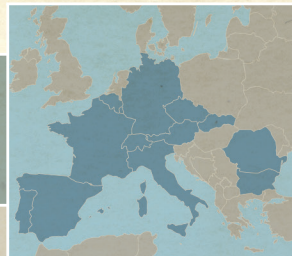




YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2023 • QUARTER 2 • INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION



AdventistMission.org











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 = stories of special interest to teens





Dear Sabbath School Leader,

Andrew McChesney
Editor



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 337,892,000 people, including 178,378 Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 1,894 people. That's about the same ratio as three years ago, when the division was featured previously for Thirteenth Sabbath projects, indicating the continuing challenge of

reaching largely secular countries with the good news of Jesus' soon coming.

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go toward five mission projects in four countries. You can find more information in the sidebar on this page.

Special Features

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer photos 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 to the Sabbath School 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 a PDF of facts and activities from the Inter-European Division at bit.ly/eud-2023. Follow us at facebook.com/missionquarterlies. You also can download the PDF version of the youth and adult *Mission* magazine at bit.ly/adultmission, and Mission Spotlight videos at bit.ly/missionspotlight.

If you have found especially effective ways to share mission stories, please let me know at mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org.

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!

Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will support five projects in the Inter-European Division:

- Elementary school, Setubal, Portugal
- Hope Life Center, Lyon, France
- Youth camp and training center, Gland, Switzerland
- Elementary school, Moisei, Romania
- After-school center, Galați, Romania

Where Are Nice People?



ROMANIA | April 1

Mahai

Mahai grew up with parents who taught him to be nice. His parents were respectful and never used bad language. They also were hardworking. They started penniless and, through hard work, became the owners of a large vineyard in Romania. Even though they sold wine produced at the vineyard, they didn't drink.

Mahai followed his parents' example. He was respectful and didn't use bad language. He didn't drink. He liked being around people who were respectful, didn't use bad language, and didn't drink. But such people seemed hard to find.

Mahai looked for nice people in the coal mine where he worked as an engineer. But the other workers were disrespectful and used bad language. They also drank.

He enjoyed going to church every Sunday, and he looked for nice people at church. But he was disappointed to see Christians who were disrespectful, used bad language, and drank.

He confided in the priest about his disappointment.

"I want to meet nice people, but I can't find any in church," he said.

The priest encouraged him to keep coming to church.

But after a while, Mahai decided that there was no need to go to church. The lifestyle of church members disappointed him.

At work, Mahai stuck to the principles that he had learned from his parents. He was respectful, didn't use bad language, and didn't drink. He was recognized as a good leader, and he became a company director overseeing several thousand workers. As a director, he longed to meet someone with a lifestyle that would impress him. But he could not find anyone among the workers. No one impressed him. No one measured up to his expectations.

After a successful career, he retired in Craiova, a city located about 140 miles (230 km) west of Romania's capital, Bucharest. He hoped to enjoy his golden years. But two weeks after his retirement, he suffered a massive stroke and was hospitalized.

After some time, he returned home to try to rebuild his life. Every morning, he exercised outside his home, trying to regain use of his once-strong arms and legs. It was a big effort. He also struggled with his emotions. A side-effect of the stroke was that he cried easily.



A neighbor named Gabriel noticed Mahai exercising outside and began to pray for him in secret. Even though the two men had never spoken to each other, Gabriel lifted up Mahai in prayer every day. He asked God to grant physical and spiritual strength to the elderly man.

After three weeks, Gabriel went over to Mahai's house and introduced himself. He invited Mahai to join a small group for prayer and Bible studies.

Mahai liked the leaders at the small group. They were respectful, didn't use bad language, and didn't drink. They were the kind of people whom he had been looking for his whole life. He also loved the Bible studies. Through them, he discovered the love of God.

Today, Mahai goes to a Seventh-day Adventist church in Craiova every Sabbath.

"I am impressed to have found many of the kind of people that I had been searching to meet — kind, respectful people — in the Adventist church," he says. "They don't drink. They didn't use bad language. That is why I am now in the church."

He is looking forward to giving his heart to Jesus in baptism as soon as he is physically able.

His neighbor Gabriel has become a close friend. The two men spend a lot of time together.

Mahai regrets that he has not been able to enjoy his retirement as he had hoped. His health is his biggest challenge. But he has no complaints because now he knows God.

"I thank God for my situation even though I am like this now," he says. 🌐

Education, including Bible studies, is an important part of the way that Adventists share the good news about the soon coming of Jesus in Romania. Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Adventist education by opening a school and an after-school center in Romania. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Pronounce Mahai as: makh-a-EE.
- Use a map to show the sites of the two mission projects, an elementary school and an after-school center, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in Romania. You can use the mission map (download the map on Facebook at bit.ly/fb-mq) to show the cities of Moisei (elementary school) and Galați (after-school center).
- Know that Gabriel invited Mahai to attend the small group at a Sola Scriptura center of influence, one of more than 50 such centers in Romania where church members hold Bible studies, health seminars, and other activities. Many Sola Scriptura centers also sell religious literature and health food.
- Download other photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- In 1904, J. F. Hinter (Ginter), was sent to Bucharest from Russia. He organized the first company in the city, with 16 members. Later, however, as a result of strong opposition from the official Romanian Orthodox Church, Pastor Ginter was expelled. His place was taken by Romanian pastors who could not be expelled by the authorities and who had a significant impact on the further development and spread of Adventism in Romania.



Finding a God of Beauty

ROMANIA | April 8

Violeta



She noticed differences between humans and animals, that humans could reason and animals could not. The capacity to reason must have come from Someone who created humans to be different from animals, she thought. She decided that He must be a good Creator. But then she wondered if it might be possible that the God who made nature was different from the God whom she knew.

As an adult, Violeta went to church because she thought God would punish her otherwise. She didn't enjoy her time there. She lit candles and kissed idols. She worshipped in fear, and she realized that everyone around her also worshipped because of fear. She didn't find any joy in the rituals, but she couldn't stop. She kept hearing Grandmother's warning, "If you make a mistake, God will punish you."

When she was in her early 30s, Violeta had a car accident. That day, for the first time, she did not wear a seatbelt. As the car rolled over, she thought that she would die. She cried out, "God, help me!"

The car was totaled, but she crawled out without a scratch. She was shocked. Everyone who saw the wreck was shocked. The car roof was crumpled into the seat where she had been sitting. But the force of the crash had thrown her into the passenger's seat. If she had worn her seatbelt, she certainly would have died.

As she looked at the wreck, a woman walked over. "God loves you so much," the woman said. "Don't delay. Seek and find Him."

Violeta listened in disbelief. She realized that the woman was talking about another

As a young girl, Violeta was scared of God. Christianity was forbidden in then-communist Romania, and no one spoke with Violeta about God except her grandmother. Grandmother had nothing pleasant to say about God.

"If you make a mistake, God will punish you," Grandmother said.

Violeta understood that God is all-powerful and knows everything and punishes every mistake that people make.

But Grandmother's image of God clashed with the beauty of nature that Violeta observed as she grew up. In the spring, she saw budding trees with growing leaves and, later, delicious fruit. She saw how the leaves fell in the autumn and the branches remained empty all winter before returning to life in the spring. She realized that Someone must take care of the trees.

The songs of the birds also impressed her. She thought that Someone must have taught each bird to sing a distinct tune.



God, not the angry God whom she knew.

She began seeking God by visiting various churches. She got her own Bible. She wanted to know Jesus.

