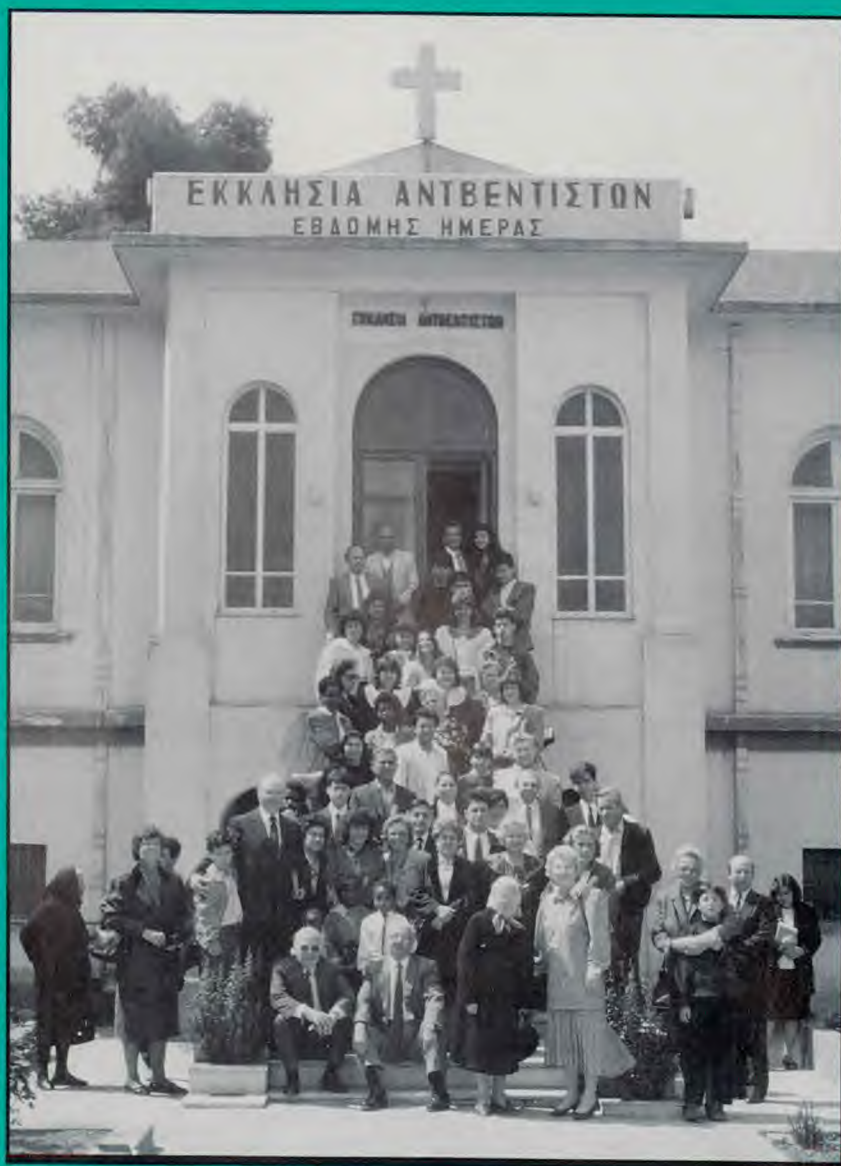


MISSION

REACHING THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL

JUL-SEP 1991



*Trans-European
Division*

**The
Thessalonian
Church Today**

MISSION

REACHING THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL

JUL-SEP 1991

Trans-European Division

MISSION

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On the Cover:

Part of Greece's

300 members,

in Thessalonica,

who will receive

a church/evangelism

center to replace

this present unsafe

structure.

Cover Credit:

Editor:

Janet Kangas

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Leader's Planner

Making Missions Meaningful

100 Years of Adventist World Mission

▲ Stewardship Promotion

The stewardship associate director in the General Conference Department of Church Ministries suggested the reprinted material from the *Sabbath School Manual* (see page 31) to aid the superintendents in carrying out their responsibility to promote the stewardship of mission.

▲ Mission Education: "Overflow"

The editor still receives references to the Thirteenth Sabbath Overflow Offering. The overflow principal (that portion on Thirteenth Sabbath that exceeded the average offering received the other 12 weeks of a quarter) no longer exists.

During the economic recession of the early 1970s in the United States, when money was tight, no overflow was received. In order to continue the Thirteenth Sabbath projects, the solution was to designate 25 percent of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for them. This plan is still followed.

Some ask, What is the offering of the other 12 Sabbaths, plus 75 percent of the Thirteenth Sabbath, used for? The answer is, to operate the existing projects and programs through the world budget.

You see, whenever a project is completed, it immediately falls into the other category—to be maintained. It requires 12¾ offerings each quarter to carry the expenses of the projects already functioning.

We wish that every dollar could be used for frontier evangelism, but we must remind ourselves that every program and building in operation now was once frontier evangelism likewise, and praise God for how far He has led us!

▲ Mission Emphasis Sabbath

August 3—Enjoy a rich story from Scandinavian history—the establishment of the first Adventist conference outside North America. The story generates appropriate

excitement for the centennial celebration of 100 Years of Adventist World Mission, for the historical site has just been determined.

You may wish to have someone from Denmark (or Scandinavia) present the report.

Plan a full day of mission. Ask your pastor to present the progress of Global Strategy in your division (Sabbath School or sermon). After a potluck dinner show a mission film or the mission pageant video from the 1990 General Conference session (available from the Adventist Book Center).

Then take your group out for missionary activities (literature distribution, sunshine or jail bands, door-to-door invitations to Bible correspondence courses, sing-along at a beach or park, or plan an evangelistic series). You may wish to regroup for vespers.

Mission Emphasis Sabbath next quarter (the final quarter of the centennial celebration) is November 2.

▲ Thirteenth Sabbath

Be sure that your participants understand the purpose of the program. Two churches are needed in Europe, where gaining new members is very difficult.

To be convincing, the primaries must understand that the verses they are presenting represent what Europe hopes will happen again today.

Use a more recent Bible translation if it will make the memorization easier for the children. Two children may alternate parts if necessary.

Likewise the juniors/teens must understand the point of their skit: that evangelism produces surprises even where the work is difficult. Their participation is not mere acting, but they are enthusing the adults to help.

We all want to hear a final report someday that the churches are finished.

concluded on page 20

A Large Problem: Smallness

The author is the president of the Greek Mission.



▲ The author, overlooking Athens, contemplates how a small church can reach large cities.

Herman Smit

July 6
Greece

Greece has a long Christian tradition. Ever since the apostle Paul set foot on land at the harbor of Neapolis (presently Kavalla) in Macedonia the middle of the first century A.D., the Greeks have been confronted with the gospel of Christ.

Paul is renowned for relating the liberating power of the gospel to concrete situations, and this is especially evident in his writings to the churches in Greece. These letters were written but 20 years after Christ's resurrection, and before the Gospels.

The Greek Orthodox Church has enjoyed a relatively calm history of development, untouched by the upheaval of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The common idea of an ecumenical community in which Christians of various denominations together form the brotherhood of Christ is alien to the Greek Orthodox mind. Religious liberty is not automatically granted to non-Orthodox Christians. All of these fall under the same label: heretics!

Adventism Arrives

Adventism touched Greece in the late nineteenth century. In 1878 the *Review and Herald* mentioned that some literature was sent to Greece. In 1879 an Italian Adventist, and in 1899 a licensed minister, went to Greece, later followed by W. E. Howell, a professor of ancient Greek.

The first known convert in Greece was George Brakas, a heavy drinker, smoker, and gambler. After reading the Bible, he stopped these vices and joined the Evangelical Church. Then he read about the Sabbath in the Bible, and after a discussion in his church about its validity, he began to keep the Sabbath.

For seven years George tried to contact Adventists in Istanbul. Then in 1909 he was visited by Pastor Greaves, a Canadian who worked in Smyrna, and George Brakas and

his wife and a daughter were baptized!

Adventism Today

Today, 80 years later, Greece has 300 Adventist members, spread mainly over two areas: Attica, with churches in Athens, Nikaria, and Piraeus; and Macedonia, with churches in Thessalonica, Katerini, Verria (biblical Berea), and Nigrita. On the island of Crete is a small church in Heraklion.

Members in other parts of Greece, including the islands, may receive a pastoral visit only once a year and can seldom come to church. A bimonthly church paper, *Angelioforos* (Messenger), and the Sabbath School lesson quarterlies are the only means of serving these isolated members.

Evangelism

Through the years the church has availed all its usual forms of outreach to present the message: the literature ministry, health programs (stop-smoking plans and lectures), Adventist World Radio shortwave broadcasts—all these served the country for a number of years. But these outreach programs eventually died because the small mission of 300 members could not carry the financial burden without support.

Also, a secondary school, affiliated with Home Study International, was closed in 1982, even though many young people were baptized during its 10 years of existence.

In spite of the erection of a five-floor building in Athens, built in 1979 to help the church accommodate its various forms of outreach, the outreach has come to a standstill. (The building still was not completed when the editor saw it in 1990.)

Looking to the Future

The Adventist Church in Greece will have to develop within a realistic pattern, formulated by examining past experience and present opportunities. The principle of ac-

Greece has
but 300
Adventist
members. The
law prohibits
proselytizing.
How can we
help?
Read on.

tion must not expend all available funds on but one approach; for example, developing the pastoral work only. The pattern must direct both the pastors and the members.

