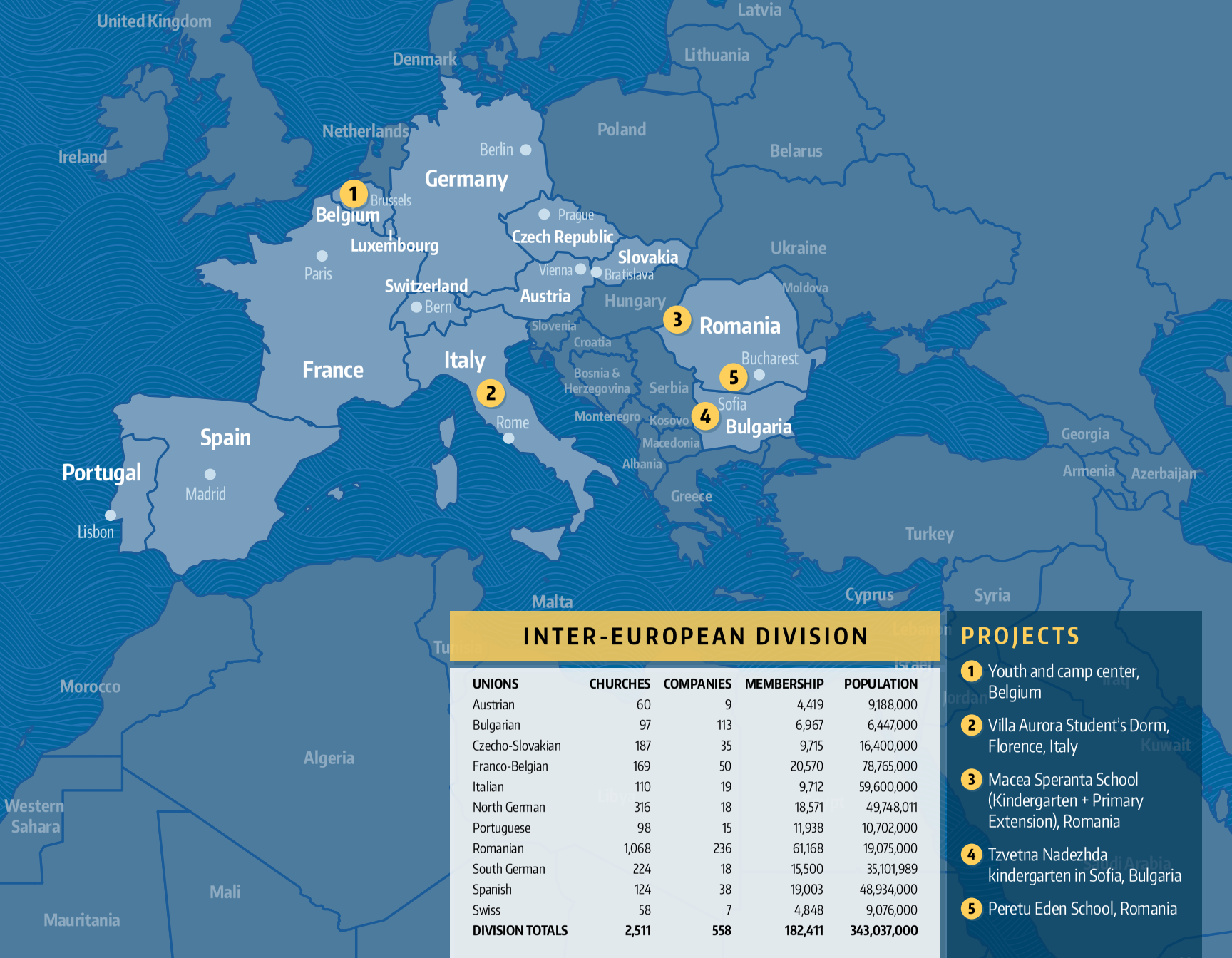

INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

UNIONS	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Austrian	60	9	4,419	9,188,000
Bulgarian	97	113	6,967	6,447,000
Czecho-Slovakian	187	35	9,715	16,400,000
Franco-Belgian	169	50	20,570	78,765,000
Italian	110	19	9,712	59,600,000
North German	316	18	18,571	49,748,011
Portuguese	98	15	11,938	10,702,000
Romanian	1,068	236	61,168	19,075,000
South German	224	18	15,500	35,101,989
Spanish	124	38	19,003	48,934,000
Swiss	58	7	4,848	9,076,000
DIVISION TOTALS	**2,511**	**558**	**182,411**	**343,037,000**

PROJECTS

1. Youth and camp center, Belgium
2. Villa Aurora Student's Dorm, Florence, Italy
3. Macea Speranta School (Kindergarten + Primary Extension), Romania
4. Tzvetna Nadezhda kindergarten in Sofia, Bulgaria
5. Peretu Eden School, Romania