One summer, while at the Black Sea for vacation, she noticed a woman selling books from a table on the beach. She saw a set of five books about Jesus on sale and asked to buy them.

“Have you ever read anything by Ellen White?” the seller asked.

Violeta acknowledged that she had not. The seller seemed to be impressed that she was willing to buy all five books of the *Conflict of the Ages* series without knowing anything about Ellen White.

“Can I call you later?” she asked.

At home, Violeta immediately read *The Desire of Ages*. She wanted to know more about Jesus.

After a short time, the seller, Yulia, called and invited Violeta to worship at the Seventh-day Adventist church. Violeta was impressed with Yulia and the church. They worshiped a God of beauty and love, a God who matched the image that she had of the God who created nature and humanity.

Violeta gave her heart to the God of beauty and love, the God of the Bible, and joined the Adventist Church.

Today, she gives Bible studies, teaching others about the God of beauty and love whom she has found in the Bible.

“God is the Creator, the Almighty, but He loves us,” she says. “This is the God whom I hoped to find when I was a child. I strongly believe that God is love.” 🌍

Education, including Bible studies, are an important part of the way that Adventists share the good news about the beautiful and loving Creator God in Romania. Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that will help expand Adventist education by opening a school and an after-school center in Romania.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Use a map to show the sites of the two mission projects, an elementary school and an after-school center, which will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in Romania. You can use the mission map (download the map on Facebook at bit.ly/fb-mq) to show the cities of Moisei (elementary school) and Galați (after-school center).
- Know that Violeta is a part-time worker with Sola Scriptura centers of influence, an initiative in Romania in which church members hold Bible studies, health seminars, and other activities at more than 50 locations around the country. Bible studies through Sola Scriptura paved the way for her baptism.
- Download photos on Facebook bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, "To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples," and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- In Transylvania, early mission work reflected the ethnic diversity of the territory. The preaching of the Adventist message was done in German, Hungarian, and Romanian.

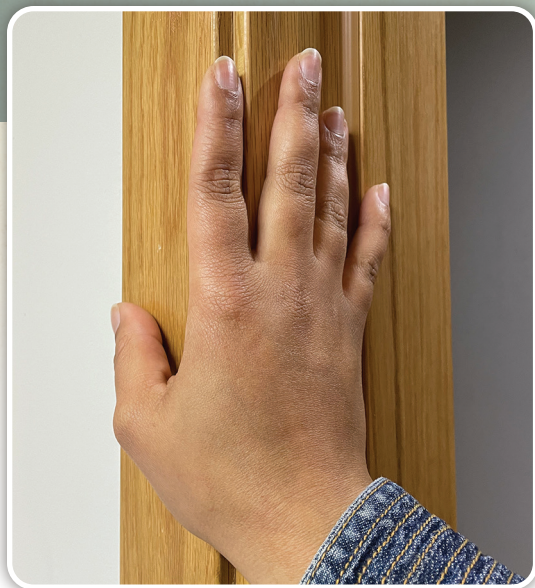




Arrested at the Airport

SPAIN | April 15

Carmen



Two days before Carmen boarded the international flight, she knelt by her bed to ask for God's protection. The young woman, barely out of her teens, had not prayed in years. She wasn't sure why she felt compelled to pray just then. But she was filled with despair, and she poured her whole heart into her prayer.

"God, please protect me and take care of me," Carmen prayed. "Guide me because I'm doing this out of a desperate need. Please don't allow the police to catch me."

That night, she had a dream. She dreamed that the police arrested her and placed her in handcuffs. When she woke up, she dismissed the dream as unimportant.

A day later, she boarded the plane for the long flight from Brazil to Spain.

Carmen trembled for the duration of the 12-hour flight. She was terrified. She remembered that she had tried to take the trip a month earlier, but things hadn't worked out. She remembered that her mother had told her many times, "Return to

God now while there is still time." She prayed nonstop for the 12 hours.

"Please give me peace," she prayed. "Give me protection. Calm my heart."

She asked God to guide her.

"Please fulfill Your will in my life," she said.

Upon landing in Spain's capital, Madrid, Carmen gave her passport to an immigration officer and passed through passport control without any problems. But when she collected her suitcase in the baggage claim area, the police stopped her.

"Follow us," a police officer said.

Carmen followed the officers to a room, where she was told that her suitcase had been inspected and something illegal had been found inside. Carmen was placed in handcuffs.

"You are under arrest," an officer said.

Carmen remembered her dream. She silently asked God for forgiveness. But there was nothing else that she could do. Police took her directly from the airport to a prison cell.

The trial lasted about four months, and Carmen was sentenced to six years in prison.

She had no family in Spain. She had no friends. She knew no one. She asked herself, "Why are these things happening to me? Why am I here?" It was a painful experience. She and many other inmates thought they were in prison because God was punishing them. It was hard to have hope.

One day, a fellow inmate invited Carmen to a Bible study.



“Nice people from a church are visiting us,” the inmate said. “They are offering Bible studies. Come along!”

Carmen went to the Bible study and met Julia and Santosa, two Seventh-day Adventist women from a group of 10 who visited the prison regularly. It was her first meeting with Adventists.

Carmen liked the Adventist women. She felt welcome and accepted. She felt a sense of protection. As they read the Bible together, she began to feel God’s presence in her life. She particularly loved reading, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me” (Psalm 23:1-4, NKJV).

Carmen felt like she was not alone. She began to have hope.

After starting Bible studies, her life got better and better. She received a coveted job in the prison and, before she knew it, she was released for good behavior. She had served only three years of the six-year sentence.

“Now I’m free,” Carmen says. “My life has been restored. I’m studying at a university and moving on with my life. I’ll always put my trust in God because God comes first in my life.”

Carmen regularly returns to the prison to encourage an incarcerated friend. She tells her, “You have to always hold onto God because everything is possible with Him.”

Carmen thanks God that she went to prison. She says God heard her frightened prayers on the 12-hour flight to Spain.

While God didn’t keep her out of prison, He answered her plea for Him to fulfill His will in her life. He brought her into a close relationship with Him.

“I feel very ashamed of my mistakes, but I want my story to serve as a lesson to others,” she says. “When you ask God for His will to be done in your life, wait patiently for Him to answer because He will.” 🌐

Story Tips

Know that Carmen is a pseudonym, used to protect her privacy as she builds a new life in God. The photo with the story depicts Carmen’s hand.

- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- Frank Bond and his brother, Walter, from California, volunteered to pioneer the church’s work in Spain, and in summer 1903 settled in Barcelona, capital of Catalonia. They knew a little Spanish but discovered that the people there spoke Catalan. Undeterred, they went to work. In October, they moved to the nearby town of Sabadell, where they opened a school. In June 1904, the first three people were baptized.

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago went to Sagunto Adventist College in Spain, where students also give Bible studies to prisoners. Thank you for your mission offering that helps spread hope.

By Andrew McChesney



Sowing Seeds in Spain



SPAIN | April 22

Iván and Delia

The first Sabbath, only Iván and Delia worshipped God in their home in a Spanish town without a Seventh-day Adventist presence. But the missionary couple were determined to change that.

Iván was from Mexico, and Delia was from Cuba. They had arrived in Spain a year earlier, just when COVID-19 hit, to support Adventist pastors in Barcelona. As the country began to reopen after COVID lockdowns, Iván and Delia were asked to plant a church in the town of Segovia, located a 90-minute drive from Spain's capital, Madrid.

That first Sabbath, they read the Bible in their home. Iván played the guitar, and they sang. Although they were only two, they had hope. They had the name of a grandmother who had expressed interest in Bible studies.