Literature ministry. The literature ministry is renowned worldwide in the Adventist Church as an effective public approach by ministers, members, and literature evangelists. This requires a sufficient stock of salable literature, which is not available in the Greek language, not to mention the publishing of regular periodicals.

A good Bible correspondence course designed to reach Greek Orthodox students is a must as a follow-up tool for those in literature ministry, and also for church members as a witnessing tool.

Local and shortwave radiobroadcasts. Licensed and unlicensed radio stations are crowding the FM band in Greece. The Orthodox and Evangelical churches broadcast daily via their own unlicensed radio stations. It may be difficult for the Adventist Church to have its own FM radio station, but it is possible to buy airtime on one of the many commercial stations.

In Athens, home of more than 3 million people, broadcasting would offer a voice of hope. Athens and the rest of Greece must be included in the church's global radio strategy. With but 300 members in all of Greece, Greece might be considered an unentered area.

Health work. Medical missionary work can be realized only if the church is able to employ skilled medical or paramedical staff. In the unused parts of the five-story building in Athens we could widen the scope of community-centered activities for an increasingly health-conscious public: stop smoking clinics, health lectures, a vegetarian restaurant, and a health food shop.

Appeal

For the big cities, Athens and Thessalonica, where small Adventist churches need new life and growth, these planned approaches could mean so much! Clearly, the church in Greece is too small to undertake alone the immense burden of these opportunities. The eyes of the members in Greece are focused on the world church members to work a plan for the country where Paul first set foot in Europe.

We owe it to Paul, to the lost, to our members and workers, and not least to Christ, our Lord. ☉



▲ Mars' hill (foreground) in Athens, from which Paul preached his remarkable sermon "To the Unknown God" found in Acts 17:22-31.



▲ The Parthenon, a famous Greek temple in Athens built in the fifth century B.C. Paul could see the Parthenon from Mars Hill.



The Ebenezer church today, in Copenhagen. ▶

Ugly Duckling, Beautiful Swan

The author is a church ministries associate director in the East Denmark Conference.

Henrik Jorgensen

July 13
Denmark

The
replacement
of the
100-year-old
Ebenezer
church with
a new
church and
evangelism
center is one
of this
quarter's two
Thirteenth
Sabbath
Offering
special
projects.

Master of fairy tales Hans Christian Andersen and American entertainer Danny Kaye are among the individuals who have made the Danish capital, Copenhagen, a city of world fame.

Known for its many towers, the Tivoli gardens, and *The Little Mermaid*, it is also an old city. It is first mentioned in the eleventh century under the name of *Hagen*. In 1167 the town was founded by Bishop Absalon, and in the fifteenth century it was made the capital of the kingdom of Denmark.

Today Copenhagen is not merely a town of fairy tales and pageantry, but a center for trade and commerce, industry and art, government and royalty. Nearly 2 million people live in the Greater Copenhagen area. Young people, 26,000 of them, pursue their studies in various fields at the University of Copenhagen. Many Muslim and Hindu immigrants are settling in the city as well.

Like many Western cities, Copenhagen suffers from the ever-increasing influence of materialism and secularism. Although 95 percent of the Danish population claims to be Christian, less than 5 percent attend church on a regular basis.

The most you hear about God is in jokes or in some strange, unreal New Age terminology. When Denmark hits the headlines in the world news, it is usually with some kind of sensation to reveal how liberal and open-minded the Danish people are, as in the late 1960s when Denmark was the first country in the world to allow pornography, and in the 1980s when Danes legalized and registered homosexual partnerships.

The Adventist Presence

In this environment the Seventh-day Adventists have six churches, two primary schools, a sanitarium, and a school of physical therapy in Copenhagen.

As many of our younger church members have decided to leave the influences of the

city, the membership has drastically declined over the past two decades. If this downward slide is not reversed, neither of our two churches in the center of Copenhagen will exist by the year 2,000.

Ebenezer, one of these two churches, is in the very center of the city. One of the oldest churches, it was dedicated in 1895, almost 100 years ago. Since then it has always served as a center for the Adventists, not just in Copenhagen, but for all of Denmark. In times past it has housed the conference office, the Voice of Prophecy, a bookshop, school, and welfare center.

Many efforts have been expended to win Copenhagen for Christ, and much money spent to support these efforts, with some results realized. Many major evangelistic crusades have been conducted, with evangelists from far and near holding campaigns. The population of Copenhagen came and listened. Yet when decision time came, few were willing to make a positive choice.

Untraditional Methods

It therefore seems as if some untraditional methods will have to be implemented. We have experimented over the past few years with continuous felt needs seminars accompanied by effective visitation programs. Recently Ebenezer has been the home of various seminars and multiple other outreach activities. Many of our members are actively involved. Results are beginning. And our members are beginning to believe that the downward trend in our statistics can be reversed.

For this reason, we have decided to replace the old worn out Ebenezer church building with a modern evangelistic center for the benefit of the local population. It will be a center for counseling and education, for Bible studies, and various seminars, where people can bring their felt needs and receive information about Seventh-day Adventists.

As in the big cities of the world, Copenhagen too has many lonely people. This center will also function as a social center for that area of the city.

In order to reach Copenhagen's population with the three angels' messages, different and creative approaches must be devised, apart from door-to-door work. It is the hope of our leaders in Copenhagen that the replacement of the Ebenezer church will aid in the soul-winning work of Copenhagen. We hope that many people will learn

of Christ in our new facility to be built from part of the Special Projects Offering this Thirteenth Sabbath.

Our Hope

In one of his fairy tales, Hans Christian Andersen described how an ugly duckling turned into a beautiful swan. It is our hope that our ugly duckling, the downward trend in our membership statistics, will turn into a beautiful swan through the activities that will be based in our new evangelistic center of wonderful Copenhagen. ●



▲ This swan was photographed at Kronberg Castle, near Copenhagen.



▲ A close-up of the Parthenon ruins in 1990.



Myrtle Roole giving comfort. ▶

A Crumb of Comfort

The author is the Church Ministries director of the British Union Conference.

K. C. Henry

July 20
England

In 1989

Myrtle Roole was nominated for an award for being Britain's most caring person. Should she win, the £2,000 will go to carry on a greater feeding program.

Giving a Crumb of Comfort" was the caption of one of many articles published by the Newham Docklands Recorder featuring the community outreach of Myrtle Roole, a member of the Stratford, London, Adventist Church.

The article reports, "In the middle of an old London square around 40 homeless ones huddle together in makeshift shelters, eagerly waiting for a minibus to arrive. . . . It's Tuesday, and that means grub night for the homeless.

"As the minibus draws up, driver Myrtle Roole toots the horn, and the homeless come and queue for their hot meal.

"It's a scene that is repeated twice a week as members of the Newham SDA churches (Stratford, Plaistow, and East Ham) do their bit to help London's sad army of unfortunates."

Some of the beneficiaries call her Mama because of what she means to them. Others see her as their guardian angel—their best friend and saint—who goes about her work in a quiet manner.

The author had the following interview with Myrtle:

Henry: Myrtle, what prompted you to undertake this mammoth task?

Myrtle: In November 1986 I heard the continual pleas by radio and television asking for private individuals and organizations to go and help people who were freezing to death. I was then vice president for the East London District of Churches Community Service Federation. I obtained the approval of my church board.

A group of us from the three churches then decided to feed the homeless, but we didn't know where to locate them. We went out one Saturday night, but by 2:00 a.m. had found no one. A police officer directed us to Lincoln Inn's Field, where we found a group of men living in boxes. They asked us if we had brought food. We said no, but

that we would return with some the next day. Sunday evening we took 65 hot meals. We were amazed that no one would take a second serving until he was sure everyone else had been served. That is how this work began.

Now we operate in five centers. Those at Lincoln Inn's Field told us of a group at the Strand. They told us of Waterloo. They told us of Embankment, and they told us of Temple.

Henry: How many helpers go with you?

Myrtle: A large number at first; now there are about 10 on whom we can rely. However, other churches throughout the London Federation of Community Services join in now and rotate the program with us.

Henry: Do you have the support and goodwill of your church?

Myrtle: You will not get the support of everyone, but with our Gideon band we are able to do wonders. I can use the church facilities, but cannot say that any one church is financing us at this time. Volunteers inside and outside the church are doing a lot. It is a miracle that we started without a bank balance. Now the finances have improved.

Henry: How is the program funded?

Myrtle: We receive contributions from individual church members, local businesses, and farmers. Food is also donated by the European Economic Community. The South England Conference Welfare Fund and the London Lay Advisory Council contribute. Backed by the Lay Advisory, we purchased a minibus, used exclusively for the project. We had a special dedication ceremony for it. In addition, we stage benefit programs.

Henry: What about the preparation of meals? How is it done?

Myrtle: The churches rotate. We are com-

mended for being the only organization to provide *hot* meals.

Henry: About how many people are fed?

Myrtle: It ranges between 300 and 500 each time.

Henry: Do they know you are Seventh-day Adventists?

Myrtle: Certainly. Whenever possible, the able-bodied ones come to church. They read our literature, attend our crusades, and are very interested in the family life magazine.

Henry: Do you view this as an outreach?

Myrtle: Yes. Already, one person has been baptized. Once 20 individuals visited the church on Community Services Day. Some are taking Revelation seminars. They really need help, especially those who have suffered sexual abuse, divorce, and joblessness. Some testify that none could do a better job helping them than the Seventh-day Adventists. Some non-Adventist churches are inviting me to conduct their services. The Community Services can sometimes go where the minister cannot go.

