



YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2017 • **QUARTER 1** • TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION



www.AdventistMission.org

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On the Cover: Elizabeth and Mercha are two professional musicians who met through the love of music. But it was the love of God that touched their hearts.

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 = stories of special interest to teens

Your Offerings at Work



In 2013, your Thirteenth Sabbath Mission Offering helped to renovate Moor Close—the historic women’s dormitory at Newbold College; establish evangelistic training centers in Athens, Greece and in Macedonia; create Bible 3-D exhibitions; and establish Messy Church congregations across the division. Thank you for generously supporting mission in the Trans-European Division!



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Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter features the Trans-European Division (TED), which includes the countries of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Macedonia, United Kingdom, the southern portion of Cyprus, and the Aland Islands.

This division is home to 204.8 million people. Total Seventh-day Adventist membership in the Trans-European Division is 85,289, giving a ratio of one Adventist for every 2,401 people.

While European countries are sometimes known as being very secular, you will find in this quarter's stories wonderful examples of how God is working with people even within very secular settings to draw them to Himself and into His Church.

To help meet the challenges of reaching the people in this world division, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help to build a much-needed Adventist church in Dublin, Ireland; an

international evangelistic and youth center in Oslo, Norway; a television studio for Hope Channel Poland; and a men's dormitory at the Marusevec Adventist School in Croatia, where a majority of the students come from non-Adventist homes.

You and your Sabbath school will also enjoy the stories on the free Mission Spotlight DVD from Adventist Mission featuring several wonderful and inspiring stories from people in the Trans-European Division, a children's story, music videos, and more. To download, go to www.adventistmission.org/dvd.

If you haven't yet done so, I invite you to visit our Facebook page and like us at www.facebook.com/missionquarterlies/.

One final note—this will be my final Mission quarterly as editor, as I will be serving in another department here at the General Conference. Nevertheless, mission will always be a part of me and I look forward to promoting it in new ways. By the way, I know you will be thrilled with the new Mission editor as you read more exciting and inspiring stories coming from around the world!

Thank you once again for your dedication to mission and helping those in your Sabbath School to connect with their spiritual brothers and sisters around the world, and encouraging them to participate in the mission of the church through giving.

Wishing you God's richest blessings!



Gina Wahlen, *Editor*

Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help to:

- build a Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dublin, Ireland.
- build a men's dormitory at the Adventist secondary school in Marusevec, Croatia.
- renovate an evangelistic international youth center in Oslo, Norway.
- build a television studio for Hope Channel, Poland in Warsaw.

“Gold In Their Hearts”

IRELAND | January 7

Theda



In this first person account, Theda (pronounced TH-EE-da), shares how God answered the prayers of her mother and lifted her up to reach others for Him.

I come from a broken family, and although my mother was a Bible worker, I was out of the church for a long time. At the age of 18 I left home, and went with any man who showed me attention, going through one relationship after another. I became an alcoholic and couldn't go a day without alcohol. In spite of this, I become a nurse and kept my job. For more than a decade, my mother was praying for me, pleading earnestly for my soul.

When I turned 30, I was brought to my knees by a very bad incident, and that's when the Lord revealed Himself to me. I'm an avid reader, and my mother had

given me a lot of books by Ellen White, which I had never gotten rid of.

Being in a very bad spot, I turned to these books. Scanning the shelf, my eye caught the title, *The Truth About Angels*. Taking the book, I opened it and read:

“We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand” (p. 14).

One evening as I sat on the floor by my bed, I was upset. There was a chord in me that didn't agree with drinking, and I wondered how I would ever be able to stop. Then suddenly the answer was there. Experiencing an unbelievable strength of purpose, I got up and poured all my wine down the toilet. I removed people from my life who were a bad influence, moved to another city and returned to church.

But then I started drinking again. Soon, however, the Lord drew me back. Determined to quit drinking, I told the

pastor, “If I don’t do this now, I never will.”

I took seven nights off from work, and locked my front door. Every hour during the first three days I went on my knees, pleading for God’s help. I went on fresh juice, water, and fruit. I ate nuts and seeds. My body cleaned out from drinking alcohol for so long. It was slow going, but when an evangelist from the U.S. came to Ireland, I attended the meetings and was baptized.

My interest in health outreach grew, and I became involved in the Cuisle (pronounced COOSH-le) Centre, a new center of influence operated by the Adventist Church on the south side of Dublin. (Learn more at www.cuislecentre.ie.) I volunteer at the center on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

One morning I decided to take some soup to the center. After arriving, I saw a man coming up on a bicycle. His hair was messed up, and he looked forlorn.

“Good day, sir. What can I do for you?” I asked.

“I don’t know.”

“Would you like me to take your blood pressure? How can I help you?”

“I wouldn’t mind a bite to eat,” he replied. I was so glad that I had brought some soup. I warmed up the soup and

sat down to speak with him. There was something about this guy—it was like God had come through the door. He was so gentle and sweet—it really struck me.

He had skin cancer by his eye, and was in pain. I changed his dressing for him. Then I took him into the church and prayed with him. He didn’t know how to kneel for prayer. He told me, “I’ve got so many things inside of me. I was abused by a religious leader. I wanted to tell the cops . . .”

We prayed and prayed. During the next six months he came to every prayer meeting, and every Sabbath he came to church. One day I took him home. His place was very clean. I walked inside, and all around were pictures of Jesus. He said, “I speak to Him all day long.”

Then he told me about that first day he came to the Cuisle Center.

“As I cycled past the church, something told me to turn around and go back. I didn’t know what I was going to do there, but something told me to turn back. Even though I was already past the building, I came back.”

He wanted to stop smoking, so we put him on the stop smoking plan. He was so grateful. But then he started smoking again and was too embarrassed to come back to church. I went to see him and told him that we missed him. We’ll help you, I assured him. He said that he missed us, too. He came back.

Some people—God just put gold in their hearts. I love community people. It’s so important for us to be here. People come in because they’re tired of walking around all day with themselves. But here they find someone who cares about them and is willing to help. 🌍

Fast Facts

- Ireland is a snake-free island. It also lacks moles, weasels, skunks, and roe deer.
- The ancestral language of Irish people is Irish Gaelic. Today, only 380,000 fluent speakers remain.
- Many Irish family names start with “Mac” or “O” which mean “son of . . .” and “grandson of . . .” in Gaelic.

Tatiana's Story

Tatiana



Born in the country of Moldova, Tatiana came to Ireland at the age of 19—and eight months pregnant. In this first person account she shares her riveting story.

I grew up in an Eastern Orthodox family. My parents took me to church and taught me about God. I knew that when I prayed, He would answer.

As a child someone gave me some books about Saturday, but our family believed that if it wasn't from the Orthodox faith it wasn't from God, so we burned the books.

But I felt God drawing me and I wanted to read a Bible. Trying to get closer to Him, I found some icons and kept them, thinking they were holy.

I married young. Believing that life would be better in Ireland, we started planning how to get there. At just 19 years old, I didn't realize how hard the journey would be. We first traveled to the Czech Republic and then to France. We stayed in Paris for six months, during which time I became pregnant. It was very difficult—

living on the street, begging for food, and sleeping in shelters at night.