A few days later, Delia contacted the grandmother, and the two began Bible studies.

The next Sabbath, it wasn't only Iván and

Delia worshipping God in their home. They were joined by the grandmother and her 4-year-old grandson.

The Bible studies continued for a month.

Then the number of people worshipping together on Sabbath grew to five. The grandmother brought her daughter-in-law, the mother of her 4-year-old grandson, to the house church. The grandmother expressed disappointment that the boy's father, Lucas, had refused to come.

Iván asked the grandmother for Lucas' cell phone number and sent him a text message.

"We would like to invite you and your wife to lunch," he wrote.

A few days later, the two couples enjoyed lunch together and went for a walk in the park. During the walk, Lucas mentioned that he would soon turn 22.

Iván and Delia decided to surprise Lucas and his family with a birthday party. Delia





baked a traditional tres leches cake (milk cake) and coated it with a light-green frosting decorated with red flowers and green leaves.

Lucas was very surprised! Never had he celebrated his birthday with a cake or a party. It was Delia's turned to be surprised when she learned that this was his first birthday party.

Lucas loved the cake and the party. He couldn't stop smiling. He was very happy. His wife also was happy. Their 4-year-old son and Grandmother also enjoyed the party.

After that, Lucas asked to join the Bible study group. Then he began to come to the house church on Sabbath. The number of people worshiping God on Sabbath grew to six: Iván, Delia, the grandmother, the 4-year-old grandson, the daughter-in-law, and Lucas. Ivan played the guitar, and everyone sang with joy.

Grandmother, Lucas, and the others invited their friends to come and enjoy the music — and they did. Then Grandfather started coming to listen to the music.

In a year and a half, the town went from having no Adventist presence to a place where 30 people regularly meet in the house church on Sabbath. Eighteen people are taking Bible studies, and six people have been baptized. Plans are under way to rent a church building.

"We are looking for a building because the number of people is growing," Iván says.

"We want a church for Sabbath worship and also for a center of influence where we can reach the community during the week," Delia adds. 🌐

Spain has many cities and towns without an Adventist presence. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that went to Spain's Sagunto Adventist College to help train people to spread the good news about Jesus' soon coming in the country and beyond.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Know that Lucas is a pseudonym.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities [and] among unreached and under-reached people groups"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- In the 1960s, Angel Codejón, president of the Spanish church, began work in the area of religious liberty. As a result, the church started to receive official permission for all churches to function and hold services. With a new Spanish constitution, the church was given total liberty in October 1978. Young men no longer had to fear being imprisoned for being faithful to their religion while in the army.
- Sagunto Adventist College (Centro Universitario Adventista de Sagunto) was established 1965 in the Spanish province of Valencia on the east coast of the country. Sagunto offers degrees in theology, as well as Spanish-language courses, a professional music center, and an art academy.





Surprise Pathfinder Ad



SPAIN | April 29

Loida

Loida's world fell apart at the age of 12 when her parents divorced.

Her parents were Seventh-day Adventist. Her grandparents were Adventist. Loida was raised an Adventist. But when her parents divorced, they stopped going to church. Her father was disfellowshipped.

Loida felt upset. She thought that a loving church would never disfellowship her father. When she spoke about her angry feelings, church members told her that her father had sinned. At the time, Loida was a faithful Pathfinder preparing for baptism. Some church members questioned whether she was ready for baptism while expressing such feelings.

"Maybe you should wait awhile and have your questions answered first," a church member said.

Loida decided not to be baptized. She stopped going to church.

To her disappointment, no one got in touch with her after she left — not the pastor, not any other church member. She wished that

someone would ask if she were well or would encourage her to keep studying the Bible in preparation for baptism. But no one called.

Thirty years passed. Loida got married, became a widow, and remarried.

One day, Loida was scrolling through social media when she saw an advertisement for a Pathfinder camporee. As a former Pathfinder, she was curious to know more. She wondered why the advertisement had appeared on her feed. She had no Adventist friends or any other connection to the church on social media.

Loida clicked on the advertisement and was led to videos from previous camporees. She cried as she watched the videos. She remembered going to church and attending Pathfinder events. A strong desire grew within her to reconnect with God.

As she looked for more information about the Adventist Church online, she learned that the church had many online resources, including sermons. She spent an entire week watching sermons, week-of-prayer programs, and other church events. She showed some of the videos to her 8-year-old daughter, Valeria.

"I have roots in that church," she said.

Valeria was fascinated by the Pathfinder camporee videos.





“Mother, why don’t you go to church anymore?” she asked.

Loida realized that she didn’t have an answer.

“I don’t know,” she said.

When she had stopped going to church as a child, she had thought that she had many reasons. But as an adult, she realized that she didn’t have any good reasons at all.

Valeria asked to go to a Pathfinder camporee.

Loida couldn’t think of anyone in the church to contact for help, but then she remembered an old Adventist friend. The friend helped the mother and daughter go to the camporee that had been advertised on social media.

It was a wonderful experience! For Loida, the most wonderful thing was that her daughter fit in well with the other children. After the camporee, she and her daughter both decided to start Bible studies. Two years later, Loida gave her heart to Jesus in the waters of baptism. She was so happy!

Today, Valeria is 10 and studying the Bible in hope of being baptized one day.

Loida has her own dreams. She and Valeria live in a small town with few Adventists nearby. She would like to move across Spain to Sagunto, which has a larger Adventist presence, so she can become more involved in church activities and her daughter can study at an Adventist school.

She is happy that the Pathfinder advertisement popped up on her social media feed. “For 30 years, I felt like something was missing from my life,” she says. “Now that I have returned to the church and God, my life feels complete.” 🌐

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago went to Sagunto Adventist College, whose campus houses the church school where Loida would like to send her daughter. Thank you for your mission offerings that help spread hope.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

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Fast Facts

- With over 570 million people speaking Spanish, the language is second only to Mandarin Chinese. Spain, most Latin American countries, and Equatorial Guinea have Spanish as one of their official languages. A total of 21 nations speak Spanish daily.
- Setting sail from Seville, Spain, in 1519, an expedition to find a route to East Asia through the Americas and across the Pacific was led by Ferdinand Magellan. Although Magellan was Portuguese, it was Spanish navigator Juan Sebastian Elcano who finished the job in 1522.
- Instead of a tooth fairy, the Spanish have a tooth mouse, called Ratoncito Pérez (Pérez the Little Mouse). Although he first appeared in oral tradition folktales, author Luis Coloma turned him into a tooth dealer in a story written for the 8-year-old King Alfonso XIII in 1894.





SPAIN | May 6

The Bible Guy

Remus

Remus is known as “the Bible Guy.” He was a nurse, and his wife was an architect. They had a comfortable life with three children in France. By all appearances, they had everything that they needed to be happy. But something was missing.

Remus longed to be able to repeat the prayer of Jesus to His Father, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4, NKJV).

Remus wanted to glorify God with His life. But how?

He wondered if his mission should be similar to that of Jesus’ when He proclaimed in a synagogue, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19).

Remus read Jesus’ parting instructions to His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all

things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Then he read in Ellen White’s book *Colporteur Ministry*, “The canvassing work, properly conducted, is missionary work of the highest order” (page 6).

Remus decided to become a literature evangelist. He wanted to be someone who, in his words, “tries to sell books to people who don’t want to buy them.”

Remus and his family moved to Galicia, a highly secular region in Spain. Among a population of nearly 3 million, only about 500 Adventists worship in five churches.