Henry: This work is time-consuming. Do you have time for any other work?

Myrtle: Yes, I am employed as a social worker 30 hours a week and I spend 44 hours in community work. My recreation is to go out and solicit food.

Henry: You must get tired from this. How much longer do you intend to continue?

Myrtle: As long as the Lord gives me the strength and resources.

Henry: What personal benefits do you get from this ministry?

Myrtle: I have peace within. Having migrated from a foreign country and living as a single, I reckon I could be one of the group. When I started this program I was

asthmatic, but those symptoms have gone. When God gives a commission, do it, and never question His leading!

Henry: Do you view this as fulfilling Jesus' commission to the world?

Myrtle: Yes. Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry before preaching to them. We did not have to declare that we are Adventists; the food told the story. The people have testified that they did not have to wait to hear a sermon before they were fed. Some more, for sure, will come to know Jesus.

Henry: Members, let us pray for Myrtle and her helpers in this ministry of love. Our ministry of love, if not just like Myrtle's, can be to support our world mission program with regular offerings. Then pray that through the many outreaches of the church, more will come to know this love made available to them through your generous gifts. 🙏





A scene in Norway, where this story occurred. ▶

MIKE STEVENSON

A Providential Personal Preference

The author is the youth director of the West Norway Conference.

Oyvind Gjengsto

July 27
Norway

One day in the spring of 1988 a Chilean refugee walked the streets of Bergen, the second-largest city in Norway, on his way to the city square. He was on a special errand. He was trying to find one particular Norwegian Seventh-day Adventist whom he had never before met.

For a long time he had tried to find the local Adventist church in town, without success. He had finally given up, when he happened to mention his disappointment in a letter to some of his relatives back in Chile. They had responded that he should try to find the city square and there look for a young Norwegian man selling vegetables, for he was a Seventh-day Adventist and also could speak Spanish.

Stein Jarl Rubach

The name of the young man (he was in his mid-20s) to look for would be Stein Jarl Rubach. The story of how the Lord prepared Stein Jarl to help the Chilean refugees is the subject of this report.

During the winter of 1987 Stein Jarl received an invitation from the Adventist church to attend a Revelation Seminar. Although not an Adventist, he knew about Adventism through an Adventist uncle in northern Norway. Stein Jarl had never bothered to read the steady flow of Adventist literature the uncle had sent for many years, but something about this seminar sounded interesting.

Stein Jarl was one of but a few who turned up at the seminar, but he was thrilled by its message. By May he was baptized. Now he wanted so much to do something for Jesus, but what?

Sometimes we are led to certain decisions without knowing why—at the time. Here's how Stein Jarl was led. In the Norwegian junior colleges, one can choose several subjects as "personal preference" classes, and Stein Jarl for some reason chose Spanish as a foreign language. Now very few people in

Norway speak or understand Spanish, and Stein Jarl didn't even know how he intended to use the language. Today he can see that God's foreknowledge impressed him to choose as he did.

The Refugees' Obstacle

After his course, Stein Jarl realized that one of the main obstacles met by the Chilean refugees in Norway was the language barrier. And so Stein Jarl thought of starting a language course for them. One problem: how to find a classroom?

He thought of the downstairs rooms at his church; of course he could use one of those. Immediately another problem arose: what about a textbook for his language course?

Stein Jarl soon discovered that a very accurately translated book between the Norwegian and Spanish languages is the Bible! What better textbook could they use!

Most of the enrollees were not Adventists and this was the first Bible they owned. Not one, but two, for they needed one in each language. It wasn't hard to find enough Norwegian Bibles, but finding Spanish Bibles in Norway was another problem. Stein Jarl persevered, and the Bibles were found. Now the language course could begin, and Stein Jarl, along with four of his Adventist friends to help, was ready.

The book chosen to begin the course was Revelation! *What better topics than these!* thought Stein Jarl.

Some Had Hardly Heard

Some had hardly ever heard about Jesus' promise of salvation, but now Stein Jarl can say that they all have been confronted with the Adventist message! Since this special language class was started in Norway, many Chileans have been in touch with it. Some have remained in Norway, while others have gone back to their home country.

The seed has been planted, and young people have used the talents that God has

Sometimes
we are led
to certain
decisions
without
knowing
why—at
the time.

given them to fulfill their part of the Great Commission.

And if you were that Chilean refugee walking alone down the streets of Bergen,

looking for someone named Stein Jarl Rubach, wouldn't you be grateful that he had witnessed to previous customers who knew he could help you? 🌿



▲ From her room she saw only the sails of the boats, not the water, and expressed surprise that boats went through downtown Copenhagen just like cars!



View from top of the "Round Tower," where EGW described balls of fire falling on Copenhagen. ▶

From her window EGW commented about this park, actually a cemetery. This caused some to say that she was not inspired! ▶



▲ During her 1885 visit EGW praised this public hospital for its practice of socialized medicine.



Touring Copenhagen With Ellen White 100 Years Ago

▲ EGW preached in this building on June 4, 1887. Her text was 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.



▲ Ellen White (EGW) entered Copenhagen June 1, 1887, at this train station.



▲ From the basement of the former building on this site, EGW said plans laid for Copenhagen by the leaders were not broad enough (see *Evangelism*, p. 421).

John G. Matteson ►



PROVIDED BY HERDIS AND CHRISTIAN LUND

First Non-American Adventist Conference

The editor reports on a search important to Adventist historians.

Janet Kangas

August 3 Denmark

During this centennial celebration of 100 Years of Adventist World Mission, it seemed celebrative indeed to locate and stand upon this historical site.

Denmark is the oldest kingdom in the world, and the lineage of its present queen, Margrethe II, can be traced back to the Viking king Gorm the Old, 910-950.

Denmark also has the distinction in the Adventist world of organizing the first conference outside North America. The Danish Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized with seven churches containing 91 members and 30 interested sympathizers, some as Sabbathkeepers.

The conference was established in the town of Hellum, with J. G. Matteson as president; C. C. Hansen, secretary; and J. P. Madsen, treasurer. The conference headquarters was established in Madsen's home (Matteson was living in Oslo, Norway, at the time). Madsen, it seems, died soon after, and the building was torn down in 1919. Its location went unmarked, and its identity, over time, faded in memory.

JGM—Pioneer

But a word about Danish-born Matteson, the president—known as JGM. After selling his furniture and possessions for half value in America, where his family had emigrated, he had sufficient funds to sail from New York to Hamburg to open the work in Scandinavia.

A few papers had been sent ahead, and there were a few interested people when he arrived in Vejle, Denmark, on June 6, 1877. But success did not look promising.

Then a letter in beautiful penmanship arrived from Alstrup that appeared to be from a well-educated man who had been reading the *Advent Tidende* (the Adventist paper). Thinking he must be an influential man who could support the work, John and Anna quickly headed for Alstrup.

When they arrived, JGM located the man, very poor and totally deaf, in a humble cottage. JGM blamed himself for his hasty decision, but shortly time proved the decision

had been the Lord's. JGM found a house in which to conduct meetings, and the people packed in. On August 12, two months after his arrival in Denmark, 500 people assembled. Here in Alstrup JGM established a church.

Three years later the conference was organized.

A Memory of JGM

A convert baptized as a boy by JGM left us this story:

"On Sabbath in 1878 the group in Vendsyssel planned to have a baptism in the afternoon, and several persons wanted to join the church. Some people had heard about it and decided to prevent it. About noon a crowd of 50 persons came to Harlund's home where JGM was and claimed that he should be handed over to them. They stood outside with sticks and pitchforks.

"Harlund's mother had hidden JGM in her pantry and placed the cradle with Marinus Harlund in it over the clap. She said to the mob, 'You can seek him everywhere but you mustn't wake the boy.' They couldn't find JGM.

"In the afternoon they had their baptism without anybody of the crowd knowing it and preventing them. But the next day JGM was threatened again. He had to ask for police protection during his meetings, and he got it. But often in the evenings when he went home after his meetings people who had hidden themselves in ditches threw rotten apples and eggs at him."

Locating the Field

It was during the editor's visit in April 1990 that the East Denmark Conference renewed its interest in locating the site of the first Adventist conference in Hellum, Denmark, the first organized conference outside North America.

Some support had swung from the tradi-

tionally held general site to the site on which the school now stands—property that historically belonged to the young church too. A Hellum church member, an educator named Frank Zenas, had recently researched the legal records, and interest had heightened at the East Denmark Conference to learn his findings.

After an interview with Jytte Kjeldal, in the archives at Danish Junior College in Daugaard, and with John Pedersen, president of the West Denmark Conference in Aarhus, where the handwritten original membership records are kept, we headed north for Hellum and located our researcher.

Frank led us to the specific spot of the traditionally held general site indicated by his documented records. It turned out to be a plowed field, the site being several hundred feet from the road and accessible by a

two-lane track along the edge. Diagonally adjacent to the far side of the field, nearer the road, is a homestead. The present owners were already aware of the Adventists' interest in their property, and cameras snapped freely from every angle. Johann Thorvaldsson took the news back to the East Denmark Conference that the authentic location had been established. Since the property is no longer owned by Adventists, of course, it remains a crop field.

During this centennial celebration of 100 Years of Adventist World Mission, it seemed celebrative indeed to locate and stand upon this historical site of the Adventist Church—not only the cradle of the work in Scandinavia, but the first organized conference outside of the land from which its missionaries were sent. ●



▲ The president of the West Denmark Conference, John Pedersen, displays the church record book dating back to the organization of the first non-American conference organized in 1880.