Then one night we snuck onto a train headed for England, but were evicted at the closest French town to England. We stayed in a camp that night, where we found large bags big enough to hide in. Then we snuck onto a freight train that was carrying olive oil! We hid inside our bags on that train for 11 hours! I was sweating, and my baby was so still I was afraid that he was dead.

When we realized that we were finally approaching England, we crawled out of our hot, stuffy bags. We had nothing with us—just our passports and a little money. Arriving in Dover, we were taken to the Red Cross where we were given a change of clothes.

Later, we bought bus tickets to Scotland, then Northern Ireland. Since both are part of the U.K., there was no passport control. The challenge was to get from there into the Republic of Ireland. Arriving at a town near the border, we walked all night across fields and gardens, quietly crossing into Ireland by sunrise.

Taking a train into the capital city of Dublin, we immediately requested refugee status. We were sent to the city of Limerick, and our son, Christian, was born that same week!

Mission Post

- In 1861 the *Review & Herald* published letters from Ireland reporting that five persons had begun keeping the seventh-day Sabbath as a result of receiving books and papers from relatives in the U.S.A.
- The Seventh-day Adventist Irish Mission was organized in 1902 and includes the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- The Irish Mission has 10 churches and 783 members.

We stayed in Limerick for a year and a half, waiting to receive Irish citizenship. During that time, we made some friends who knew that we planned to move to Dublin. Before we left, they gave us the name and phone number of a couple they knew in Dublin. “Just call these people and you’ll have some friends there,” they said.

After receiving Irish passports, we briefly returned to Moldova. It was my first time to fly, and I cried the whole way. “Please God,” I prayed, “I promise that I’ll get a Bible and do everything in it! Just keep me safe.”

Arriving in Moldova, I bought a Bible. I also took my religious icons and other items, including some Moldovan food.

Back in Dublin, I called the number that our friends had given to us and invited the people over for a meal. It turned out that we lived in the same place—different buildings, but side by side!

The night before our guests came, I took my new Bible, sat down, and prayed. “God, this is the first time that I’m opening this Book. Show me the truth. Please show me what I need to do.”

The next day when our guests arrived,

I put some Moldovan wine, salami, and other meats from Moldova on the nicely arranged table. As they approached the table, they said, “We’re sorry, but we don’t drink wine.”

Shocked, I thought, *they must be from some strange sect!* But then another thought came, “*You promised you would do everything in my Word.*”

“Why don’t you drink wine?” I asked.

“Because the Bible says it’s not good,” they responded.

“Can you show me in my Bible?”

“Of course,” they responded, and showed me the texts condemning alcohol.

“OK,” I said, as I put the wine in the rubbish bin. Then I invited them to eat something.

“Sorry,” they said, “we can’t eat pork.”

“Why?” I asked. Then they showed me from my Bible.

“What church are you from?” I asked.

“Seventh-day Adventist.” I’d never heard of it.

“We go to church on Saturday.”

“Why?” I asked once again, and of course, they gave me the answer from my Bible.

“May I come to your church?” I asked.

I had promised God that I would follow the Bible.

That Sabbath I visited the Adventist church. After that visit, I never went back to the Orthodox church again. I had found the truth. Thank God that He brought me straight away to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Today, Tatiana and her children are members of an Adventist congregation that meets in a rented school hall in Dublin. They’re looking forward to having their own church building soon. Thank you for supporting them through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering! 🌍



The Power of Example

Elizabeth and Mercha

I was the first of nine girls in my family and the first to get married,” says Elizabeth. “It was a disgrace when I divorced my husband of about three months. My father didn’t understand that my new husband was abusing me. To him it looked bad to have such a renegade daughter.

“In 1980, the local orchestra in which I played flute went on a tour to the United States. We toured over 20,000 miles by bus, giving the same concert of Irish music 63 times in 71 days! It was on this tour that I met Mercha, who was new to the orchestra and who played violin.

“We moved in together and the next year the first of our three children was born. It was a magical time as I had escaped my unhappy childhood and found a wonderful relationship with Mercha.”

However, each time Elizabeth returned home after visiting her family she came home crying. “What’s the point of your

going there?” Mercha asked. “These visits upset you.” Elizabeth felt ostracized by her parents, society, and the Catholic Church.

If that’s what religion makes someone do to their own child, I don’t want it, Elizabeth decided. She determined not to have anything to do with organized religion.

At the same time, however, Elizabeth couldn’t help but notice the contrast between the way her own parents treated her, and how Mercha’s parents were warm and welcoming. Even though Mercha wasn’t a practicing Adventist at the time, his parents never criticized him or Elizabeth, and they always felt accepted. At that time, Mercha’s father held a leadership position in the Romanian Adventist church and was sent to various parts of Romania to sort out problems because he was an incredible diplomat.

“Sometimes Mercha’s parents would visit us and the children,” says Elizabeth.

“They would quietly go about their business. I could see that they had another way of doing things. His dad often explained things to me from the Bible, and I’ll admit that it was way over my head. I couldn’t help but wonder if the day one kept really made a difference as long as you loved God. In theory, the Catholics also had a Sabbath on Sunday, but after going to mass they would watch sports and maybe go to the pub. Mercha’s parents didn’t even go shopping on Saturday, but I could see there was a lovely gentle rhythm: six days and then a rest day.”

About this time Mercha starting thinking more about the Sabbath. He was working with the orchestra and knew that he couldn’t just claim to be an Adventist and continue working on Sabbath. Then he had a bad accident on his motorcycle.

“I had my violin on my back like a backpack. A car came from behind when I was stopped at a traffic light. The car went straight through the light without stopping and catapulted me about 20 feet in the air. I had a big bike and I think that

was a saving grace. The violin acted as a shield along my back and kept my back and neck from snapping. The violin was sacrificed but God saved me.”

Elizabeth was supposed to be on the back of the bike that night, but her sister came to visit and they decided to visit their mom instead. Mercha had broken ribs and many fractures and nearly lost his leg.

“For me it was a wake-up call,” he says, realizing that he could have been dead or living as a vegetable. In 2007 he was baptized. Elizabeth wasn’t ready to be baptized, but told him that his decision was between him and God.

At the same time, Elizabeth knew that if she ever turned to religion again she would turn to Mercha’s parents’ religion because it made sense. Things started falling into place for her. The negative language of the Catholic Church and the huge idea of guilt all seemed upside down to her.

In 2014, Pastor Mark Finley and Dr. Michael Hasel came to Ireland to conduct seminars on Amazing Discoveries and Biblical Archeology. Mercha invited Elizabeth to attend with him.

“I thought the lectures were brilliant,” says Elizabeth. “I enjoyed them very much and went every night.” She was amazed that she had never heard these truths before, and wanted to continue to learn more. At last she made her decision and was baptized in February, 2016.

While realizing that her conversion was a process, Elizabeth says, “The best promotion you can make is by example. Mercha’s parents gave the biggest example to me—the example of how they lived their lives.”🌍

Fast Facts

- Ninety percent of Irish nationals are Roman Catholic, but only 30 percent attend church.
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was founded in 1824 by Richard Martin, an Irish politician and one of the first animal rights activists.
- The longest place name in Ireland is Muchanaghederdauhaulia, in County Galway.