Remus started to sell Bibles and other books at outdoor markets, where people gather to buy farm produce, clothes, toys, books, and second-hand items. As he sold books from a stand, people began to call him “the Bible Guy.”

At one outdoor market, Remus saw a fellow vendor also selling books. He went up to the man and began to talk.

The man clearly didn’t want to engage in conversation, but he didn’t seem able to turn away.

“There is something unusual about you,” the man finally acknowledged.

After many conversations at the market, the man agreed to place several of Remus’ books on his stand for sale.

As a gift of thanks, Remus presented him with a Bible.

The man read the Bible at home and asked Remus for Bible studies. After a few months,



he gave his heart to Jesus. Today, the man is trying to convince his daughter, sister, and mother to also accept Jesus.

He and Remus are friends, and whenever they meet, he calls out, “Hello, Bible Guy!”

Sometimes, Remus’ books sell themselves. Once someone stopped him as he was carrying several Bibles on the street.

“Is that a Bible?” the stranger asked.

“Yes, I’m selling Bibles,” Remus said.

“How much does one cost?”

“Ten euros,” he said, or about US\$10.

“Give me one, please. I’ll buy one.”

In that case, Remus didn’t need to do anything to make the sale. He just had to leave his house. It was God who sold the Bible, he said.

Another time, a woman literally jumped for joy when she saw that Remus was selling Bibles.

“I have been praying to God for a Bible!” she exclaimed and then kissed her new purchase. “This is an answer from God!”

Another time, Remus traveled 70 miles (120 km) to reach an outdoor market. To his joy, he sold many books that day. But as evening came, he realized that he hadn’t sold enough books to cover the cost of the gasoline for the trip.

He wondered, “Was the trip worth it?”

Then an elderly man of about 90 came to the book stand.

“Do you have a Bible?” the man asked.

The man wanted to know if Jesus could possibly love him.

Remus spoke joyfully about Jesus and His love.

With tears in their eyes, the two men contemplated Jesus’ love.

Then the man bought a Bible.

It truly is never too late to get to know Jesus. Meeting the elderly man and sharing the love of Jesus with him was well worth the cost of traveling to the market. Remus hopes to see the man with Jesus in heaven.

Remus is happy to serve God in Spain.

“There are many people searching for the Bread of Life,” he says. “We can help them by giving them the Bible.”

Story Tips

- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No.1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples”; Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities [and] among unreached and under-reached people groups”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- The Phoenicians, who came to Spain in the eighth century BC, called the peninsula “Span,” or the hidden land.
- El Restaurante Botín, in Madrid, opened in 1725, and is the oldest restaurant in the world.

He also is happy to be known as “the Bible Guy.” 🌐

Spain has many cities and towns without a Seventh-day Adventist presence. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that went to Spain’s Sagunto Adventist College to help train people to spread the good news about Jesus’ soon coming in the country and beyond.

By Andrew McChesney

Daring Escape Plan

ITALY | May 13

Georgio



Georgio hit upon what he thought was the perfect plan to escape communist Romania.

He saw lucky people boarding trains in Romania's capital, Bucharest, for the journey from the closed country to the French capital, Paris. As he watched, he noticed a gap between the ceiling and the roof of the passenger train cars. It was just enough space to hide a young man.

He couldn't board the train without a ticket, but each Paris-bound train stopped for a few minutes after pulling away from the train station. It was just enough time for him to run across the tracks, climb up into a train car, and squeeze into the gap. It was a crime to try to flee Romania. He would go to prison if he were caught. But in 1982, he was 20, and he longed for a new life.

He thought that he was the first to come up with the escape plan. But he was not the first. Guards anticipated the daring escape attempt and caught him. Georgio was interrogated for two weeks. Authorities asked if he were anti-communist and if he had any secrets to take

out of the country. Then he was sent to prison to await court sentencing.

Georgio was an atheist and didn't believe in God. Even though he had rejected the government's ideology, the government had convinced him that it was better to be an atheist than a Christian. He believed that only stupid people believed in God.

In prison, Georgio met a Seventh-day Adventist for the first time. The young man was about the same age. He had been conscripted into the army and imprisoned for refusing to work on the Sabbath. Georgio noticed that he behaved differently from the other prisoners. His face was different. He seemed like a good person. The two began to talk. To Georgio's surprise, he was not stupid even though he believed in God.

The Adventist prisoner told him about the Bible, which was banned in Romania.

Georgio was curious to know more and resolved to find a Bible after he was released.

Hours after making this resolution, Georgio was taken to court to be sentenced for his escape attempt. He knew he faced a harsh sentence aimed at discouraging others from making a similar attempt. He had already been in prison for two months.

But the judge made an unusual decision. "You will be freed immediately," she said.

The state prosecutor protested. "But he committed a crime against the state," he said.

The judge didn't budge. Turning to the police officer who had brought Georgio to court, she asked, "When can you free him?"

"He will be free tomorrow," the officer said.



As Georgio was being escorted back to prison, the police officer said with awe, “Surely you know someone in high places.”

Georgio almost said he didn’t know anyone important. Then he realized that Someone in heaven could be helping him.

Georgio was not freed the next day. Nor the next. On the sixth day, his Adventist friend asked, “Are you sure that the judge really said you would be freed immediately?”

At that moment, Georgio remembered his resolution to study the Bible upon his release. He resolved to study the Bible even in prison, with the help of his Adventist friend. As he told his friend about his decision, a prison guard came over. “You are relieved of your work duties tomorrow,” he said. “You will have to stay in your cell because you’re going to be released.”

And that is what happened.

Georgio made good on his promise to God. He found an Adventist church and began worshiping every Sabbath. His life changed. He no longer longed to flee Romania. He had discovered something more important: freedom in Jesus. He was happy.

Today, Georgio lives in Italy and is a faithful member of the Romanian Adventist church in Rome. He and his wife have three adult children and eight grandchildren. He left Romania after the communist collapse.

To this day, Georgio cannot explain why the judge released him. He is certain that only God could have intervened.

Georgio remains in contact with the former Adventist prisoner, now the owner of a construction company. For refusing to renounce the Sabbath, the Adventist had faced a two-year prison sentence. But he was freed under a presidential amnesty two months after Georgio. He had been imprisoned for only a year.

Georgio is a lean 60-year-old man with white hair and a kind smile. Nothing about his face gives a hint about his remarkable experience with God. To know his story, he has to be asked. That’s the reason Georgio likes to ask people to share their personal testimonies.

Story Tips

- Encourage listeners to share their personal testimonies about God’s life-changing power with one another — and to ask others to tell their own stories.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives,” and Spiritual Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Mission Post

- Italy was the first country in Europe in which Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were preached. Michael Belina Czechowski, a former Polish priest, having failed to persuade the Adventists to send him to Europe, convinced another denomination to sponsor him and he arrived in Italy in 1864.

“Because of this experience, I like to invite people to our home to hear their stories,” he says. “You don’t know what is behind people’s faces.” 🌐

Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offering that helps spread the good news about freedom in Jesus in Italy, Romania, and across the Inter-European Division, which will receive this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

By Andrew McChesney





From Los Angeles to Rome



ITALY | May 20

Melanie

Melanie was a party girl after she graduated from a university in Los Angeles. She loved to travel and have fun.

Melanie was in Rome when she got a phone call that her younger brother Randy had died at the age of 20. He was the youngest of five in the family, and he and Melanie were very close. His body was found floating in a swimming pool at 5 a.m. Medical examiners suspected a heart attack. There was no evidence of foul play.