▲ Site of J. P. Madsen's home in which first non-American conference was organized in Hellum, Denmark, 1880. This view is from the road.



▲ Herdis and Christian Lund. Mr. Lund compiled extensive records and photos of the early SDA work in Denmark.



▲ Frank Zenas, researcher, on site he located of Madsen's home. This view looks up the slope toward the road.



▲ This was the Voice of Prophecy headquarters where this story occurred.

MIKE STEVENSON

Voice of Prophecy Vignettes

The author is the principal of the Voice of Prophecy Bible School in Britain.

K. F. Taylor

August 10 Britain

[A man and a woman may alternate the following sections accordingly, if desired.]

Leader

As we press on with the church's global radio strategy program through Adventist World Radio, we are cheered by vignettes of previous converts through the Voice of Prophecy broadcasts and correspondence schools.

Peter

Peter found that his reasonably happy life was shattered by a letter from his employer notifying Peter that he was unemployed. Finding another job would be difficult, for unemployment was high. For a few weeks, being at home did not prove too difficult, but then tension set in. As weeks turned into months, Peter realized he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

While in this condition Peter received an invitation to take a free Bible correspondence course. Relieved for something else to think about, he applied. But when the lessons arrived, he didn't feel like studying, so he decided instead to phone the Bible school and talk things over! After a long discussion, and assurance that the school would pray for him, Peter did become an active student—and wrote and phoned a number of times. An invitation to some meetings followed, and Peter is now attending baptismal classes.

Gladys

Gladys, 80 years young, had been so upset by the news that the minister of her Sunday church had left the church and his wife to live with another woman that she had stopped attending. About this time someone put a Voice of Prophecy card in her mailbox. The lessons so pleased her that she shared them with others passing through her same experience, and soon a group was meeting each Friday night.

All went well until they got to the lesson on the Sabbath. After a long discussion the group decided to discontinue the studies. But Gladys was convicted that the lesson was based on Scriptures and decided to continue studying on her own. Soon the local Adventist minister was a regular visitor to her home, and after a time of heart-searching, Gladys was baptized. She attends church regularly and keeps in touch with the Voice of Prophecy staff about twice a year by sending a generous box of delicious Scottish shortbread—famous biscuits that melt in the mouth!

David

David was a tall, strong young man who enjoyed playing rugby and also the celebrations at the bar afterward. Gradually drink began to control his life. After a policeman "interfered" with his unruly behavior one day, David disapproved—by seeking to fight with the constable. This foolish action resulted in his being sent to prison.

There an Adventist couple who visited prisoners met David and asked him to ask Christ to give him the power to live a different life. He enrolled in the Voice of Prophecy school, always asking further questions about each topic studied. When he was released, the Adventist couple encouraged him to attend church.

David had been bitten by the "study bug" and wanted to delve even deeper into God's Word. He applied at Newbold College, where they were not too sure he could manage the effects of his past life on his study load. Time proved them wrong, for David graduated from Newbold with honors and went on to obtain a doctorate from another university. Now David is a highly respected faculty member of one of our colleges.

Joan

Joan, partially paralyzed from a stroke, walked with great difficulty and had limited

use of her hands, although she had learned to type with one finger. Her speech was so affected that it was almost impossible to communicate. But her mind was active, and a friend encouraged her to take a Bible course. Joan began to study with the Voice of Prophecy. She was so thrilled with this newfound activity that she wanted to share her experience. But how?

She decided to write to the newsletter circulated by the local association for stroke sufferers and explain how these Bible studies helped her to cope. To her surprise, her letter was published in full, including the name and address of the school! The result: 15 other people followed her example!

Tony

Tony was a young Christian seeking to know more about God's Word. He enrolled in one of the Bible courses and enjoyed his Bible lessons so much that he decided to make them the basis of a Bible study series for his friends in his town in the west of England. Some time after he had written to the principal about his plan, the principal was visiting a church in northern England and was sharing Tony's experience with the members. As he was speaking he noticed that a group of young men sitting together seemed highly amused by the story.

At last one of them who seemed a little less embarrassed decided to speak up and explain their reaction. "I am Tony," he said. Tony was visiting his friends in the church there during the term break from Newbold College, where he was now taking the ministerial course!

Leader

Although these were Voice of Prophecy courses, did you notice that the broadcasts were not mentioned? You need not be a radio evangelist to lead someone to Christ! You can be one who distributes enrollment cards with a personal invitation. ●

Try a recipe for the Scottish specialty mentioned in the story:

Scottish Shortbread Fingers

½ cup sugar
1 cup butter
2 cups plain flour

Cut butter into flour by hand or with a mixer. Add the sugar. Knead with hands or beat with mixer until the mixture holds together.

Press into a baking sheet 10" x 12". Cut through the dough to make "fingers." Prick each finger with a fork. Sprinkle with sugar.

Bake at 250° F until firm. Remove from oven while still hot. Re-cut the shortbread where you cut it before. Let cool before removing from pan.





Bente Juhl ▶

Is There Nothing More?

Richard Muller is the Sabbath School director for the West Denmark Conference.

Richard Muller and Bente Juhl

August 17 Denmark

Materialism
and
secularism
have swept
over the
Nordic
countries
until one
could almost
conclude that
God has been
forgotten.

The 3,500 Adventists in Denmark face a tremendous challenge in proclaiming the Adventist message to the Danish people. There is about one Adventist for every 1,500 in the population, with the average member's age very high and only a few children and youth.

Although the Danes are born into the Lutheran State Church membership, very few ever attend church. Materialism and secularism have swept over the Nordic countries until one could almost conclude that God has been forgotten. But Jesus once said, "Man does not live by bread alone," and to our joy we see that the spiritual hunger is still present—not to say increasing.

As the state church has not been able to satisfy this hunger, Danes over the past decade or two have turned to the teachings of the East, such as Hinduism, Yoga, healing and transcendental meditation—all mixed in a system we call the New Age.

In spite of this, the Adventist Church has kept proclaiming the three angels' messages. And we have seen some residents in the capital, Copenhagen, touched and added to the church by God's hand through evangelistic campaigns.

Bente and Thorkild

Also, in other parts of the country we do see "burning sticks snatched from the fire." Thorkild and Bente, a husband and wife who live in the West Denmark Conference, are two such "sticks." Here is their story.

Bente was baptized as an infant into the state church. As a very sickly child she spent many weeks, and often months, each year in bed, often contemplating issues like "death," "Why are we here?" "Is there nothing more to life than to be born, to eat, drink, sleep, work, get old, and die?"

Bente had no one with whom to share her worries. Her mother just said that hard work would keep such thoughts away. So Bente began reading books and magazines about

death and dying. Eventually she got ahold of New Age literature.

Soon Bente had the ability to localize magnetic fields in the earth around sick people, and she had no question in her mind about the truth of reincarnation. She was even referred to as an authority on magnetism. She believed she had found "the way."

Thorkild had grown up in a free-church family, but after he left home he gradually drifted away from his church. All the work that he involved himself with left no time for religion, although once or twice he did visit the local Lutheran church.

Finally the only religious activity he engaged in was the grace he said over the roasted goose at Christmas dinner. But in 1979 great changes came into his life when he met Bente. They were married in 1985.

Struggle and Search

One day Bente, with an intense longing for the truth—whatever that meant—in her heart, was suddenly overwhelmed by despair. With no peace of mind and after a long struggle, she knelt on the kitchen floor and pleaded with God for help.

Shortly after, she and Thorkild were invited to some tent meetings. Here she experienced a new and exciting joy, but which Thorkild did not share. He felt that the message was "too modern," and without depth.

At this troublesome time, the couple saw a notice in the local newspaper advertising a Revelation Seminar to be conducted in town. Bente persuaded Thorkild to attend with her, and for the first time they heard about the Adventist Church.

Gradually the pair were confronted with the Adventist message. Both were shaken by the plain Bible truths, but at the same time shocked that they had lived so many years in an "enlightened" society without any knowledge of these truths.

After more study and discussion at home,

they began to visit the local Adventist church, where they immediately found some friends from whom they received much support during this perplexing time. They discovered how many areas of their lives they would need to surrender before asking for baptism. The church and pastor stood by their side and gently led them. On July 1, 1989, Bente and Thorkild were baptized in the small cozy church of Vejle.

Bente, having accepted God's message for these last days of earth's history, spends many hours in her "closet" in prayer and studying the Word of God. She has found the peace for which she longed so many years, and her interest in the occult and the other supernatural forces has vanished.

Thorkild, who used to be a workaholic, working from early morning to late evening

seven days a week, now knows the joy of Sabbath rest. Both are enjoying the Sabbath School lessons, which provide further understanding of the Bible's many treasures.

A Personal Testimony

Bente and Thorkild give this personal testimony:

"We would like to express our gratitude not only to the local Adventist church in Kolding, but also to every Seventh-day Adventist for the heartwarming receptions and hospitable welcomes we have experienced wherever we have been. A special thank-you goes to our pastor and our first friends in the Kolding church, as well as to the church at Vejle, where we experienced our unforgettable baptism." ●



**EMBRACE
MISSIONS
AROUND
THE WORLD**

ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN GRAY



▲ Overlooking the city of Athens from the Parthenon.

Friendly People and a *Peripteres*

The author is the president of the Greek Mission.

Herman Smit

August 24
Greece

Have you
ever invited
anyone to an
Adventist
baptism by
immersion?
You will find
that what
began as
curiosity
fulfillment
makes a
deeply
meaningful
memory.

