

women's ministries

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

2018.16– September 19, 2018

News from Women's Ministries Inter-European Division

God, others and I



MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WITH OTHER WOMEN

The Women's Ministries retreat in St. Stephan, Switzerland, from September 7 to 9, 2018 focused on relationships. How do I relate to others? What is my relationship with God? Am I able to share God's bounty? What does that have to do with me and my faith? We considered these and many other questions.

Based on the parable of the talents, our speaker Tina Tschage challenged us. How many talents has God given to me? Am I content with that? Am I using the talents God has given me? Am I multiplying them or burying them?

Ellen White wrote in *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* that God uses whom He wants. Often He chooses the simple for important tasks. His power becomes great in the weak. We consider things according to our values; but God's values may be very different. What we see as great may not be so great in God's eyes. It is not good for us to judge the value of our gifts or choose our duties. We should accept the burden that God gives us and carry it to His glory. When we need rest, we may come to Him. In all our work we honor God by serving Him joyfully with all our hearts. He wants us to take up our duties with joy and gratitude for being permitted to so-operate with Him.

Tina Tschage permitted us to experience the love of God in a practical way, and we became a new vision of God and ourselves. Spending time sharing together was also an important part of the retreat. Wonderful weather permitted us to enjoy nature on the Sabbath afternoon and

after the program in the evening new friendships were deepened with humor. Hatschi, Peter and Philipp, our kitchen team, provided delicious food during the whole weekend. I am so thankful that I was able to participate in this blessed weekend.

According to Dagmar Latuski Photos: WM DSV



Romanian Camp Meeting for Single Women



"SINGLE, BUT NEVER ALONE"

The seventh edition of the Romanian Single Women Camp Meeting took place in the wonderful mountain resort Sinaia, Romania, between 10-16 of September 2018. There were 26 participants, and the 9 who were non-SDA, greatly appreciated all the activities, especially the morning Bible study. The main focus of the camp meeting was "Single, But Never Alone". From the Bible characters like Esther, Gideon, Hagar and Balaam women learned what single people can do when they find God as their true partner. The Bible study was daily presented by Emilia Avramiea. The daily schedule also included morning exercise. We enjoyed such a Spirit-filled atmosphere that most of the women shared



their testimony during the evening worship. We are so grateful to God who richly blessed us with sunny and warm weather that encouraged all of us to go out and enjoy the beauty of the forest and mountains every day. Strengthened and empowered by the good news received, all participants decided to go and share God's love. Reported by Viorica Avramiea - Romanian Union Single Coordinator Photos WM Romania

Anastasia, From Trauma to Baptism



A FRIENDLY CHURCH REVERSES PAST EXPERIENCES

Anastasia represents the image we have of eastern European people. Lean, tall and blond. She is reserved, smiling and very pleasant. But unfortunately, this exterior hides suffering. She knew the Adventist church from a young age in Belarus, her home country. During a major part of her childhood she was brought up by her grandmother. But an extremely strict vision of the gospel and the Adventist message wreaked havoc. Not only in her heart but also

in her mother's heart.

Anastasia and her mother left Belarus and moved to Italy about 20 years ago. At the same time they decided to leave the Adventist church. Her mother decided to never again set foot in an Adventist community.

Time passed and in spite of all, a seed of faith still remained in Anastasia's heart. Due to her work, Anastasia now lived in Switzerland, in the Italian-speaking region. She looked for a church in the area and found herself back in the Adventist community in Lugano. Discreetly and reservedly she would come to church services but would leave again right after. Finally, when Sister Bernadette, one of the church members, a Women's Ministries leader, approached her a friendly relationship developed. At last she was able to express her doubts about the church. She constantly worried what the church thought about her, about her clothing, her speech and comportment. Above all she didn't want to create a "scandal".

Having been reassured that the church loved and accepted her as she was, she took courage. Pastor Matthias Maag recognized her need to study the Bible in order to find a new and refreshing experience with God. But he waited for the right moment. Then one day, at a baptismal service, she was deeply touched and stood up at the appeal and declared her wish to prepare for baptism herself. After this the pastor invited her to start Bible studies.

During this time they not only studied the Bible but the pastor, as a representative of the church, listened to Anastasia's anger and bitterness about what she had experienced in the church as a child. And the pastor was able to symbolically ask for forgiveness in the name of the church. In spite of tears and many crises Anastasia found a close friend in God. Somebody who saves and does not condemn. She saw that the church members in Lugano had a completely different relationship with each other from what she had experienced in her past. And thus she found her place in the congregation and decided to be baptized.

The baptismal ceremony was a very strong moment. Not only did her grandmother come for the occasion from Russia, but also her mother came from Italy, entering an Adventist church for the first time in twenty years. A cousin also attended. All were delighted by Anastasia's testimony and decision to follow the Lord.

As a surprise for Anastasia, her Neapolitan friend, who had attended church from time to time, expressed his desire to study the Bible when the appeal was made.

Anastasia's life shows that God is always there. Even if the ground seems dry and hostile, if there is a small seed of faith somewhere under the soil, beautiful things can happen. This ground can become a beautiful garden, full of "spiritual flowers" that will spread out and touch their surroundings. God's power to change hearts has no end.

According to a report in Adventiste Magazine by Rickson Nobre on the words of Matthias Maag, Pastor of the Lugano SDA church Foto: AdventisteMagazine

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