Heartbroken, Melanie returned home to Los Angeles to seek answers. Why did Randy die? She wondered about death itself and what happens to people after they die. She questioned the meaning of life.

Melanie stepped up her party life, seeking to run away from her pain.

Then one of her sisters, who was interested in becoming an actor, invited her to take acting classes. “It’s a good way to blow off steam and confront your pain,” she said.

Melanie took acting classes and began to act.

Falling in love with an Italian man, she

moved with him to Italy. Two and a half years later, they broke up, and Melanie returned to her party life while pursuing an acting career in Rome.

But she felt increasingly empty in her party life. She woke up feeling sad every morning. The meaning of life seemed to elude her. She wondered if spiritual forces were at work in the world. She wondered who was ruling the world. Seeing much evil in the world, she researched the occult.

One day, she stumbled across a YouTube sermon about Daniel and biblical prophecy. She was intrigued and opened her Bible to see if the presenter was speaking the truth. She researched the history of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire. Everything matched what she had heard in the sermon.

“This is all true,” she whispered to herself.

She fell on her knees, weeping. She felt like she didn’t belong in this world but in another world. She gave her life to Jesus.

“I’m not fulfilled anymore with partying,

drugs, and drinking,” she prayed. “I cannot live anymore like this. I’d rather die. You’re going to have to change something about my life and me. I cannot take this anymore.”

She continued watching the YouTube presenter, who she learned was a Seventh-day Adventist. She compared his sermons with the Bible. She read the Bible faithfully. She began to keep the seventh-day Sabbath at home.

After two years, she felt impressed that she should worship in church on Sabbaths. An online search found an Adventist church near her home. She went to church on Sabbath. She told the first person whom she saw there, an elderly man, that she wanted to be baptized.

“Hi,” she said. “I need to get baptized.”

The elderly man was surprised.

“What are you talking about?” he said.

She explained that she had been reading the Bible for two years and was following its teachings.

“I am ready to be baptized,” she said.

Life didn’t change overnight for Melanie after her baptism. She still partied and tried to fit her new life into her old one. But the things that she used to like to do became boring. The things that she once thought were boring became interesting. She was experiencing the process of sanctification. The Holy Spirit was growing inside her.

“He has a lot to do, but He is working me,” Melanie says.

Today, Melanie knows that death is the result of sin (Romans 6:23). She knows that when people die, they sleep in the grave until Jesus’ second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). She says she has found the meaning of life; it is to share her love for Jesus and her hope in His soon return. Daniel 12:3 says, “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (NKJV).

Melanie leaves church tracts and health magazines on bus seats and in restaurants in Rome. She places sharing cards about the

Story Tips

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Fast Fact

- Toss a coin into the Trevi fountain and you’ll return to Rome — or at least that’s the legend. Tourists throw about U.S.\$3,000 (3,000 euros) in change every day into the fountain. This adds up to about \$1 million (1 million euros) every year. All of the money is donated to charity.

church and Adventist radio in gyms. She is looking forward to seeing Jesus — and being reunited with her youngest brother, Randy.

“My blessed hope is that I will see Randy again,” she says. 🌍

Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offering that helps spread the good news about Jesus’ soon return in Italy and across the Inter-European Division, which will receive this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

By Andrew McChesney



PORTUGAL | May 27

Inmate With a Radio

Ana

Someone gave a small radio to Paulo in prison in Portugal. The radio was the only thing that Paulo, a well-educated scientist, had to distract himself. He started looking for radio stations. However, the only station that the radio would pick up was Seventh-day Adventist. Paulo had to stand in a certain spot by the window to pick up the station. He began listening to Adventist programs.

One day, someone on the radio offered a free copy of Ellen White's *The Great Controversy*. Paulo asked for the book and received it by mail.

After a while, Paulo was transferred to another prison, but he wasn't happy because it wasn't where he had hoped he would be sent. The new prison, however, ended up being closer to the Adventist radio station, and he could pick up the radio programs better.

Paulo sent a long letter to the director of the radio station. He wrote about why he was in prison. He told about how he had started listening to the radio station.

"My life is being transformed by what I'm hearing every day," he wrote.

The radio station director was amazed that Paulo had been able to listen to radio broadcasts from his first prison. The director

lived near that prison and had never been able to pick up the radio signal.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, the radio station added Sabbath worship services to its programming, and Paulo began listening to the sermons. In one sermon, the preacher invited people to sign up for Bible studies, and Paulo did. He began studying the Bible through the mail with Ana, a church volunteer.

As a scientist, he was a curious student, and he asked many questions. When he finished the Bible studies, he asked to be baptized. COVID restrictions and bureaucracy blocked his request.

Then he began studying the book of Revelation with Ana. After finishing Revelation, they began a study comparing Ellen White's writings with the Bible.

The studies are ongoing. Ana is trying to make Paulo as independent as possible in his Bible study. "I want him to have the tools to go to the Bible and study for himself," Ana says.

Paulo has asked Ana to give Bible studies to several other inmates. Ana is happy to teach the inmates, but she wants to get Paulo involved in teaching. So, she is encouraging



him to give Bible studies to the inmates. “I want to make him a tool in a place where we cannot reach people in person,” she says.

It is very difficult for Adventists to reach people in Portuguese prisons.

Paulo is worried that he doesn’t know enough about the Bible to teach about Jesus. He also worries that he lacks moral authority to teach others because, after all, he is in prison.

But Ana has continued to encourage him, and he is growing more comfortable. He has begun Bible studies with one inmate, and talks regularly about Jesus with two or three others. He also has spoken about Jesus with his psychologist. In Portugal, inmates are either required to undergo counseling or have the option to seek counseling. Paulo’s psychologist is an atheist. Paulo has told the psychologist about Jesus, and the psychologist questioned his beliefs. “How can you as a scientist believe something that science cannot prove?” the psychologist said. “Everything you believe is a fairy tale.”

The counseling sessions have turned into conversations about faith. Paulo feels like the Holy Spirit is guiding him. He says things that he has studied but he didn’t plan to say just come to his mind. At one session, he challenged the psychologist to read *The Great Controversy*, and the psychologist agreed. Paulo offered his copy, and the psychologist is reading it.

Paulo has written to Ana that prison life is not easy. He wants to change his diet and be baptized, but prison restrictions have complicated things. But he is grateful to be in prison. “I believe that it gave me the encounter that I needed with Jesus,” he writes. “Looking back, I can see that everything that has happened was guided by God to transform my life.”

Ana says Paulo is in prison because he made bad decisions. He is not innocent.

“Yet I believe that he is being called to be God’s instrument in a place that we don’t have access to,” she says. “I really believe that he is a missionary there, even though he

Story Tips

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Mission Post

- Stephen N. Haskell (1833–1922) was the first Seventh-day Adventist minister to visit Portugal. Haskell traveled around the world during 1889 and 1890 in order to inquire about favorable conditions for the establishment of Adventist missions, and he arrived in Portugal in July 1889. Haskell was impressed with the city of Lisbon, in particular the degree of religious liberty guaranteed in Portugal by the constitutional monarchy.

has not discovered that yet.” 🌐

Education, including Bible studies to prisoners, is a major way that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the good news about Jesus’ soon coming in Portugal. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Adventist education by opening an elementary school in Setubal, Portugal. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney



Trapped in Alcoholism



PORTUGAL | June 3

Gabriel

Gabriel liked to drink. He drank more and more, and his wife, Luisa, worried that he was becoming an alcoholic. She prayed for him to stop drinking. She wanted to protect him from himself and to protect their young son, Jorge.