A Walk In The Park

POLAND | January 28

Dorota



From her earliest childhood Dorota longed to hear God’s voice. That was an unusual desire for a child growing up in the eastern European country of Poland.

Although she was just five years old, Dorota faithfully went with her grandfather to the Roman Catholic Church each week. But one Sunday after mass she blurted out, “Oh, Grandpa! I’m sad I don’t hear God in this church.”

Taking her into the beautiful countryside fields and meadows, her grandfather said, “Now you can open your heart and mind and speak to God openly and sincerely, and He will hear you.”

“I was very happy,” recalls Dorota, “because from that time on, I really heard God.”

After her grandfather’s death some years later, Dorota felt like “an odd element out, not fitting into the community. Many people didn’t understand my relationship with God,” she says.

Health Problems

As the years went by, Dorota kept close to God, praying to Him every day. She eventually married and had a son and daughter. Unfortunately, however, Dorota’s health deteriorated. She prayed fervently, but no relief seemed to be in sight.

“People said to me, ‘You pray so much. If this God existed, He wouldn’t allow you to suffer so much.’ But I persisted in my prayers,” says Dorota, “and I believed that He would help me go through this. He never left me. I always felt His presence.”

Dorota decided to travel to Northern Ireland where she had heard she might find help for her health problems. Arriving in Belfast, she learned she didn’t have the disease she had originally been diagnosed with and treated for during seventeen years. Before long, Dorota was feeling better and decided to settle in the small town of Carryduff, just a few miles south of Belfast.

At the Park

Dorota enjoyed the park in Carryduff and sometimes went there with her now-grown daughter. One day as the two were walking and conversing in Polish, they overheard a woman speaking

in Polish on her cellphone. Suddenly, all three women stopped and smiled.

Introducing themselves, the three began talking about what had brought them to Northern Ireland, where they were from in Poland, and so on. Eventually, the conversation turned to religion, and Barbara—the woman with the cellphone—shared her faith.

Explaining that she was a Seventh-day Adventist, Barbara invited the two to study the Bible with her. Dorota was delighted! In addition to the Bible studies, Barbara also introduced them to the internet broadcasts of Hope Channel Poland, including the popular Hope Sabbath School program translated into Polish.

A Lot of Emotion

Dorota was very happy and began attending the Seventh-day Adventist church regularly. “I always wanted to be baptized, and through Barbara I learned that you could be baptized as an adult [rather than as an infant].” Soon Dorota made plans to be baptized, but wanted this special service to take place in her homeland.

Traveling back to Poland for her baptism, Dorota’s one regret was that her now-grown children were unable to come with her. “I prayed fervently that my children could somehow also participate in the ceremony,” she says. “And they did! Thanks to Hope Channel Poland’s live broadcast over the internet, they were together with me. Many of my friends and family were able to watch my baptism live. They were very moved; they cried. There was a lot of emotion.”

One Hour Not Enough

Now back in Northern Ireland, Dorota

says that she finds that on Sabbath “an hour at church isn’t enough.” After the church service, she invites her Polish speaking friends to her home where they “watch Hope Sabbath School and dwell on spiritual matters the whole day.”

Not forgetting her non-Adventist friends in Poland, she invites them to watch Hope Sabbath School on Hope Channel Poland, and then Skypes with them to discuss the ideas presented on the programs.

“I’m grateful to God for the illness that forced me to come to Ireland,” says Dorota. “I could really get to know God, and thanks to this I got to know Seventh-day Adventists. Now I don’t feel strange anymore with not fitting, not belonging. I feel like I’ve come home.”

A Great Plan

Dorota is delighted that a portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go toward the building of a new studio for Hope Channel Poland. Currently, the staff work in a very small area of the Polish Union Conference building in Warsaw.

“This is a great plan because it [a new studio] is much needed,” she says. “People do a great work here, and they need a more comfortable place and equipment to prepare professional programs.”

In the meantime, Hope Channel Poland continues to stream programs over the internet. “I’m thankful that I can watch Hope Sabbath School and other programs in my language,” says Dorota. “This is a great help to many Poles who live abroad.

“My daughter and I hope to attend camp meeting in Poland,” she continues, “but the tickets are very expensive, so I don’t know if it will be possible. But if not, Hope Channel is the option!” 🌐

A New World in Nowa Huta

POLAND | February 4

Agnieszka



and services! Nevertheless, the people pressed on and with their own hands built the only kind of church they knew—a Roman Catholic Church—which is known today as “The Lord’s Ark.”

Reaching the People

In the late 1980s, Seventh-day Adventists were given the opportunity to reach the people of Nowa Huta, and following the collapse of communism in Poland in 1989, religious activities were more widespread.

One day in 1992, Agnieszka (pronounced Ag-NESH-ka), a young woman in her early twenties, noticed a poster on a city tram advertising lectures on vegetarianism and health, along with some religious presentations. Having always been reluctant to eat meat, Agnieszka decided to attend. In the same year, a Seventh-day Adventist church was officially organized in Nowa Huta.

While she enjoyed the vegetarian cooking and health demonstrations, Agnieszka wasn’t as excited about the Bible presentations. When Bible study interest cards were handed out, Agnieszka tore up the card.

“One Purpose”

“I came here for one purpose, so don’t add anything else, OK?” she thought to herself. “This isn’t of interest to me—it’s just some kind of propaganda!”

But Agnieszka enjoyed the health topics

Nowa Huta (pronounced Nova WHO-ta), was meant to be the perfect communist city—a model for the great communist society spreading across Eastern Europe. Built by the Soviets following the devastation of the second World War, Nowa Huta (meaning, “New Steel Mill”) is located just outside of Kraków, Poland.

Of course, following communism’s atheistic ideology, a church of any kind was never part of the plan for this model communist city. Nevertheless, the people themselves longed for some kind of religious presence and for decades pleaded with the communist government for permission to build a church.

At last permission was secured in 1967. The Communist authorities, however refused to make any equipment or materials available for building a church—which was quite a challenge since the government was the supplier of all goods

so much that she kept attending the Adventist-sponsored program, and soon her heart warmed to the Bible lessons. After the fourth presentation she picked up a Bible study card for herself!

“During the lectures I learned that Jesus Christ died for me, and that was very moving,” Agnieszka recalls. “And I learned that the Bible is relevant for everyday life; that it speaks of things pertaining to our well-being.”

At the end of the meetings, Agnieszka decided to be baptized. Although her parents were Catholic, they reacted positively to Agnieszka’s decision to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A Regular Viewer

Today Agnieszka works in the Secretariat office of the South Polish Conference and is a Sabbath School teacher at the Central Adventist Church in Krakow.

“Very often I use the short clips from Adventist Mission’s *Mission Spotlight* when people share testimonies,” she says.

In addition, Agnieszka enjoys watching Hope Channel Poland and is a regular viewer of Hope Sabbath School. While she appreciates the current programming, she is delighted that Hope Channel Poland has been designated to receive part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for a new studio.