Everywhere in Athens one finds the *periptero*, or kiosk—on street corners and squares, and in the nearby bus and train stations. I've never seen so many anywhere else, and I've seen a few places.

The *periptero* is a small boxlike shed, with hardly enough space for the salesperson to sit or to move. It's overloaded with stock of any kind: local and international newspapers and magazines, postcards, chewing gum, chocolate bars, cigarettes, and haberdasheries.

The *periptero* has a social function, too. It's the place at which people make phone calls and exchange the latest gossip and news.

An Observation Post

One *periptero* is located at Solomou Square in Nikaia, one of Athens' many satellite townships. The lady owner has been sitting inside her small observation post for 13 years. She knows everyone who lives within her service area. Many come to pick up the daily newspaper, or just to look at the headlines of the many newspapers. Or to exchange the statistics of life: who was born, and who's no more!

Opposite the *periptero*, or kiosk, next to restaurants and housing, is a small building at which at least twice a week people move in and out. It's a church. That's what it says—Christian Church of Seventh-day Adventists.

Now most of the Greeks, of course, are Greek Orthodox, but this is a different church. The *peripteres* sees most activities occurring on Wednesday and Saturday.

(In Greek the word for Saturday is *Sabbato* [pronounced savvato], which can be traced back to the first century.)

Back to our story, throughout the years the *peripteres* has seen the people coming to and going from the Adventist church.

A Friendly One Comes

Now one of these churchgoers comes to use the phone. The lady wants to call her husband at home. While the client pays for her call, the *peripteres* comments, "Lots of activities this week—people coming nearly every day. What's going on?"

The answer comes cautiously. "Well, we will have a special service this Sabbath, a baptismal service."

"Oh!" says the friendly voice in the box, "a child born lately?"

"Well," says the lady outside, "four persons will be baptized."

"Four babies, *poh-poh-poh*!" (Greek for "my, my, my!")

"Not exactly; we baptize only adults," bravely says our sister. "If you would like to come and see for yourself, you're most welcome to attend the baptismal service!"

Says the *peripteres*, "I've watched you people. And I have noticed that you're a friendly lot. People always nicely dressed . . . polite and smiling. I have the impression that you're really a happy people. I would like to come and bring my friend!"

The baptismal service occurred Sabbath evening. The *periptero* was closed, and its owner and her friend attended the service in the beautifully decorated church.

I'll Never Forget

Later she reflected, "I will never, never forget this. This will stay with me forever. Thank you so much for inviting me!"

Sabbath School members, please pray that the visitor's remark "This will stay with me forever" will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. And also pray that this week you might bring someone in touch with Christ in a way he or she will "never, never forget!"

Leader's Planner (cont. from p. 3)

▲ Worthy Appeals to Editor

Occasionally personal letters for monetary assistance during times of crisis are sent directly to the editor. For example, upon return from General Conference session in July 1990, five requests were waiting on the desk. The pleas were typical: a sponsor was needed for five of a member's 10 children for college educations; Bible study guides, videos, three specific books, and a Bible; the book *Life Sketches*; children's materials for Sabbath School; and a church building.

The MISSION office is not alone at the General Conference in receiving these worthy pleas. How does the Church Ministries Department handle them? One individual has been designated to forward the letters to their respective divisions. The leaders there decide whether to request a local administrator to investigate the need. (Unfortunately, on rare occasions, not all requests have been legitimate that GC personnel *have* responded to in the past.)

General Conference employees regret the inability to personally meet all the individual pressing needs that come to our attention. We do, however (as revealed by the North America stewardship figures), give substantially to the world budget.

▲ Information on Trans-European Division Territory

For information on the Trans-European Division territories featured this quarter, write to the corresponding tourist offices or embassies in your country. Tell them you

are studying their nation and would like information about their people, climate, religion, agriculture, industry, and holidays.

In the United States, write to: Embassy of Denmark, 3200 Whitehaven Street NW., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone 202/234-4300; Embassy of Greece, 2211 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone 202/232-8222.

National Geographic articles of interest from the Trans-European Division territory that you might obtain from your library include descriptions of Denmark (February 1974 and December 1979); and Greece (March 1980 and December 1983). The 1983 article is historical (Byzantine Empire). The rest are overviews.

▲ Trans-European Division Territory

The territory of the Trans-European Division includes: Afghanistan, Albania, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Yugoslavia.

▲ Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Fourth Quarter 1991: Eastern Africa Division. Capital City Church in Lilongwe, Malawi; literature evangelists' seminary in Nairobi, Kenya; and a library and girls' dormitory at Tanzania Adventist Seminary.

First Quarter 1992: Euro-Africa Division. Chapel in Maputo, Fomento, Mozambique; evangelistic center in Paris, France; and reconstruction of primary/secondary school in Lisbon, Portugal.



▲ Chat and Matt

A More Precious Harvest

The author is the communication secretary at the Oxford SDA Church.

Vera Porter

August 31
England

When you
Ingather, are
you looking
for the more
precious
harvest along
with the
paper, silver,
and bronze
harvest?

We trudge heavily from door to door, from shop to shop, and from pub to pub during the two or three weeks allocated to us by the government for Ingathering, spurred on by thoughts of achieving a personal goal, a church super goal, or a conference goal.

When our tins are full we cheerfully hand them to the local agent, who sits for endless hours counting the paper, silver, and bronze harvest. But let me tell you the story of a more precious harvest.

In the Oxford SDA Church we have just baptized a very special young man. But let me go back to the beginning of the story.

The situation was depressingly wrong at Matthew's home. His parents were having problems. In a desperate attempt to lighten his aching heart, Matthew got in touch with an agency that introduces young men from England to Filipino young women to establish pen friendships.

Matthew's name was paired with Miss A's, but Miss A, in the meantime, had met and married someone. When the letter arrived suggesting Matthew as a pen friend, Miss A passed it to her cousin, Charito, asking her if she wanted to take up correspondence with an Englishman.

Curious and Intrigued

Charito, curious to know more about life in England, agreed. After Matthew's initial letter Charito was intrigued because he mentioned that although he had no formal religion, he tried to live by the Ten Commandments. The correspondence between Matthew and Charito became regular.

Charito says, "Initially I tried to get Matthew to think more about his need of God—that God loves him and that Jesus could better his life. Because of the distance between us I was not sure how successful I could be, but I thought it my duty to try. Our friendship grew quickly, and I tried to encourage Matthew to find our local church.

At first he didn't respond, but I didn't lose hope. Then I sent him *Steps to Christ* and other Adventist literature. I prayed that in some way the Holy Spirit could work through my letters."

Meanwhile, Matthew was somewhat bemused by this deluge of pamphlets that accompanied each letter, but, as a palliative for his loneliness, he pursued the correspondence. He read and re-read *Steps to Christ*, and was surprised to feel that the book was aimed specifically to him.

Some of Matthew's doubts and questions were beginning to find answers. When he mentioned this to Charito, guess what Matthew got—more material! She suggested he read *The Great Controversy*. Then Matthew visited a bookshop and found a book about Seventh-day Adventism. The book, however, was *against* Adventism—an attack on the church doctrines. But as he read it, he became increasingly convinced that there was more to this religion than he had anticipated. He was becoming particularly convinced that the true Sabbath was, in fact, Saturday. By now Matthew sensed a conflict within himself and was not sure what to do.

The Ingatherer

One night as Matthew was sipping beer and chatting about the daily news with some friends in the coziness of a pub, he found himself confronted by a lady offering a leaflet about world missions and holding out a collection box. Like his friends, Matthew nonchalantly dropped some coins into it and folded the leaflet to fit into his pocket.

When Matthew remembered the incident, next morning, he pulled out the paper. "Sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church," it read. This was more than a coincidence! Matthew immediately signed up for the free health course and, on completion of that, he studied the Bible lessons.

Here are Charito's words again: "My church members knew that I was writing to

Matthew, and most of them were excited that I was shining my light so far away. I could tell that Matthew was becoming very interested when he wrote me that he had begun to study the lessons. I again advised him to find the church, believing the Adventists would help him."

And so Matthew went searching for the Oxford Adventist Church. He was surprised by the warmth and friendship so soon extended to him. That first Sabbath he was invited to the pastor's home for lunch, and whose face across the table do you suppose he found himself looking into?—the very lady who had approached him in the pub with the Ingathering leaflet!

Time to Meet

By now Charito and Matthew had corresponded for two and a half years, and decided it was time to meet. They arranged to meet in Manila at Christmastime. The day after Matthew's baptism, he was bound for the Philippines. On the plane, Matthew was excited, and although anxious, he was convinced that the Holy Spirit was beckoning him on.

But unbeknown to Matthew, while his plane was winging its way toward Manila, there was an uprising in the Philippines and President Aquino's government was engaged in crushing yet another coup attempt. Rebel troops had captured the airport, so Matthew's plane was unable to leave Kuala Lumpur. The airport authorities in Manila could not guarantee his flight in. In fact, he was offered a flight home!

Matthew went to a hotel to think. He believed that if he trusted in God, he would eventually meet up with Chat, as she was nicknamed. But the next morning all the planes—even those not able to leave for Manila—were fully booked and the prospects were dim. Matthew walked around the city and asked God for one last chance. He returned to the airport in time to hear a call that one passenger had canceled a ticket.

Matthew lost no time! After a two-day delay, Matthew arrived safely in Manila.

A few days together were all the couple needed. They were married by the chaplain of the Manila Sanitarium as soon as the service could be arranged. And so Matthew and Chat spent that Christmas together as husband and wife in her parents' home.