Then a series of unusual events took place in their lives on the Portuguese island of Madeira. The island is located an hour-and-a-half by plane south of Portugal and off Africa's west coast.

Jorge was 4, and he needed to go to preschool. But after a few days at the public preschool, he didn't want to go anymore.

"WAHHHH!" Jorge wailed when he was dropped off.

Luisa didn't know what to do. Gabriel didn't know what to do. He had a drink.

A few days later, the family of three traveled to Funchal, the biggest city on the island, to carry out some errands. As the family went about their business, Luisa noticed an attractive school surrounded by a fence with a

metal gate. "Look," she said to Gabriel. "Let's see if they will accept Jorge."

The three walked through the open gate. The moment when Jorge stepped onto the school grounds, he exclaimed, "I like this school!"

Then he saw other children playing on the playground. "I don't want to go to the other school," he said.

He looked up at Mother and Father with great determination on his tiny face. Stamping his feet on the ground, he yelled, "I don't want to go to the other school!"

So it was that Jorge was enrolled in the Seventh-day Adventist school. He loved it from the first day, and he never cried to go home.

Luisa was relieved. Gabriel was relieved. He had a drink.

Luisa kept praying for Gabriel to stop drinking.

Some time passed, and a teacher invited Luisa to attend a Wednesday prayer meeting on the second floor of the school. Luisa went with Jorge and loved it! She felt like she was experiencing heaven on earth. She and Jorge returned the next Wednesday and the next.

Then Gabriel started to go with them to the prayer meetings. As he went, a desire filled him to stop drinking. He wanted peace.





He longed to leave behind his past. But he felt trapped.

One day, church members invited Gabriel and his family on a picnic. For the first time in his life, Gabriel ate a healthy meal without alcohol. He had never eaten such a meal before. He liked the food, and he felt like this might be a good way to live.

Gabriel and Luisa joined a small group for Bible studies. To Gabriel's surprise, as he studied the Bible, he lost his thirst for alcohol. He was surrounded by people who didn't drink. It was so unlike being at work, where he was surrounded by people who drank. His heart was touched when he read in the Bible, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19, NKJV). As he spent more time with people who didn't drink, he lost all desire to drink.

Luisa was so happy that he had stopped drinking! God had answered her prayers.

Gabriel and Luisa gave their hearts to Jesus and were baptized. When Jorge was 12, he also gave his heart to Jesus and was baptized. Today, Gabriel is a church elder, and Luisa is a deaconess who helps in the children's department.

To this day, Gabriel and Luisa don't understand why Jorge cried at the public preschool and was happy at the Adventist school. But one thing is clear. Because Jorge went to the Adventist school, the family's life has changed completely.

"I wish I had known about the church earlier," Gabriel says. "It has proved to be a big blessing to my family and me." 🌍

Education is a major way that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the good news about Jesus' soon coming in Portugal. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Adventist education by opening an elementary school in Setubal, Portugal. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Show the location of the Portuguese island of Madeira on a map.
- Read next week about how Adventist education changed the life of another member of Gabriel and Luisa's family: the grandmother.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives," and Spiritual Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- The staple foods in Portugal include fish, vegetables, and fruits. One of the national dishes is bacalhau (dried cod), which is usually served with potatoes and green vegetables, and sometimes beans.
- Lisbon was struck by a massive earthquake and subsequent fire on All Saints Day, November 1, 1755. 275,000 people were killed, and 85 percent of the buildings were destroyed.
- An underwater canyon off the Portuguese coastline creates some of the world's biggest waves. In 2011, Hawaiian surfer Garrett McNamara rode an 80-foot (24-meter) wave off the coast of Nazaré in Portugal, creating a new world record.





PORTUGAL | June 10

Baptized Again

Salome

Salome was baptized as a baby, but she didn't follow the doctrines of her parents' church. Something didn't seem quite right to her about the church's teachings.

As Salome grew older, she stopped going to church altogether. She didn't want anything to do with church. But she still believed in God and asked Him for guidance.

Salome began to think a lot about God when her 4-year-old grandson, Jorge, was enrolled in a Seventh-day Adventist school on the Portuguese island of Madeira. The island is located an hour-and-a-half by plane south of Portugal and off Africa's west coast.

The family hadn't planned to send Jorge to the Adventist school. The boy's mother took him to the public preschool for several days, but then he began to cry when she left him.

"WAHHHH!" Jorge wailed.

No one could understand why Jorge was crying. His parents didn't know what to do. Salome didn't know what to do.

Then the boy and his parents traveled to Funchal, the biggest city on the island, to carry out some errands. As the family went about their business, they noticed a neat school surrounded by a fence with a metal

gate. They went inside to take a closer look.

The moment Jorge stepped onto the school grounds, he exclaimed, "I like this school!"

Then he saw other children playing on the playground.

"I don't want to go to the other school," he said.

He looked up at Mother and Father with great determination on his tiny face. Stamping his feet on the ground, he yelled, "I don't want to go to the other school!"

So it was that Jorge was enrolled in the Adventist school. The teachers allowed Salome to accompany her grandson to classes for the first two months to make sure that he adjusted well to the school. Salome liked the school. She liked the teachers. It was clear that Jorge also liked the school. He never cried or asked to go home.

The pastor of an Adventist church that met on the second floor of the school invited Salome to take part in Bible studies.

"I don't mind having Bible studies," Salome replied. "I can go to Bible studies anytime. But I'm not going to be baptized again. No one is going to put water on my head again."

She didn't go to Bible studies.

After some time, Jorge and his parents started attending prayer meeting every Wednesday at the school. Then the parents started to take Bible studies. Seeing that they were studying the Bible, Salome agreed to



Bible studies. But she insisted that she would not be baptized again.

“I was baptized when I was born,” she said. I don’t need to be baptized again.”

Salome met for Bible studies with a church member named Ana. At the start of the first Bible study, Ana bowed her head and prayed for God’s presence. At the end of the Bible study, Ana asked, “Do you want to pray again?”

Salome shook her head. It was her first Bible study, and she had mixed feelings about what was going on.

Ana suggested singing a song instead, and Salome agreed. Ana opened a hymnal and held it out so she and Salome could sing together.

Ana began to sing, “I am the potter, you are the clay —”

Immediately, Salome burst into tears. She tried, but she couldn’t sing a single word.

Surprised, Ana stopped singing. She got up and gave Salome a big hug.

“Don’t cry,” she said.

The song was very meaningful for Salome. She explained that the song, which Ana had chosen at random, had been played at the memorial service of her mother. Ana also began to weep. The two women wept together.

Salome continued the Bible studies with Ana. She learned about Jesus’ example of baptism by immersion. She saw that the Bible did not teach infant baptism. She also went to prayer meetings with her grandson and his parents. Then his parents declared that they planned to get baptized.

Two weeks before the baptism, Salome called Ana. “I want to speak with the pastor,” she said.

Ana guessed what was on Salome’s mind.

“Do you want to do what I think that you want to do?” she asked.

The pastor was surprised that Salome wanted to be baptized after being so adamant about not needing to be baptized again. He suggested that she take her time in making a decision.

Salome gave her heart to Jesus in baptism five months later.

Story Tips

- Show the location of the Portuguese island of Madeira on a map.
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- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Fact

- The Bertrand Bookstore in Lisbon is the oldest bookstore in the world and was opened in 1732, making it 283 years old.