“I’m very happy about this opportunity,” she says. “This means that we’ll have more programs that are prepared not as adaptations from elsewhere, but [programs] by Poles and for Poles.” She also envisions using Hope Channel Poland as a way to invite people to attend local Adventist programs and concerts.

Media Outreach

Adventist media outreach in Poland began in 1980 when the church signed an agreement with the Polish government for radio programming. “We prepared the broadcasts, but they were aired by Adventist World Radio (AWR) from Lisbon, Portugal,” says Jan (pronounced “Yon”) Kot, programming director of Hope Channel Poland.

In those days, everything had to pass through government censorship before being sent to AWR. Only if the censors stamped their approval was the program allowed to air.

But now, “Poland has changed, and the religious set-up as well,” says Jan. “So we are trying to find new ways of reaching Poles.”

“For a time, we used private television stations, but access was limited because the fees were so high,” he says. “But when the internet became accessible it was much easier, financially speaking.”

And then YouTube appeared, and the Voice of Hope team (as it was then known) began posting video programs on YouTube. Today, with the possibility of live streaming over the internet, much more is possible.

“Today we have 100 to 150 hours of premier programming a year and on YouTube we have more than 1 million views,” says Jan. “And we use Facebook, to help advertise our programs. Every month people from around 50 countries visit our Facebook page. Many Poles lives in different parts of the world,” he adds.

As Hope Channel Poland expands, they still work in a very small area of the Polish Union Conference building in Warsaw.

They are ready to feature more Polish programming and are in need of a studio. Thank you for your generous support of this important project. 🌐



Blind Hope

Marian

Commandments taught at Laski differed from the Decalogue his grandmother had taught him. The second commandment about graven images was missing, and the tenth commandment was broken into two. He wondered about this, but said nothing until one day after reading these verses:

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, *he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 5:17-19, NKJV).

“Why do we have two Decalogues?” Marian asked his religion professor. “Why is there such a discrepancy?”

“Because the Church has the right to give God Himself orders,” said the professor, “and it [the Church] is invested with the power to change the Law of God.”

After that exchange, Marian no longer attended religion class.

Learning About Protestantism

A few years after graduating from Laski, Marian married a lovely young woman named Anna. Although Catholicism is the dominant religion in

Marian wasn't born blind, but by his first birthday his parents noticed that he was unable to see. Being farmers in a little village in east-central Poland, Marian's parents entrusted their son to his grandmother.

“The best things in life I owe to my grandmother,” says Marian, “because she taught me to respect the Bible, and she introduced me to God's Ten Commandments.”

When he was nine, Marian was sent to the Laski Educational Center, a boarding school just north of Warsaw. The school provides high-quality education to blind children and prepares them to live successfully in a sighted world.

First Serious Bible Experience

After completing primary school, Marian continued at Laski—a Roman Catholic institution—for his secondary school training. It was during this time that Marian had his “first serious experience with the Bible.”

Marian had noticed that the Ten

Poland, Anna was interested in learning about the Protestant movement.

One day, Anna noticed a leaflet on the ground. Picking it up, she saw it was from a correspondence Bible school and decided to sign up for Bible lessons. After completing the course, Anna received a certificate, personally delivered by the pastor of the local Seventh-day Adventist Church, who invited her to attend services the following Sabbath.

She accepted and after the church service hurried home to share her experience. Excitedly, she told Marian everything and challenged him to visit the church the following week to “find out if they really study the Bible there or not.”

Because the couple had small children, Anna suggested that she would stay home while Marian went to the church. Going alone wasn't a problem for Marian, as he was used to walking around town with his white walking stick.

A Sensation

Arriving at the Adventist church, Marian created quite a sensation—a blind man, arriving alone. He found it somewhat amusing to see how the members approached him—“not knowing how to speak with me, where to sit me, because they thought maybe I wouldn't be able to walk around the church!” he recalls.

As he listened to Sabbath school and church, Marian liked what he heard. Afterward, he was invited to a member's home for lunch. When he finally arrived home, Anna was eager to learn his thoughts.

“They really study the Bible and I think that we'll go there more often!” Marian said. Eventually Marian and Anna were baptized.

A Great Asset

For the last several years Marian has been serving as an elder and Sabbath School Superintendent. He takes his church work seriously and prepares each week's lesson carefully. Hope Channel Poland has been a great asset for him.

Using assistive technology, including a screen reader, Marian is easily able to navigate the website and its resources.

“As a Sabbath School superintendent, I use the Bible study guides that are available online, and whatever I need, I incorporate into my studies,” he says.

Each week, Marian listens to the Hope Sabbath School program as he prepares material for his teachers. This interactive lesson study is produced in the English language and translated by Hope Channel Poland for online streaming and delivery through YouTube.

“I believe in Hope Channel because I know that the more ways we have to communicate with people, the better,” Marian says. “I send links with information about the programs to my friends, and I email the links to every Sabbath School teacher that I know—about 40 people in all!”

Many people need someone who will be their eyes to help them see Jesus. Hope Channel Poland aims to captivate a growing audience through translated programs. But they face a challenge with very limited space. The Hope Channel staff is praying for a TV studio with lights and cameras so that they can produce local content, contextualized for the multitudes who are hungry for light. Thank you for helping answer their prayers by giving generously to this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering! 🌍

Pressed for Space

NORWAY | February 19

Pastor Reidar Olsen



Located within walking distance of Oslo City Hall—the place where the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each year—the Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church in the capital city of Norway is the oldest continuously occupied Seventh-day Adventist church in Europe.

“The Adventist work in Norway began through a Dane who was in America,” explains Pastor Reidar Olsen, current pastor of the Bethel Adventist Church. “John Gottlieb Matteson became an Adventist in the United States, and then came to Norway and Denmark. He spent some years here and established a church here in Oslo and in other places.”

“He bought this property—the church and the sanitarium next to it. Ellen White had a vision about this place, and she encouraged the purchase of the property.” Pastor Olsen points out that some years later, Ellen White visited the church and

preached from the very pulpit that is still in use today.

Founded in 1879, the church is located in a historic building that once housed the Norwegian Seventh-day Adventist printing press, the *Kurbadet* (sanitarium), and a school. The press, once located in the basement of the building, started publishing in 1879, and the health work began on July 4, 1898, when a clinic was opened by two graduates of Battle Creek Sanitarium.

While the large *Kurbadet* is no longer operational, there continues to be a medical clinic in its place. The publishing house is continuing its ministry just south of Hønefoss, a town 63 kilometers (39 miles) northwest of Oslo, and has a thriving literature evangelism program with students from many countries participating each summer.

Community Outreach

In addition to using print media, the Bethel Church in Oslo reaches out to the community in a number of other ways, such as radio broadcasting and cooking schools.

Pastor Olsen serves as the director of the church’s community radio station—Kanal 7 Oslo (FM 107.7). The station broadcasts across the city of Oslo and has at least 2,000 active listeners each day. In addition to broadcasting the Sabbath School program and church service each week, the station features Bible studies and other Bible programs, Christian music,

testimonies, and a variety of programming produced by Hope Channel Norway. Each Friday, Pastor Olsen invites the listeners to attend services on Sabbath, and some have come to the Adventist church because of his radio invitation.