Matthew, a new Adventist—and a new husband—was tremendously impressed with the kindness and help of all our church members in the Philippines, and how sad he was to leave them when the time came for him to return home—alone. Yes, the authorities were not ready to issue Chat's visa and emigration papers, so Matthew's faith—once again—was tested.

Back in Oxford, the church members waited with Matthew for three long months. Finally, in April, Chat arrived.

Here is Chat's final word: "I found it a wonderful experience to witness to other people, and to have a part in saving one lost soul who is very dear. Who can tell—if I had not let my light shine, would I ever have met the man God had chosen for me?"

And how about Ingathering, world church members? When you Ingather, are you looking for the more precious harvest along with the paper, silver, and bronze harvest? When you give your *own* harvest in the weekly World Mission Offering, are you giving your paper, silver, and bronze to maintain our world mission program, or are you, too, praying for the more precious harvest—souls? ●





▲ The new evangelism center in Eindhoven.

City of Light and Light Bulbs

The minister of the Eindhoven church reports on a completed Thirteenth Sabbath project.

Rudy Eingjan

Sept. 7
Netherlands

This
presentation reports on the completion of a previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering project in the Trans-European Division.

Eindhoven, the Netherlands, is called the City of Light because here began the production of light bulbs. And so when a name had to be chosen for the new evangelistic center in Eindhoven, what name could be more appropriate than Het Lichtpunt (The Lighthouse)? But we are getting ahead of our story.

The Netherlands is probably the smallest union in the world. Although the country has almost 15 million inhabitants, there are only 55 Adventist churches and 4,000 members. The Netherlands is mostly below sea level, bordered on one side by the North Sea and on the other sides by Belgium and West Germany. It constitutes about 16,000 square miles, of which nearly half was once covered by the sea, lakes, or swamps. The Dutch "made" this land by pumping out the water, first with windmills and now by electric motors.

The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with 14 times as many people per square mile as the United States. Their need to conquer the sea, then, in their battle for land is evident.

Although small, the Netherlands boasts a number of famous theologians. These include Aalders, Bavinck, Berkhof, Berkhout, Greijdanus, Grosheide, Ridderbos, Schillebeeckx, Van Unnik, and many others. The Dutch have also considerably influenced the history of Protestantism.

The Need

When the Adventist message was first preached there at the end of the nineteenth century it was received by Protestants who were well versed in the Scriptures—except in the south. Here the population is almost exclusively Roman Catholic. For centuries they had not been allowed to read their Bibles.

It is not surprising, then, that the ratio of Adventist membership in the south is far below the national average. It was almost

impossible to begin Bible studies with these people. In the 1970s, however, a marked change was observed in religious attitudes. After Vatican II Roman Catholic believers were encouraged to study the Bible themselves. Many became interested in reading God's Word, but they found it hard to understand.

A Solution

The Netherlands Union stepped in and decided to build an evangelistic center in Brabant, one of the provinces in the Catholic south. Although there are 3 million people in this part of the country, only three Adventist churches exist—with a membership totaling less than 200. When the Trans-European Division was approached for help, the union found a sympathetic ear. They decided to locate the center in the largest town of the southern Netherlands, Eindhoven, which has almost 200,000 inhabitants.

Approximately half the cost of the building was covered by one of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings in 1984. The amount received was \$289,546.84. The Netherlands Union, other Dutch churches, and individual church members provided the other half.

The groundbreaking ceremony had to be delayed, however, until a few problems could be resolved: property was exceptionally expensive in Eindhoven, the local officials were reluctant to have a new church built in their city, and it seemed that the building money was melting away as the currency it was being held in was devaluating.

There was rejoicing in the city of Eindhoven when the evangelistic center was officially opened on September 13, 1989.

The Potential

The center can accommodate a number of seminars and programs simultaneously. On Sabbaths it is used for worship services. During the week programs are conducted on

health, stress, archaeology, and family life. It soon became apparent that the people who receive light on these topics also begin to realize their need for spiritual light. Bible studies are conducted for them.

The Eindhoven church hopes to experience strong growth in the next few years, thanks to the benevolence of the world members in 1984. They hope to found

churches in some neighboring towns. The Dutch "dark south" covers the provinces of Brabant and Limburg, which is about one fourth of the Netherlands. The dark south deserves to hear the last message of God's grace before the Lord Jesus comes. We hope that because of the Lighthouse many potential converts may one day find Jesus—the real light of the world! ●

Much More Than Enough

(Primaries)

- Leader:** Today we are helping to build two churches, one in Thessalonica, Greece; and one in Copenhagen, Denmark. Long ago another church was built when God told Moses to ask the Israelites for their gold to build a sanctuary. Let's review what happened, children.
- First child:** "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Ex. 25:1, 2).
- Second child:** "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. . . . And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted . . . and every man that offered an offering of gold unto the Lord" (Ex. 35:21, 22).
- Third child:** "And [those who were wise] received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning" (Ex. 36:3).
- Fourth child:** "And all the wise men . . . spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make" (Ex. 36:4, 5).
- Fifth child:** "And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing" (Ex. 36:6).
- Leader:** And what is one of God's promises to those who bring Him their offerings?
- All:** "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. 3:17).



The author and
"Uncle George" ▶

GREEK MISSION

Uncle George's Last Sermon

The author is the pastor of the Adventist church in Thessalonica, Greece.

Denis Pollatos

Sept. 14
Greece

Because
of the state
religion
in Greece,
its laws are
very strict
against
proselytizing.
The Lord,
however,
still has
unique ways
to uncover
His message,
as you will
discover here.

About midnight on August 6, 1989, my telephone rang. The trembling voice of my church secretary announced the sad news of the death of our beloved Brother George, 87 years old. *Barba Yiorgis*, which in Greek affectionately means Uncle George, had quietly passed away earlier that evening in his room while on his knees, praying.

Uncle George had also been known as "the Sabbatarian who walked to his church," because every Sabbath he walked the five miles from his home village, to church, which he did the last Sabbath of his life, even though his son and others had offered to take him to church.

Uncle George loved to be the earliest member in the Lord's house every Sabbath, faithfully performing his duties as deacon.

Uncle George beamed God's love everywhere, and was never heard to speak a word of evil or criticism against anyone.

Something else Uncle George had always done was to pray for his son, Vasilis, to come to the Lord. Vasilis had never attended our church, although through the years he was visited by several of our ministers and members.

Funeral Plans

After my secretary's call, I called Vasilis to express my heartfelt sympathy and also to offer my services in making the necessary funeral arrangements. Vasilis appreciated my offer, but informed me that the relatives had already arranged to have the funeral in the Greek Orthodox Church, with the Orthodox priest.

However, Vasilis kindly invited our church to the funeral service the following day in order to say our last goodbyes to beloved Uncle George.

We arrived at Vasilis' home in the morning, where Uncle George's body was resting peacefully in his casket awaiting the glorious day of the resurrection. Most of the vil-

lage people were gathering, bringing flowers, incense, money, and lighted candles according to their custom.

What Can We Do?

"I'm sure Uncle George didn't want this kind of a funeral," one of our older church members whispered, "but what can we do?" Some of our other members were silently praying out in front of the house for the Lord to perform a miracle that would change the plans.

After waiting around about an hour after the funeral was scheduled to begin, Roula, granddaughter of Uncle George, came to me in tears. "Brother Pollatos, I am very worried about my father, Vasilis. I am afraid that an automobile accident or something is keeping them. They left early this morning to see the county bishop in order to obtain special permission to hold the funeral in the Greek Orthodox Church, since Grandfather was not an Orthodox," she explained.

Shortly after lunch Vasilis drove up in his pickup truck, the priest with him. As the local Adventist elder and I approached Vasilis, he quickly said, "We are going to have the service together; let us go to get ready."

My elder and I thought that he meant "together" with the priest, as was the original plan, but the priest turned and quickly disappeared in the opposite direction.

Then Vasilis called everyone together and, with tears in his eyes, explained that the bishop, in spite of pleading by the priest and himself, would not grant the needed permission to conduct the funeral in their church on the grounds that George Tsitsilianos was a heretic.

Sorrow to Anger

Now sorrow turned to anger. Uncle George's daughter-in-law, who had resisted our church, loudly shouted, "What did he ever do to them? He was a real saint! He

was always doing good, and was even praying while dying!”

While this commotion continued, I humbly prayed for the Lord to give me heavenly wisdom and the power of the Holy Spirit to present an inspiring message for Uncle George’s funeral, a request I expected at any moment. And suddenly it came.

With no church, we began the funeral in the home, with people crowded in the living room, hallways, adjoining rooms, and even outside. We began with Uncle George’s favorite hymn, “He Leadeth Me.” To my surprise, Roula and three members from another evangelical church joined in with beautiful voices.

The Lord delivered through me a message about the great resurrection hope, followed by another message of salvation, and climaxing with an invitation to accept our soon-coming Saviour.

Then we walked to the graveyard, with four of our brothers carrying the casket in their arms. As we walked, the evangelical church members asked us to sing more hymns in order to give our testimony to the rest of the village. We walked, like “the Sabbatarian who walked to his church,” singing our hymns until we reached the grave.

The Books

After the graveside service, Uncle George’s daughter-in-law brought a large bag of Uncle George’s religious books to place on top of the closed casket. Roula, shouting, stopped her: “Please, no, Mother! This is the spiritual property of my grandfather! I want to keep all of his books and read throughout all my life!”