Today, Salome serves in the women’s ministries department of her Adventist church. Jorge’s father is a church elder, and his mother is a deaconess. Jorge was baptized when he was 12.

To this day, Salome doesn’t understand why Jorge cried at the public preschool and was happy at the Adventist school. But one thing is clear: because Jorge went to the Adventist school, her life has changed completely.

“The Holy Spirit touched my heart,” Salome says. “That was when I knew that I had to be baptized.” 🌐

Education is a major way that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the good news about Jesus’ soon coming in Portugal. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Adventist education by opening an elementary school in Setubal, Portugal. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney



Mysterious Man on Bicycle

PORTUGAL | June 17

Vera



Vera gave Bible studies to an elderly couple, Ana and Pedro, who couldn't read or write. The couple's son, Benvendo, helped with the Bible studies. He read the Bible verses aloud to them and wrote out their answers.

No Seventh-day Adventists lived in the remote town of 100 people in central Portugal. The townspeople were simple and honest and had never traveled beyond the nearest town, which was quite some distance away. Vera was sent to the town to work as a missionary for a year.

Ana and Pedro were well over 70 years of age. Something about them caught Vera's attention. When the Bible study examined the Sabbath, Ana readily accepted the biblical teaching that the Sabbath is on the seventh day of the week.

"Yes, yes, I know that's true," she said.

Vera was surprised. People in the village tended to cling to their traditional beliefs. But Vera didn't say anything.

A week later, the Bible study turned to the topic of clean and unclean meat in Leviticus 11.

"Yes, yes, I know that's true," Ana said.

Vera's surprise grew. She couldn't remain silent.

"How do you know that's true?" she asked.

Ana explained that more than 60 years earlier, when she was a young girl, a man had arrived in her town on his bicycle on a Sabbath afternoon.

The visitor had made his way to the town's central square and preached to whoever would listen. Among those who listened was Ana's father.

He listened and went home afterward to look in his own Bible to see if the man had spoken the truth. Unlike his daughter, he knew how to read.

The man on the bicycle came Sabbath after Sabbath. Ana's father listened every Sabbath and compared what he heard with what his Bible said. He saw that the man preached only Bible truths. He told young



Ana many times, “Now, the seventh day is the Sabbath. You know, we shouldn’t eat unclean meat.”

Vera was amazed to hear about the Adventist preacher. Because of his preaching many decades earlier, she didn’t need to convince Ana about anything from the Bible. Ana knew that what she was hearing was the truth because she had heard the same truth from her father. The Bible studies with Vera simply confirmed her father’s words.

Vera was humbled by the experience. She felt like Jesus was telling her, “The saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors” (John 4:37-38, NKJV).

Vera got to see Ana and Pedro baptized because of the sermons preached by an unknown man many years earlier. The couple’s son, Benvenuto, also was baptized.

Vera has never forgotten Ana and Pedro. Those Bible studies took place at the beginning of her work as a missionary, and the experience strengthened her faith. Wherever she works as a missionary, she is not worried about whether she sees immediate results. Her job is to sow the seed and to trust the results to God.

“I look forward to meeting the man on the bicycle in heaven,” Vera says. “I will tell him, ‘Look, the work that you did was not in vain. See these people who were baptized because of you.’” 🌍

Education, including Bible studies in unreached towns, is a major way that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the good news about Jesus’ soon coming in Portugal. Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will be collected next Sabbath, will help expand Adventist education by opening an elementary school in Setubal, Portugal. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Remind everyone that the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will be collected next Sabbath. The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to help five projects in four countries of the Inter-European Division. The projects are listed on page 3 and on the back cover. You can download a mission map with the projects on Facebook at bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples”; Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- Portugal is the largest producer of cork in the world: almost 100,000 tons of cork each year. This cork is then made into, among other things, bottle stoppers and thermal insulation for houses. The main importers of Portuguese cork Germany, Britain, and the United States.
- Portuguese weather is mainly hot. The country is known for having the highest number of sunshine hours in Europe; some parts have nearly 300 sunny days a year.

Mission Field at Home

13th SABBATH | June 24

Victor and Eunice



Sabbath-keepers not only in the sciences, but in the Scriptures. These schools, established in different localities, and conducted by God-fearing men and women, as the case demands, should be built upon the same principles as were the schools of the prophets” (*Review and Herald*, July 2, 1908, par. 1).

The congregation decided to open a church school.

Eunice, a public-school teacher and fourth-generation Adventist, accepted an invitation to teach at the school just outside the city of Porto.

Her decision took a big leap of faith. The Adventist Church had never operated a school in Portugal, and everything had to be started from scratch.

“It was like going to Angola or another mission field,” Eunice says. “We had no tradition to follow. It was all new.”

Church members bought land for the school, and classes started in 1975. A small classroom hosted the first students — a group of children from the local church.

Enrollment grew as the school gained a name. Adventist parents from other churches began sending their children to the school. Influential non-Adventist families also enrolled their children, including a local pharmacy owner and the city mayor.

Eunice taught at the school until her retirement. Victor, who had worked for 21 years building electrical engines, went back to school and became a teacher. Both he and Eunice served as the school’s principal at different times.

Over the years, Portugal’s first Adventist

Victor and Eunice longed to serve the Lord as Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in a faraway country like Angola or Mozambique. But a 1974 revolution in their homeland, Portugal, seemed to end their dreams.

Things, however, were not as they appeared. When the Portuguese military ousted the authoritarian government, the laws changed. For the first time, the Adventist Church could open schools in Portugal. The revolution opened a new mission field at home.

In the months after the revolution, Victor and Eunice’s church congregation were drawn to Ellen White’s advice on education. They read, “In all our churches, and wherever there is a company of believers, church-schools should be established; and in these schools there should be teachers with a true missionary spirit, for the children are to be trained to become missionaries. It is essential that the teachers be educated to act their part in instructing children of



school has turned out many mission-minded children, including a union president and at least 14 pastors and four literature evangelists.

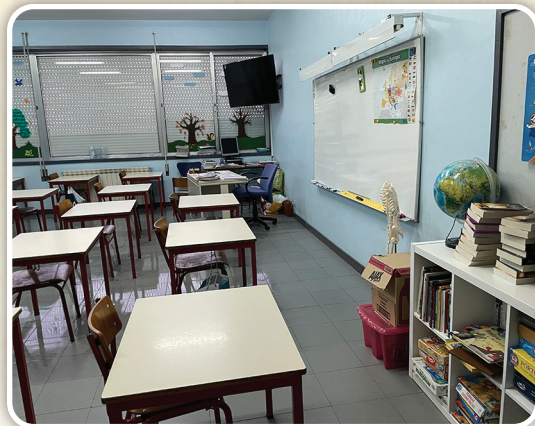
Victor and Eunice have rejoiced in seeing children give their hearts to Jesus in baptism.

One of their favorite memories is of an older student, a young man of about 18, who came to the school from a non-Adventist home. He befriended a young Adventist woman working as a volunteer at the school. The two began to date and later got married. Today, the couple are faithful church members and have two grown daughters, one who is a physician and the other a Pathfinder leader.

Victor recalls a time when the city wanted to honor him for his contribution to education. City leaders proposed naming a

Story Tips

- Remind everyone that their mission offerings are gifts to spread God's Word around the world and that one-fourth of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to help five projects in four countries of the Inter-European Division. The projects are listed on page 3 and on the back cover.
- Before or after the story, use a map to show the four countries in the Inter-European Division — Portugal, France, Switzerland, and Romania — that will receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. You can download a mission map with the projects on Facebook at bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Know that the full name of the people in this story are Victor and Eunice Alves and that the school is Colégio Adventista de Oliveira do Dour, also known by the acronym, CAOD.
- Download photos on Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-European Division: bit.ly/eud-2023.
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, "To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.



street after him. “No, no,” Victor told them. “I don’t need that. I don’t need to be recognized. I would prefer that you name a street after the school.”