Linn Helene Stoelen, a professional dietician and active church member, leads out in the cooking schools held at Bethel.

“With the church board, we came up with a vision where people feel welcome and experience fellowship,” says Linn. “Then, as a church, we decided on five goals to reach this vision, and the vegetarian cooking course was one of them. We announced it in church, on Facebook, and at the medical office next door, so most people were from the church or their friends. When you do outreach what works best is when people invite their friends.

“We had a good mix of ages—young and older, and many nationalities,” she says. “We want to create more bonds between the different cultures within our church. The people were very happy and content. It’s been fun but a lot of work!”

More Space Needed

The Bethel church is vibrant and active, not only with native Norwegian members, but with numerous immigrants from Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and South-east Asia, whom the church has embraced as part of its family. The church is also home to several young people, many of whom are university students in Oslo.

Currently, the church is in need of more usable space. So “the plan is to renovate this very historic basement,” says Pastor Olsen. The “historic basement,” of course, is where the old printing press was once

Fast Facts

- Norway is a Scandinavian country with mountains, glaciers and deep coastal fjords.
- Norway is regarded as the birthplace of modern snow skiing.
- In the parts of Norway above the Arctic Circle, the sun never sets during the summer.

housed in 1879. Today, it’s in desperate need of repair and renovation.

“When we have communion service, we don’t have proper space for the foot washing,” Pastor Olsen continues. “We also really need a kitchen facility, and a place for social activities, prayer meetings, and a place for the young people,” Pastor Olsen continues. “They would like to have a kind of café for Saturday evenings and for use during the week. And we can have small group seminars there, too.”

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help to renovate this historic basement into a multi-purpose center that will minister to the growing needs of this increasingly young and international congregation in Oslo.

“We’re happy that the world church is willing to support this church,” says Pastor Olsen. “And although we live in a country with a fairly good economy, we have many students who don’t earn much money, and we have many foreigners who are not yet able to be very economically supportive yet. And then we have many elderly members who aren’t able to contribute much, either.” Thank you for your generous support of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering! 🌍



From Atheist to Adventist

Torgeir

“God must have a sense of humor,” says Torgeir (pronounced Tor-GUY) of Norway. “My wife Cayetana (pronounced Kay-TA-na), who had been widowed for several years, prayed for God to send her a man with whom she could share her faith and who could help raise her young son. Instead He sent me—an atheist!”

Torgeir had previously been married to a Norwegian girl with whom he had three children. However his lifestyle caused their marriage to deteriorate, as he was drinking every day. He would drink a bottle of liquor and then go out to find friends who shared his habits. In spite of being a self-declared atheist, he began to realize that he was living far from God and he had to do something about his life.

At Christmas time, as was his family tradition, he was decorating the Christmas tree with his three children. He drank the entire day but finally came to his senses enough to ask himself, “What am I doing?” He knew he had to make changes.

Pursuing His Peruvian Dream

All of his life he had been fascinated with the Inca Indians of Peru and their culture. It was his dream to go see their ruins and to learn more about Peru. In 2002, he was able to take his dream trip and he fell in love with the country and people.

Then back in Norway he began tutoring a young Peruvian boy. The boy wanted to go back to Peru to visit his grandfather, so he and Torgeir made the trip which cemented the man’s love for the country.

Torgeir came back to Norway and began studying Spanish, for he knew he wanted to return to Peru. One day in 2003, he was walking around observing the atmosphere in one of the Peruvian cities which was on his list to visit. He became hungry and wandered into a restaurant. It was God’s plan; it was Cayetana’s restaurant. Torgeir smiles when he repeats the old proverb, “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.”

He did not travel to any of the other

cities on his list, but stayed right there and eventually met Cayetana's family, who were Seventh-day Adventists and leaders in their churches. Torgeir visited Peru three times in 2003 and the last time he applied for a visa for Cayetana to come to Norway to marry him.

Back in Norway

When Cayetana first arrived in Norway, Torgeir called the Adventist church in Oslo to learn its location and the times of services. He thought he should go to church with his wife the first few times until she made friends and felt comfortable there.

Torgeir says he had a good experience at the church and little by little God was silently working with him.

“One day Cayetana noticed that I knelt down for prayer at church,” he recalls. “But I know that God started working with me long before that. About five or six months after my divorce I threw away my cigarettes and stopped drinking. I had tried to give these up before, but this time God took the desire away. I believe God started to change my lifestyle years earlier to prepare me for coming to church.”

He had never owned a Bible, and nothing about God interested him, but he says, “Now I can't go a day without studying the Bible. I read it in three languages to compare—several versions in Norwegian, English and Spanish. God changed me. Before I wasn't interested in reading the Bible, but now I can't go a day without seeking His words and listening to what He has to say.”

A Quiet Conversion

After attending the Adventist church in Oslo for about six months, the pastor

Mission Post

- In 1874 the *Review & Herald* received a letter from a woman named Reirsen in Norway, saying that she and her husband had begun to keep the seventh-day Sabbath and that several others were interested as a result of having read Adventist church papers.
- On June 8, 1887, the first-known Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting in Europe met at Moss, Norway.
- Today the Norwegian Union Conference has 62 churches and 4,531 members.

asked Torgeir if he would like to study the Bible with him, and Torgeir accepted the invitation.

“We studied together for some months,” recalls Torgeir, “and it was almost like I was expecting another question, and that question came: ‘Do you want to be baptized?’ I was ready! I was baptized April 1, 2006 in the central church by Pastor Tito. My wife was re-baptized at the same time. It was a great day!”

Torgeir says that his conversion was a quiet thing. He simply listened to sermons, studied the Bible, and absorbed the Holy Spirit's leadings. He willingly came in, sat down and listened. He could have left at any time. No one confronted him or told him that he had to join the church.

“My conversion was certainly the leading of the Holy Spirit. I was changing without noticing. My conversion was like a flower slowly, slowly opening.” 🌍

Tortured Yet Faithful

NORWAY | March 4

Moalign



As we learned last week, the historic Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oslo, Norway, is vibrant and active. In addition to its native Norwegian members, the church has embraced numerous immigrants as part of its family.

One such person is Moalign [pronounced MOE-a-line] Hailu. Growing up in Ethiopia, Moalign suffered much for his faith, as did his father before him.

“My father was one of the early Adventists in Ethiopia,” explains Moalign. “During that time (1940s/50s) Adventists were called ‘Anti-Mary.’” Moalign’s father was put in jail where he was frequently beaten. But God did miracles for him, says Moalign. “When they chained his legs, the new chain broke in pieces! They took another new chain, and the same thing happened again!”

Encouraged by this story, Moalign’s faith was strengthened to face similar

circumstances at the young age of 16. At that time (1978 to 1991), socialism had entered Ethiopia, and the Soviet-style government was pushing atheism.

He explains some of the challenges. “Everyone had to proclaim the slogan: ‘There is no God!’ I was in high school at the time, and we were all supposed to attend political meetings on Sabbath.”