Following the funeral, at the “supper of consolation” in Vasilis’ home, we had opportunity to share Adventism with the village officials, curious and eager to learn. Two hours later, as we were preparing to leave, the village elementary school principal told us that we should write a special

thank-you letter to the bishop for this unique opportunity given us! The following Sabbath our Sabbath School superintendent asked one of our sisters to remember Vasilis in her closing prayer, as Uncle George would if he were present.

As the prayer closed, I glanced toward the back of the church. I could not believe my own eyes. Vasilis had quietly stepped in—the very first time he had ever come—and was sitting alone in the back with tears streaming down his cheeks. After 40 years of Uncle George’s prayers for his son to come to church, the Lord had answered his prayer, the first Sabbath after he had passed away!

Our now-oldest member, Brother Nikos, who also had prayed all those years for Vasilis, held him in his arms while everyone in the church was crying and praising the Lord.

Then Vasilis asked where the seat of his father was. Brother Nikos led him to the left corner of the second pew, shedding tears of joy for Vasilis and tears of sadness that his father was not alive to see his son in church. My sermon that Sabbath was on God’s love.

Vasilis attends our church every Sabbath now, sitting in his father’s seat. His wife and neighbors eagerly come also.

Uncle George’s last sermon, even after his death, was indeed very powerful. We believe with all our hearts that we will see our beloved brother “who walked to his church” also walk in the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem.

It is most difficult to spread our message in this country where strict laws prohibit proselytizing, but we try, and the Lord orders events in wondrous ways. And through your weekly Sabbath School offerings for world missions, you make it possible for us to seize the opportunities when He provides them. Thank you, world Sabbath School members, for your part in stories like Uncle George’s. ●



The present
Adventist church
in Thessalonica. ▶

The Real Macedonia Still Calls

The editor reports on the project need in Thessalonica, following a visit to the site.

Janet Kangas, Nikos Yiantzaklides

Sept. 21
Greece

Next Sabbath is Thirteenth Sabbath, a tradition in the Adventist Church for mission project giving. Two worshiping and witnessing centers are planned.

The most frequent title received on MISSION story submissions is “Come Over to Macedonia and Help Us.” This morning the title is neither trite nor a generalization. This call truly is from Macedonia!

In Macedonia today are 50 Adventist members in Thessalonica and another 70 in smaller cities such as Nigrita, Katerini, and Verria. These 120 members are calling.

So far the Greek Mission, Trans-European Division, and Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Committee of the General Conference have responded to that call, by agreeing that their need should be met this Thirteenth Sabbath. That need is in Thessalonica—a church founded, and written to in Holy Scripture, by Paul!

Thessalonica is the center at which all the members of northern Greece meet. Here the work in Macedonia has progressed more, and both young and old have accepted the message in recent years. When the 120 Macedonian members meet together at the Thessalonian church, there isn’t room enough to hold them.

The worst part is that the building is very old, purchased more than 60 years ago, and even then it was old. The earthquake of 1978 damaged the building, leaving the walls cracked, a situation that is worsening. The old place needs to be replaced.

Eyewitness Assessment

Imagine the surprise of the editor, upon arrival in Athens, to learn that I would worship with the Thessalonians over Sabbath, and see the need of the church there myself!

After a quick look at Athens from Likavitos Hill, at the mission office, the Parthenon, and Mars Hill, I winged out of Athens the following day for the north country. Looking down at the island specks in the Mediterranean, I knew I was not passing over Patmos, but one may as well have been, for I was awestruck by the biblical

history that I was reliving. Little did I know that after arriving in Thessalonica, I would also visit Philippi—seeing the city’s ruins that include the prison in which Paul and Silas were beaten, and the nearby river (now a rushing wide creek) in which Paul baptized Lydia, seller of purple. And that enroute to Philippi I would pass through the harbor of Neapolis (Acts 16:11), now Kavalla, where Paul stepped ashore in Macedonia on his second missionary trip. I was actually following Paul!

In Thessalonica I was taken by my pastor hosts (Yiantzaklides and Pollatos) up to the city’s ancient walled-in ruins. Thessalonica is a very old city, going back to 315 B.C. When the city was secured, it sprawled out from its vantage point, walled in the hill overlooking the sea, to the coast area below. Now the population of this modern city is nearly 1 million.

Among the ancient ruins within the walls a monastery has been built over the traditionally believed spot where Paul preached. I wondered what the Adventist residents feel about living here. Does this heritage ever become ordinary . . . ?

The Church

Sabbath I entered the Thessalonian Adventist church. Although cozy and inviting, the description of its decrepit state fit. The walls were cracked and from the outside, weavy. The worship area is atop the two-story structure, and one cannot help wondering if it will fall through.

The structure was purchased more than 60 years ago, known to be old even then. Part of it was used as an orphanage during the war, but not much else is known, including the whereabouts of its predecessor(s) in the city. As this church opened its arms to orphans then, it plans to open them to the elderly in their new church, with a few rooms for them to live in also.

The members were exceptionally loving

people. I had been alerted that they feel so few and lonely, such a minority in their own country, and so far removed from the rest of the Adventist Church, tucked away there in Greece without much contact.

I was told that nothing would thrill them more than to hear greetings relayed from the church's headquarters—that we know they are there and that they belong to the body. And true, as this was translated, warm smiles broke out on their faces.

I told them I was sure everyone who took his/her worship hour there must select a passage from the book of Thessalonians, and I would be no exception. I chose 1 Thessalonians 1:3-5, assuring them that they *still* have (1) a work of faith, (2) a labor of love, and (3) hope in our Lord; and that the gospel still comes to Thessalonica not in word only, but also in (1) power, (2) the Holy Ghost, and (3) much assurance. All of Macedonia will yet hear the gospel planted there by Paul!



▲ A portion of the ancient walled city of Thessalonica. The modern city is in the background, along the seacoast.

Next Sabbath Is Thirteenth Sabbath

The Thessalonian members give to the church building fund, but the small congregation will not be able to put up all the money for a new church and pastor's flat. They are confident that with God's help and the support of the Sabbath School members around the world their plans will be realized. The call from Macedonia still sounds, "Come over and help us!"

Next Sabbath is Thirteenth Sabbath, a tradition in the Adventist Church for mission project giving. Two worship and witnessing centers are planned—one in Copenhagen, Denmark, and one in Thessalonica, Greece.

In most Adventist churches, Thirteenth Sabbath is also Communion Sabbath. Lest we are caught unprepared for either service next week, won't you join me in heart-searching and prayer this week for the Holy Spirit's guidance in each of these two areas before next Sabbath? ●



▲ The traditionally held location of Paul's preaching in Thessalonica. A monastery has been built over the spot.

Surprises Can Happen!

Janet Kangas

Sept. 28

Program

Congregational Song "I'd Rather Have Jesus," *The SDA Hymnal*, No. 327.

Welcome Hostess

Interview Trans-European Division President

Junior/Teen Skit "From Pop Concert to Baptismal Pool"

Primary Verses "Much More Than Enough"

Kindergarten Song "When He Cometh," *The SDA Hymnal*, No. 218.

Offering Kindergarten children disperse into congregation to receive the mission offering while all join in repeating or humming the song

Interview

Hostess: Our guest today is Jan Paulsen, president of the Trans-European Division. He comes to us all the way from England. *[Person representing Elder Paulsen enters, shakes hands with hostess, and takes seat.]*

Welcome, Elder Paulsen! Tell us what makes your division unique!

Paulsen: Greetings! The Trans-European Division in terms of membership is a small division; in terms of mileage, nations, cultures, and religion it would be difficult to find one more complex.

Hostess: You mentioned in terms of mileage, Elder Paulsen. How much territory does your division cover?

Paulsen: It stretches from that small island in the north Atlantic, Iceland, some 6,000 miles east, to Pakistan in Southern Asia. Incidentally, projects in those two countries benefited from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering last time that privilege came to us. Mul-

tifunctional centers for evangelism and education are being built in the cities of Reykjavik and Karachi. We expect great things from both of those investments.

There are 16 countries in this division. As we begin this quinquennium two of these countries, Afghanistan and Albania, are on our statistics as "unentered." It is our intention to do all we possibly can to report differently when this quinquennium ends. The Lord will find a way. The pointers are there already for us to see.

Hostess: Can you share with us the religious composition of your division?

Paulsen: The religious scene in our division is Islam (40 percent of TED's population is Muslim); Judaism (Israel); various shades of Christianity from the Orthodox Church in Greece, and Roman Catholicism in Poland (95 percent of the population); to Protestant churches in much of central and northern Europe. But with the movements of people in and into Europe during the past 25 years all of these varieties of peoples, cultures, and religions are to be found in any one of the large cities of Europe today.

Hostess: Whom do you plan to reach through your Global Strategy program?

Paulsen: The Global Strategy umbrella in our division is understanding and relating to Muslims, and includes not only Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yugoslavia, but also London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. If we don't watch out, those cities could become missions we forgot.

Hostess: What are your projects this quarter, Elder Paulsen?

Paulsen: We have again selected two multifunctional worship and witnessing centers to benefit from the generous gifts at the end of the quarter. One is in the ancient city of Paul's early missionary work—Thessalonica in Macedonia, Greece—and in Copenhagen,

Preparation:

For the interview, arrange two comfortable chairs separated by an end table with a flower arrangement. For the skit scenes, see Teen Mission.

Denmark. The need is great in both places for new centers so we can do something more and do it better for the Lord and the people He wants to reach.