So it is that one of the city’s streets is named in honor of the Adventist school.

Victor and Eunice are now in their 70s. Looking back, they express joy that they answered a call to be missionaries at home.

“Back then, we were thinking about going to Angola or Mozambique as missionaries,” Victor says. “But because of the revolution we could not go. Then we realized that the mission field was here, too. The school and teaching have always been a mission to me.”

Eunice remembers a conversation that Jesus had with His 12 disciples after many other people decided not to follow Him anymore. Jesus asked the Twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” But Peter replied,

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:67, 68; NKJV).

Eunice agrees with Peter.

“If not You, who will I follow?” she says. “If there was an Adventist school, then that was the place where I had to go.” 🌐

Education is a major way that the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the good news about Jesus’ soon coming in Portugal. Part of today’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help expand Adventist education by opening an elementary school in Setubal, Portugal. In all, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help five mission projects in four countries. Thank you for your generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

Offering

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering next quarter will support two projects in the Trans-European Division:

- Center of influence, Riga, Latvia
- Youth camp, Zelenika, Montenegro

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

Italy: government website	bit.ly/ItalyGovt
Rick Steves	bit.ly/StevesItaly
National Geographic	on.natgeo.com/3MISPgX
Portugal: government website	bit.ly/PortGovt
Rough Guide	bit.ly/RGPortugal
Visit Portugal	bit.ly/Visit_Port
Romania: government website	www.gov.ro/en
Romania Tourism	bit.ly/RomaniaTour
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LP_Romania
Spain: government website	bit.ly/SpainGovt
US News Travel	bit.ly/USNews_Travel
Lonely Planet	bit.ly/LP_Spain

Seventh-day Adventist

Inter-European Division	bit.ly/SDA_EUD
Italian Union of Churches Conference	bit.ly/SDA_ITCC
Portuguese Union of Churches Conference	bit.ly/SDA_PUCC
Romanian Union Conference	bit.ly/SDA_RUC
Spanish Union of Churches Conference	bit.ly/SDA_SUCC

An offering goal device will 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, which will be collected on June 24. Remind the congregation that their regular weekly mission offerings 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 Inter-European Division. On June 17, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage the congregation 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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YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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Mission (ISSN 0190-4108) is produced and copyrighted © 2023 by the Office of Adventist Mission, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.

Printed in U.S.A.

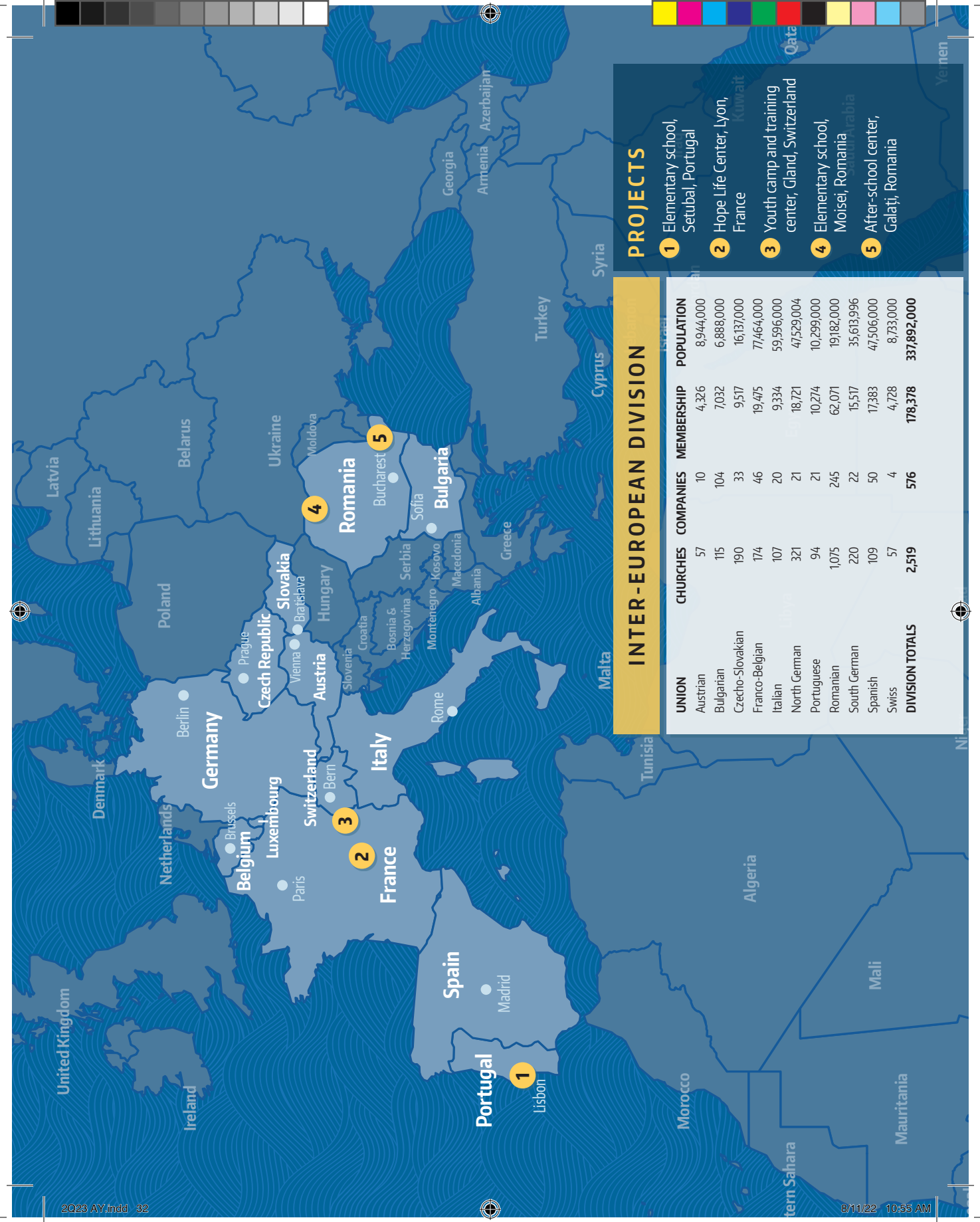
Second Quarter 2023

Volume 112, Number 2

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PROJECTS

- 1** Elementary school, Setubal, Portugal
- 2** Hope Life Center, Lyon, France
- 3** Youth camp and training center, Gland, Switzerland
- 4** Elementary school, Moisei, Romania
- 5** After-school center, Galati, Romania

INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

UNION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Austrian	57	10	4,326	8,944,000
Bulgarian	115	104	7032	6,888,000
Czecho-Slovakian	190	33	9,517	16,137,000
Franco-Belgian	174	46	19,475	77,464,000
Italian	107	20	9,334	59,596,000
North German	321	21	18,721	47,529,004
Portuguese	94	21	10,274	10,299,000
Romanian	1,075	245	62,071	19,182,000
South German	220	22	15,517	35,613,996
Spanish	109	50	17,383	47,506,000
Swiss	57	4	4,728	8,733,000
DIVISION TOTALS	2,519	576	178,378	337,892,000