When Moalign and two other Adventists refused to proclaim the slogan or attend the political meetings, the other young people beat them mercilessly. They were taken to prison where officials instructed the young prisoners in Marxism.

In Prison

“They wanted me to curse God and step on the Bible,” Moalign remembers. They told us, “Religion is the opiate of the people. You must work on Saturday! Who are you?! Other Christians work on Saturday—they work for social development. We are struggling to forward our country’s growth, and you are an obstacle! You are teaching other young people to be affected by this religion!”

As his father did before him, Moalign suffered beatings and torture while in prison. “They hit me with the gun butt, slapped me, kicked me—this was normal,” he says. But sometimes, there was a “planned program.”

“They would come drunk, so they wouldn’t have any compassion,” Moalign

Fast Facts

- About 90 percent of Norwegians identify as Lutheran.
- As of 2016, 14 percent of the Norwegian population was made up of immigrants and children born to immigrants.
- Norway's public universities are free for students from anywhere in the world.

remembers. “They would tie you together and then either hang you, or put your legs up on a chair, tied to it. Then they would beat your feet with electric wires and leather straps.”

When asked how he was able to bear it, Moalign responds, “Ask Jesus. I really don’t know. I was praying.”

After Moalign was in prison for a year, his father was allowed to visit. “I’m so proud to see such a son who can dare to stand for Jesus,” he said. “Now that you have started, don’t look back.” Then he confided, “We won’t see each other again. When you hear that I died, don’t cry—you don’t need to disturb your mind. I will rest in the Lord, and we’ll be there” he said, pointing upward.

“It’s Not Us”

After seven years of imprisonment, Moalign and the two other faithful Adventists were called to the regional administrative headquarters where officials tried to give them the death sentence.

“But somehow, God intervened,” says Moalign. “They tried to intimidate us, telling us that we were going to be killed, but it didn’t happen.”

Later, the administrator told the young men, “you imprisoned yourself. You could

have been free a long time ago. Now in one way, I appreciate it—you are so strong in your faith. You suffered seven years for your faith!”

“It’s not us, it’s God,” Moalign told him.

Then the man told them, “You’re going to be freed because the Ethiopian people are now civilized. No one will accept your propaganda, your preaching. You are just a drop in an ocean, so that’s why we’re releasing you!”

“You say that,” Moalign replied, “but it’s not because the people are civilized or you are being kind to us. It’s from above, and the time is over. The Lord had a plan for us, why else would we have gone to prison? You have given us the privilege of spreading the gospel in this dark place.”

Called to Serve

After being released at the age of 23, Moalign returned to high school and later studied theology at the Adventist University of Eastern Africa, in Baraton, Kenya. After returning to Ethiopia, where he served as the youth and stewardship director, Moalign was called to serve Adventist Ethiopians living in London, England. After a time the Ethiopian Adventists in Norway invited Moalign to join them in Oslo. He currently serves this group of approximately 50 as a volunteer lay evangelist as he earns an income by working in a nursing home.

In addition to encouraging the Ethiopian Adventists who are part of the fellowship at the Bethel Adventist Church in Oslo, Moalign has a burden to reach out to the approximately 3,000 Ethiopians currently living in Norway today.

“Pray for us,” he asks the world church. “This group needs your prayers. I need your prayers.” 🌍



“They Need God”

Maja

As a young child growing up in the Eastern European country then known as Yugoslavia, Maja (pronounced MY-ya) had never heard about God. Then one day she heard her grandmother and great-grandmother talking about Jesus.

“He was just a good man,” said Maja’s grandmother.

“No,” replied the great-grandmother. “Jesus was God.”

The discussion became very important to young Maja, as she listened intently. Later, she decided that great-grandmother was right—Jesus was God.

Six years later, she turned to the one church she had heard of—the Roman Catholic church—to learn more. After studying the Church’s teachings and traditions, she was baptized into the Catholic faith.

Not long after this, while attending school in the Croatian village of Maruševac, Maja became acquainted with Seventh-day Adventists through some of her classmates who were Adventist.

In addition, instructors from the nearby Adventist Secondary School came to teach English at the village school.

Later on, Maja’s parents learned more about the Adventist school when they attended an informational meeting and decided to enroll Maja in the school.

So when she was 14 Maja started attending the Adventist Secondary School in Maruševac. She soon made friends at her new school, and she soon noticed that some things were done differently at the Adventist school.

“I didn’t read the Bible in the Catholic church,” she remembers. “Just during the service—portions from the Epistles and the Psalms.

“But here [at the Adventist school], someone gave me a Bible and I started reading it. And I started singing in a group at the church at the beginning of the Sabbath. I met this group the first time I came for the service here and I saw how to start the Sabbath day. It was very important for me.

“And then when I read Isaiah 58:13—about keeping the Sabbath—I thought about what the Adventists were saying about the Sabbath. I decided that the Adventists must have the whole truth, because this is very important, and they aren’t lying about it.”

Maja began studying her Bible in earnest, looking up all of the cross-references on points she found important.

“The Psalms taught me how to pray,” she says. “The Old Testament is very important because I found that it has a lot that encourages me in my own life. And the Gospels and New Testament Epistles teach me how to live, and how to treat other people.”

She began reading the Sabbath School lessons. She joined a prayer group. And after a while, Maja decided she wanted to become a Seventh-day Adventist.

“The Bible became my textbook for life,” she says earnestly, “and I received this here [at the Adventist school].”

When asked about her experience at the Adventist school in Maruševec, Maja sighs and says, “Oh, I don’t have words to explain. I think that God had a very big plan for me! I came here to school, and, most importantly, I met Christ.” The school is also where she met her husband, Daniel.

After graduating from Maruševec, Maja studied at a university in the city of Cakovec to become a primary school teacher and instructor in the Croatian language. Upon completing her training, she was invited to stay in Cakovec to teach. However, she also received another invitation—to return to the Adventist school in Maruševec.

“When I received the call to come back here,” recalls Maja, “I believed it was very important. I prayed to know God’s will

and felt that it was a calling from God.”

That was twelve years ago, and Maja has been serving at Maruševec ever since. She lives on the campus with her husband, Daniel, and her two young sons, ages two and four, and serves as the Girls’ Dean.

“We have here a wholistic approach,” Maja explains. “For me, the most important, is the spiritual level. And we also encourage character development, cognitive development, health development and practical skills. But the most important is for the girls to meet Christ. That’s the most important for everybody,” she adds.

Sometimes Maja sees reflections of her young self in the girls she now serves. “They need love. They need understanding. They need encouragement. They need God. Like me,” she says.

Today, the school is at maximum capacity of 230 students—most of whom are not Adventists. “There is much more interest than we currently have the capacity for,” Maja explains. “We are in need of a new building.”

Currently, the main classroom building also houses the boys’ dormitory. A part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will be used to build a new dorm for the boys, giving more space for students. In addition, it will allow the the current building to be used exclusively for classrooms.

“This school is the biggest mission project in our Union,” says Maja. “We need a lot of prayer. Every year we have students who choose to receive an Adventist education, even though they are not Adventists. We need to prepare for ministry to these students with our living, and teaching, and everything. They study the Bible here, and some choose to be baptized. Like me—twenty-three years ago.”