Also, we have a vision. Also, we hear the call *today*, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Thank you for your help.

Hostess: Thank you, Elder Paulsen. Not only us, but the whole Adventist Church around the world will be helping Thessalonica and Copenhagen today.

[Turns from Elder Paulsen to audience.]

The Trans-European Division has acquired the full-time services of evangelist Mark A. Finley to promote membership growth. On October 7, 1989, Elder Finley began his campaign in Budapest, Hungary. Everyone felt that this would be an outstanding event, for after a long, long silence, the Adventist Church had finally become free to organize a program in a public hall, to advertise on radio and television or in newspapers, to display posters

around the capital, and to distribute brochures to the residents. Since it is a new phenomenon to speak freely about God and religion, the people are interested and/or curious!

The Adventist believers were happy that the university hall, in a beautiful location of the city, not only could hold 850 people, but also provided enough room to sell books, teach children, and conduct stop-smoking classes and Bible classes.

Most important, a university club, the KEK club, provides some of the most popular entertainment for Budapest young people at the university hall and is always full on Saturday nights. Young people from all over town are used to going to this well-known place, and the Adventists hoped this would boost attendance. Now let's invite our junior and teen departments to give us a few scenes of how things turned out that opening night in Budapest!

[Youth begin scene 1 of skit in Teen Mission.]

A scene from Paul's ministry in Greece:



◀ The jail in Philippi in which Paul and Silas sang after they were beaten. Here the jailer was converted after the prisoners did not try to escape during the earthquake. (See Acts 16:22-34.)

Mission Offerings

Selected excerpts from the Sabbath School Manual

One of the most significant contributions the Sabbath School has made to the advancing work of God is to inform, instruct, motivate, and train its members in habits of self-denial and benevolence, and to keep before them the vision of a global responsibility in giving the gospel. This constant educational and inspirational process has resulted in Seventh-day Adventists being considered among the most liberal givers of all religious groups. More importantly, it has not only helped to stifle the natural human tendency to selfishness and materialism, but has given the message and mission of the church credibility, claiming as we do that Jesus is coming soon and that there is a world to be warned.

The Sabbath School's Part

For many years the General Conference world budget has depended upon the Sabbath Schools of the world to provide a large portion of the funds devoted to mission work.

In the promotion of mission offerings, various personal objectives have been suggested. Systematic liberality accounts for a good part of the offerings year by year. The Department of Church Ministries encourages liberal and proportionate giving for world missions. The present suggestion is two percent of the income.

... All offerings given during the Sabbath School, except the Sabbath School expense offering, are General Conference offerings, and are to be passed on in their entirety by the church treasurer to the conference or mission for transfer to the General Conference. These offerings include the weekly offering, the Birthday-Thank Offering, Investment, and the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. They are all mission offerings. The Sabbath School expense offering is retained in the local church to meet the recurring expenses of the Sabbath School. *No offerings for any cause other than those stated above should be promoted or received during the Sabbath School.*

Mission Promotion

In the promotion of offerings for missions many Sabbath Schools have found that using visual aids and other devices to keep members well informed about mission work help greatly in achieving offering objectives.

All Sabbath School officers and teachers are called upon to promote offerings for missions. They are aided in this work by the publication of the world *Mission* report each quarter in editions for both adults and children. Each issue provides information concerning needs and opportunities in the world division scheduled to receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering for that quarter. Reports on previous offering projects, stories, experiences, and appeals help members to participate more liberally and consistently (pp. 85-87).

Prayer Calendar

July

1991

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Pray for four lay preachers in Butembo, Zaire to receive a two-year ministerial training course. (US\$250 each)					
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Pray for 25 hard water pumps for rural areas in the Eastern Africa Division. (US\$200 each)					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Pray for the theological books for our seminary libraries in Angola and Mozambique. (US\$1,000 each library)					
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Pray for 25 bicycles for pastors and colporteurs in Burma. (US\$175 each)					
28	29	30	31			
	Pray for three outboard motors for Inter-America lay preachers in Guyana and Nicaragua. (US\$400 each)					

August

1991

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
	Pray for three outboard motors for Inter-American lay preachers in Guyana and Nicaragua. (US\$400 each)					
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Pray for another 20,000 Power to Cope Bible Guides for Handling Stress to be distributed on the streets of New York. (US\$5,000)					
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Pray for 10 village church buildings for unentered sections of the South American Division. (US\$5,000 each)					
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Pray for 100 desks for the Adventist boarding school in the Southern Asia Division. (US\$50 each)					
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Pray for a duplicating machine for Navesau School at the Fiji Mission. (US\$1,500)					

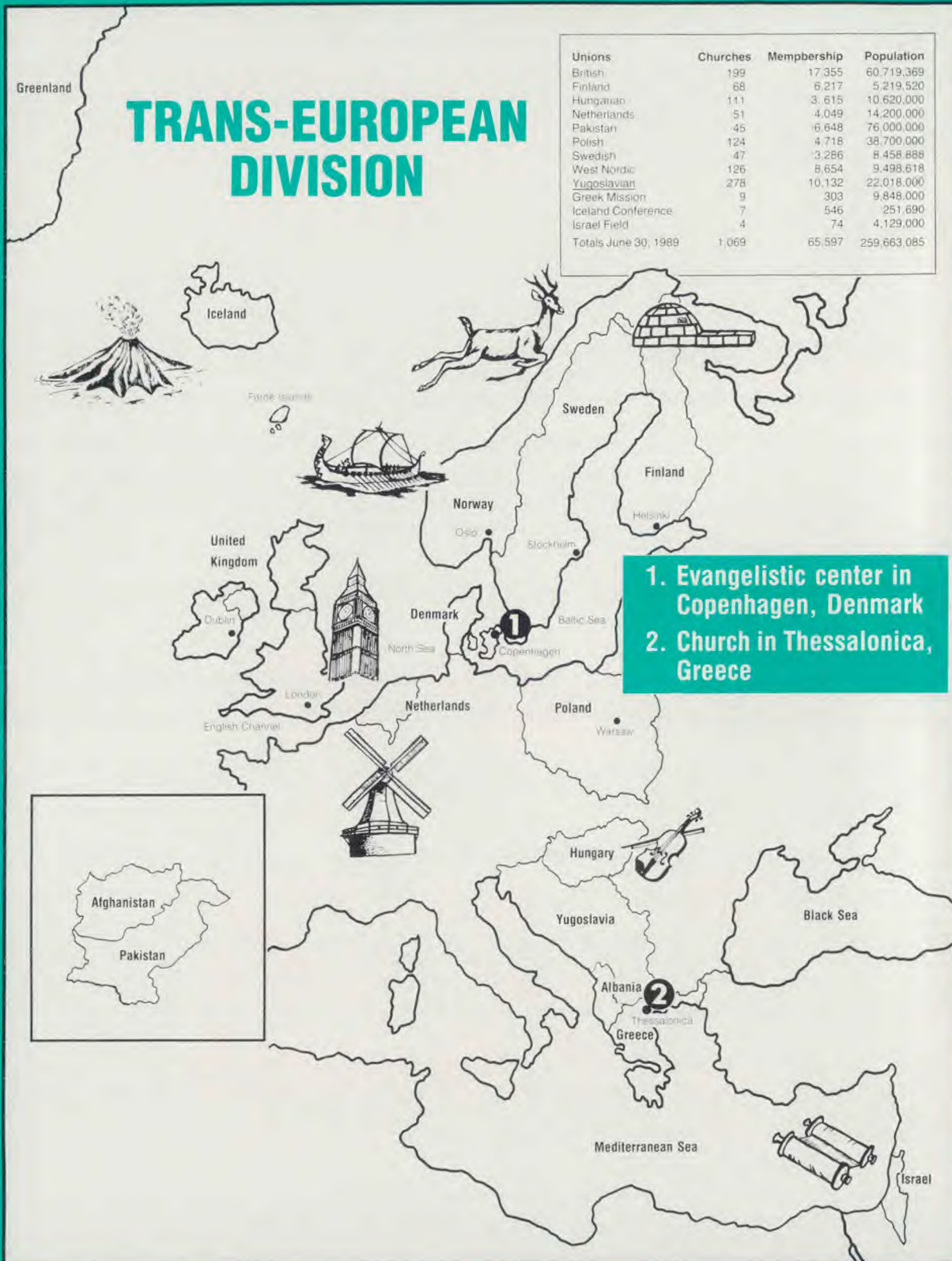
September

1991

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Pray for a generator for Pakistan Adventist Seminary. (US\$5,000)					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Pray for 30 village church buildings for new people groups in China. (US\$1,000 each)					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Pray for a pioneer worker's budget to open a new area in Russia. (Twenty are needed.) (US\$3,500 each)					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Pray for this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath special projects. Can you name them? (See back cover.)					
29	30	31				

TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION

Unions	Churches	Membership	Population
British	199	17,355	60,719,369
Finland	68	6,217	5,219,520
Hungarian	111	3,615	10,620,000
Netherlands	51	4,049	14,200,000
Pakistan	45	6,648	76,000,000
Polish	124	4,718	38,700,000
Swedish	47	3,286	8,458,888
West Nordic	126	8,654	9,498,618
Yugoslavian	278	10,132	22,018,000
Greek Mission	9	303	9,848,000
Iceland Conference	7	546	251,690
Israel Field	4	74	4,129,000
Totals June 30, 1989	1,069	65,597	259,663,085



1. Evangelistic center in Copenhagen, Denmark
2. Church in Thessalonica, Greece