“God Is First”



CROATIA | March 18

Naum

Sabbath, not in school,” Naum replied.

“You’ll be expelled from school, and will have no further opportunities to receive an education!” the man glared.

Naum’s response came quickly. “I’ll be in church anyway, because God is first in my life.”

“So what do you do at your church?” the interrogator continued.

“We read the Bible, sing songs, and pray.”

“Sing us a song!” the group demanded.

So Naum sang a hymn and prayed a simple prayer, thanking the Lord for opportunities given, for health, for the government, and to direct the commission properly and honestly.

Following his prayer, Naum was asked if his father had told him not to go to school.

“No,” Naum answered honestly.

If the answer had been “yes,” his father would have gone immediately to prison. Knowing his son could be interrogated, Naum’s father had never told him not to attend school.

The commission was silent for a few moments. Then abruptly Naum was told, “You will be informed whether or not you will stay in school.”

Naum hurried home to tell his parents what had happened. Not surprised, “they knew what my decision would be,” he recalls.

No directive came from the commission, so Naum continued attending school, except on Sabbaths. Upon completing primary school, Naum

Naum (pronounced NOW-oom) had to stand up for his faith at the tender age of seven. In Yugoslavia, school was obligatory every Saturday. Although young, Naum determined to not attend school on Sabbath. After missing two Saturdays in a row, the first grader was confronted by a special commission set up to interrogate him.

Coming to his classroom, the group of five officials dismissed all of the class except for Naum. Standing alone, the seven-year-old bravely faced the school director, two teachers, and two uniformed police officers—one of whom was the regional director of the secret police.

“Why aren’t you attending school on Saturday?” the interrogator began.

“Because I believe in God, and according to the fourth commandment of His law, I’m not to be in school on His Sabbath. This is why I’ll be in church every

Fast Facts

- The Croatian Conference is part of the Adriatic Union Conference and was organized in 1925.
- Croatia has 84 Adventist churches and 2,796 members.
- The Adventist Seminary in Croatia originally opened in 1931 in Belgrade. It has moved to different locations, but is now on the Maruševac campus and is known as Adriatic Union College.

wasn't able to continue his education because of his firm decision to keep the Sabbath. So at age 15 he started working fulltime with his father on their farm.

But God had other plans for Naum. He remembers well the day he learned that there would be a Seventh-day Adventist secondary school and college in his own country.

"A brother from the Yugoslavian union came to visit my church and told us about this Adventist school that was going to be opening. We were delighted!"

The school in Maruševac opened in 1969 with 45 students. "It was like a miracle to have this school!" exclaims Naum. "We were the first generation, the experimental generation. The staff read the book, *Education*, by Ellen G. White, and the education we received was the best!"

Since the school was not then accredited, the students had to pass all 17 subject exams given by the government at the end of every school year.

"It was a severe drill," Naum recalls, "but at the end of the fourth year, we were scoring higher than the students from the State schools! We were considered to be the best school

in what was then Yugoslavia."

After graduating, Naum attended university in the city of Zagreb where he studied French and Latin. Upon completion, Naum had two job offers—one from the communist government, offering him a highly desired political position with many benefits; the other a teaching position at the Adventist school in Maruševac.

In speaking with the government officials, Naum said, "You know I'm an Adventist. I'll go to church every Sabbath. Why are you inviting me for this position?"

"Because we need honest people in politics; they are rare!" came the surprising response. "We need people with principles!"

"Thank you," Naum replied, "but I've accepted a job at the school in Maruševac."

For many years Naum faithfully served the students at Maruševac, not only by teaching them French and Latin, but eternal values.

"God and salvation—these were the first things I wanted my students to learn. After that comes knowledge, and accepting the obligations in life—to take life seriously. We're not playing at life; times are serious."

Today, with the majority of the students coming from non-Adventist, even atheistic homes, Naum sees Maruševac as even more of a mission field.

"There's a reason why our school should stay and develop," he says. "The exceptional possibility to witness for the truth is here. How could you ever, anywhere in the world, put together 200 non-Adventists who are learning about God every evening, every Sabbath, every day?"

Thank you for supporting the mission outreach in Maruševac, Croatia. 🌐

Free!

MISSION SPOTLIGHT *is back!*



Starting in 2015, Adventist Mission presents “Mission Spotlight,” a DVD featuring Sabbath School mission reports from around the world. Like the old classic, the new Mission Spotlight DVD will include a video for each month of the quarter that focuses on:

1. Introducing the quarter’s featured division.
2. Highlighting Mission challenges, issues or past projects.
3. Featuring the quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath offering projects.

Plus short video mission stories for use before or during church, in classrooms, on lobby monitors, prayer meetings, or even embedded on your church website.

DOWNLOAD AT WWW.MISSIONSPOTLIGHT.ORG

HELP NEEDED



Hundreds of people in Dublin, Ireland, have responded favorably to the Adventist message, but one church building isn't large enough to accommodate them all.

The first Adventist church in Norway, founded in 1879, embraces a vibrant community of young and old, native and immigrant. Now it's time to expand.

The Adventist school in Marusevec, Croatia has been successfully operating for more than forty years, but the school needs to renovate its communist-era buildings.

Hope Channel Poland has

been broadcasting English-language content with Polish translation since 2012.

Professional programming in the local language, featuring health programs, Bible content, and more is needed. You can help by giving generously to this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. For stories, video, and more, visit our secure website.



Thirteenth Sabbath Program

➤	Opening Song	“Take My Life and Let It Be” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 330
➤	Welcome	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
➤	Prayer	
➤	Program	“Remembering the Stories; Offering to Help”
➤	Offering	
➤	Closing Song	“I Gave My Life for Thee” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 281
➤	Closing Prayer	

Participants: Two readers.

Props: Flags (or pictures of flags), from Croatia, Ireland, Norway and Poland; Large map of Europe or the world, with the countries of Croatia, Ireland, Norway and Poland highlighted.

Reader 1: This quarter we’ve heard wonderful stories of how God is working in the lives of people across the Trans-European Division.

Reader 2: This world division includes the territories of the Aland Islands, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greece, Greenland, Guernsey, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Jersey, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the southern portion of Cyprus.

Reader 1: This quarter we’ve heard stories from people living in the four countries that will be receiving the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering: Ireland, Poland, Norway, and Croatia.

Reader 2: Let’s take a few minutes to review the stories and the opportunities that we have to make a difference in these four countries of the Trans-European Division.

Reader 1: In Dublin, Ireland, we met Theda, a woman who struggled for years with alcoholism and broken relationships, but whose mother continued to pray for her. Those prayers were answered and today Theda has a powerful outreach at the Cuisle Center—an Adventist

center of influence in Dublin—where she ministers to others who are in the same situation she once was.

Reader 2: While in Ireland, we also met Tatiana—a young woman from Moldova who came along a very difficult route to Ireland where she obtained refugee status. Through a miraculous set of circumstances, Tatiana met a Seventh-day Adventist couple who answered all of her questions from the Bible. Today, Tatiana and her three children are happy to be Adventists.

Reader 1: The story of Elizabeth and her husband Mercha, also in Ireland, reminds us that God often uses a variety of methods in reaching people. For Mercha, it was a near fatal motorcycle accident. For Elizabeth, it was the love and acceptance she experienced from Mercha’s parents, along with a Bible-based evangelistic program and follow-up Bible studies.

Reader 2: In the city of Dublin, there is only one Adventist-owned church building. As attendance has flourished, at least three different church plants have grown from this “mother church.” These new congregations are meeting in rented halls in schools, hotels, and other venues.

Reader 1: A portion of today’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will be used to help build a new church in the capital city of Dublin, giving these new members a permanent church home.

Reader 2: In another story we learned how God used a walk in the park in an Irish town to connect three Polish women. This meeting resulted in Bible studies, hope, and baptism.

Reader 1: You may remember the story about the “ideal” communist city of Nowa

Huta in Poland, and how God has worked to reach the people there through health evangelism and the Adventist-run Hope Channel Poland.

Reader 2: In another story, we met Marian, a blind man from Poland who found the truth he was looking for through his wife—who found a piece of paper on the ground offering Bible studies. Today, Marian is a very active Sabbath School superintendent and promoter of Hope Sabbath School shown on Hope Channel.

Reader 1: For the past number of years, Hope Channel Poland has been working in a very small area at the Polish Union in Warsaw. They are in real need of a proper studio where they can produce and broadcast local programs to reach their large audience not only in Poland, but of many Polish-speaking people around the world.

Reader 2: In the beautiful capital city of Oslo, Norway, we visited the historic Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church. Located in the city center, this historic building once housed a sanitarium, school, printing house, and church.

Reader 1: Today, the largest Adventist congregation in Norway still meets in this building and is reaching out to the Norwegian community, as well as to a diverse community of immigrants.

Reader 2: One of the immigrants we met was Moalign, from Ethiopia. As a teen, Moalign suffered severe torture and years of imprisonment for his faith. Today he lives in Norway and is a leader at the Bethel church.

Reader 1: Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help the Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church to

renovate their historic basement where the Adventist press began operating in 1879. As membership has grown, more space is needed for Sabbath School and seminar rooms, a fellowship hall, and place for young people.

Reader 2: In the former country of Yugoslavia, all children were required to attend school on Saturdays, but not all complied. As a first-grader, Naum told the communist officials that “God is first” in his life and that he would not be attending school on the Sabbath.

Reader 1: Later, he was among the first group of students at the newly opened Adventist school in the town of Maruševac.

Reader 2: After completing university studies, Naum returned to Maruševac where he mentored many students. Today, in the country now known as Croatia, most of the student body comes from non-Adventist and even atheistic backgrounds. Naum sees Maruševac as even more of a mission field than before.

Reader 1: He says that, “The exceptional possibility to witness for the truth is here. How could you ever, anywhere in the world, put together 200 non-Adventists who are learning about God every evening, every Sabbath, every day?”

Reader 2: Currently, the school at Maruševac is in desperate need of classroom and dormitory space. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help to build a men’s dormitory, which will not only provide more housing, but will free up classroom space currently being used to house male students.

Reader 1: Thank you for your generous gift today through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Your will help with urgent needs in Croatia, Norway, Poland and Ireland, and may well make an eternal difference in the lives of many.

[Offering]

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects



Next quarter the West-Central Africa Division (WAD) will be featured. Special projects include a youth multipurpose center at Babcock University in Nigeria, and building an Adventist school, Central Africa Union Mission Academy, in the country of Gabon.

Leader's Resources

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 European countries featured in this quarterly, visit your local library or a travel agency, or visit the Web sites listed below.

Ireland:

www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/ireland.htm
www.eupedia.com/ireland/trivia.shtml
www.escapehere.com/destination/11-cool-facts-you-didnt-know-about-dublin-ireland/

Poland:

go-poland.pl/10-things-you-should-know-about-poland
www.poland.travel/en/about-poland
www.slavorum.org/25-facts-about-poland-that-you-didnt-know/

Norway:

www.visitnorway.com/about/
<http://fjordtravel.no/about/norway/>
www.studyinnorway.no/Living-in-Norway/About-Norway

Croatia:

www.lonelyplanet.com/croatia
www.visit-croatia.co.uk
www.slavorum.org/25-facts-about-croatia-that-you-didnt-know/

You may also find these denominational sites helpful:

Trans-European Division: ted.adventist.org
Adriatic Union Conference: <http://adventisti.hr>
Norwegian Union Conference: www.adventist.no
Polish Union Conference: www.advent.pl
British Union Conference: adventist.org.uk
Irish Mission: <http://adventist.ie/home>
Adriatic Union College: <http://atvu.org>
Hope Channel Poland: www.hopetv.org/watch/poland/

Be sure to download your free *Mission Spotlight* video, featuring video reports from around Northern Europe and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at <https://am.adventistmission.org/mission-spotlight>.

Ask your Sabbath School council to set a quarterly mission offering goal (set the goal a little higher than last quarter and divide it by 13, one part for each of the 11 regular Sabbaths this quarter and two parts for Thirteenth Sabbath—which is actually the twelfth Sabbath this quarter!). Chart the weekly progress toward the quarter's goal on a goal device.

Remind your Sabbath School members that their regular weekly mission offerings will help the missionary work of the world church and that one quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in the Trans-European Division. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving on Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION



IRELAND

Dublin

U. K.

London

North Atlantic Ocean

North Sea

Baltic Sea

NORWAY

Oslo

SWEDEN

Stockholm

DENMARK

Copenhagen

FINLAND

Helsinki

Tallinn

ESTONIA

Riga

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

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POLAND

Warsaw

BELARUS

UKRAINE

CZECH

SLOVAKIA

SWITZERLAND

AUSTRIA

SLOVENIA

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

CROATIA

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

SERBIA

MONTENEGRO

BULGARIA

ITALY

MACEDONIA

ALBANIA

GREECE

Athens

TUNISIA

MALTA

Mediterranean Sea

CRETE



CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERS	POPULATION	
Adriatic	103	15	3,763	9,171,000
Baltic	89	10	6,218	6,200,000
British	265	46	35,728	69,973,000
Danish	45	1	2,459	5,781,000
Finland	62	7	4,854	5,463,000
Hungarian	104	19	4,631	9,835,000
Netherlands	56	18	5,691	16,942,000
Norwegian	62	2	4,531	5,194,000
Polish	117	31	5,800	38,478,000
South-East European	210	8	7,803	15,241,000
Swedish	33	4	2,805	9,805,000
Cyprus Section	2	0	90	854,000
Greek Mission	11	9	437	11,521,000
Iceland Conference	6	1	479	331,000
Total	1,165	171	85,289	204,789,000

Statistics from the 2015 Annual Statistical Report
Population statistics from the 2015 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook

PROJECTS:

- Build a church in Dublin, Ireland.
- Build dormitory at Marusevec Adventist Secondary School, Croatia.
- Build evangelistic international youth center, Oslo, Norway
- Establish Hope Channel studio, Warsaw, Poland

CHILDREN'S PROJECT: Vacation Bible Schools in each union to reach un-churched children

