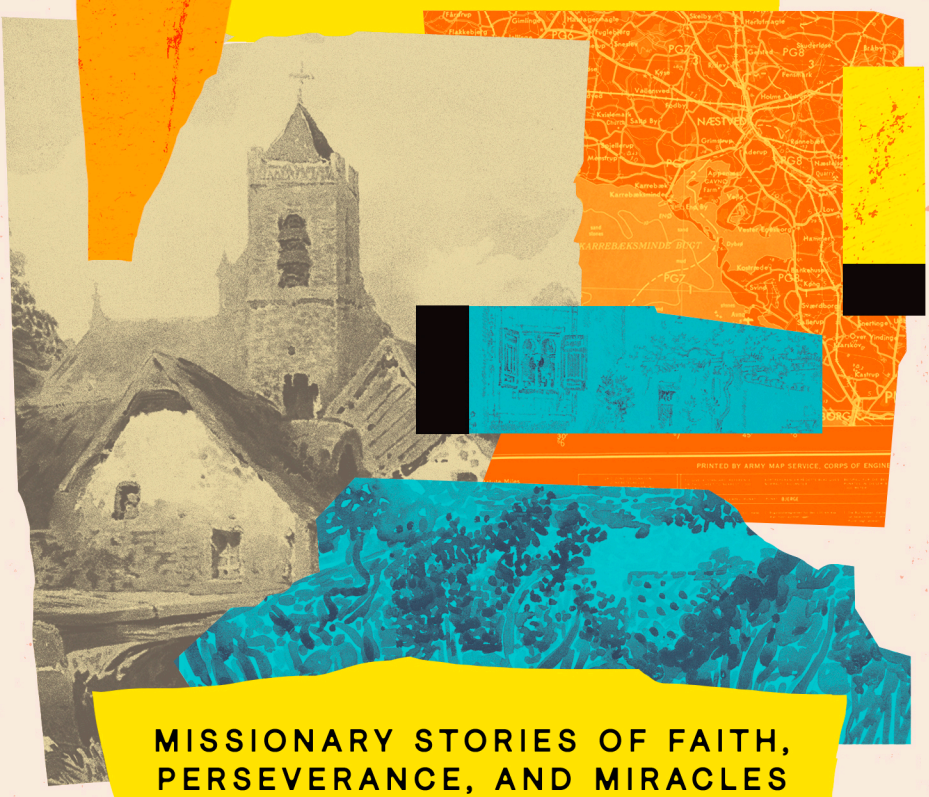
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
WORLD MISSIONS

EUROPE 365

DAILY DEVOTIONS



MISSIONARY STORIES OF FAITH, PERSEVERANCE, AND MIRACLES

DAILY DEVOTIONS

EUROPE 365

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AGWM ASSEMBLIES OF GOD WORLD MISSIONS | europe

GPH Gospel Publishing House

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Published by Assemblies of God World Missions, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802.

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027079

978-1-60731-912-2

28 27 26 · 1 2 3

Printed in United States of America

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

Welcome to *Europe 365!* You will discover that this is a book of daily inspiration and encouragement that will feed your faith and motivate you to take action.

Every day, you will find a daily Scripture verse and a spiritually encouraging devotional story written by one of AGWM Europe's missionaries. You will read amazing stories about God at work among Europe's nations and people groups. You will be inspired by testimonies of miracles and stories of the Holy Spirit in action, answered prayers, healings, divine protection, evangelism, souls saved, the call to missions, and more. Other stories share biblical reflections on missionary life and ministry in Europe. Perusing this devotional will encourage you to believe God for more extraordinary things in your life, church, and city.

Daily, you will participate in reaching Europe for Christ by partnering in prayer for a specific country with three unique Prayer Focus points. Missionaries and the Europe 365 team have created these Focus Points. By praying over these vital prayer points daily, you will be changing Europe for Christ. Scripture says, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16, NKJV). You will be a world changer as you pray and intercede for these requests.

In addition, every two months, one of the six Europe area directors describes and paints a spiritual description of a specific area of Europe. These informational sketches will facilitate a better spiritual understanding of that area's historical and cultural background. Area-specific prayer needs are also presented. Please remember those prayer needs and the daily Prayer Focus requests during the subsequent two months.

At the end of this book, you will find a glossary of some of the missionary acronyms and terms used throughout the

book. A list of contributing missionary authors is also included. Some missionaries have worked in various European fields. Therefore, you will notice that some missionaries are listed through the book as serving in different nations.

We pray that the next 365 days will be a faith adventure that will change you, your church, and those in Europe. May the Holy Spirit guide you into a closer relationship with the Lord of the harvest as you read this devotional daily (Matthew 9:37–38).

NORTHERN EUROPE AREA OVERVIEW

STEPHEN AND SONIA WALLACE, AREA DIRECTORS

Denmark | England | Finland | Iceland | Ireland
Northern Ireland | Norway | Scotland | Sweden | Wales

From the verdant hills of Ireland to the breathtaking fjords of Norway, from the urban centers of London and Stockholm to remote villages nestled in the Faroe Islands and beyond, northern Europe spans four time zones, comprises ten unique countries, and is home to more than sixty Assemblies of God global workers.

Northern Europe is commonly divided into two major groups: the British Isles and the Nordics. The first of these include the nations of Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. Though seemingly very similar because of their common language, each country has its own remarkable history, culture, and church traditions. The second grouping encompasses the lands of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. They also represent a rich diversity of cultures, with unique languages, fascinating histories, and varying levels of exposure to the gospel.

In the early twentieth century, northern Europe experienced powerful moves of the Spirit, such as the famous Welsh Revival, which saw nearly one hundred thousand saved in

a single year! Later, T.B. Barratt, an English-born pioneering pastor who was baptized in the Spirit at Azusa Street, was instrumental in seeing a spiritual awakening come to the Nordic nations of Norway, Sweden, and eventually Finland, along with other parts of Europe. This was the beginning of several Pentecostal Movements that gave birth to missions agencies that would carry the gospel from China to Latin America, from the continent of Africa to Southeast Asia.

Without a doubt, God has done amazing things throughout the nations of northern Europe over the past century. However, we believe the best days for this area of Europe are still ahead, though it will require eyes of faith and our fervent prayers to see it. Will you believe with us and pray for God to touch these northern lands again?

Today, some of the most secular countries in the world are found within the borders of northern Europe. A nation like Sweden, historically Lutheran, is now considered by many to be the most secular country in all Europe, if not the world. And in the least populated country of the continent, Iceland, you'll find fewer than a dozen active churches, with a great need for more pastors and workers. On the surface, these northern nations may seem cold, not just because of their wintry climates, but spiritually as well. Even so, we believe God is most certainly not yet finished with northern Europe. We believe the seeds of revival that were planted here years ago will soon yield an abundant harvest.

Indeed, God is at work in northern Europe. The Assemblies of God in Great Britain recently announced its goal to grow from six hundred churches to more than seventeen hundred over the next decade. Can you imagine the impact that more than one thousand new church plants will have across the countries of Scotland, England, and Wales?

Similar church-planting efforts are currently underway in Ireland as well. In Finland, a recent monthlong evangelistic

campaign used innovative methods through print and media to bring testimonies of lives transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ to literally thousands. Finland is hearing the good news! We are also seeing God raise up leaders among our national church partners who are passionate for the lost. Northern Europe just may be on the brink of another spiritual awakening.

Will you join us in prayer for northern Europe? Will you unite your faith together with all our global workers and ministry partners here? Let's believe jointly that the Church should be planted across all of northern Europe.

—Stephen Wallace
Northern Europe Area Director

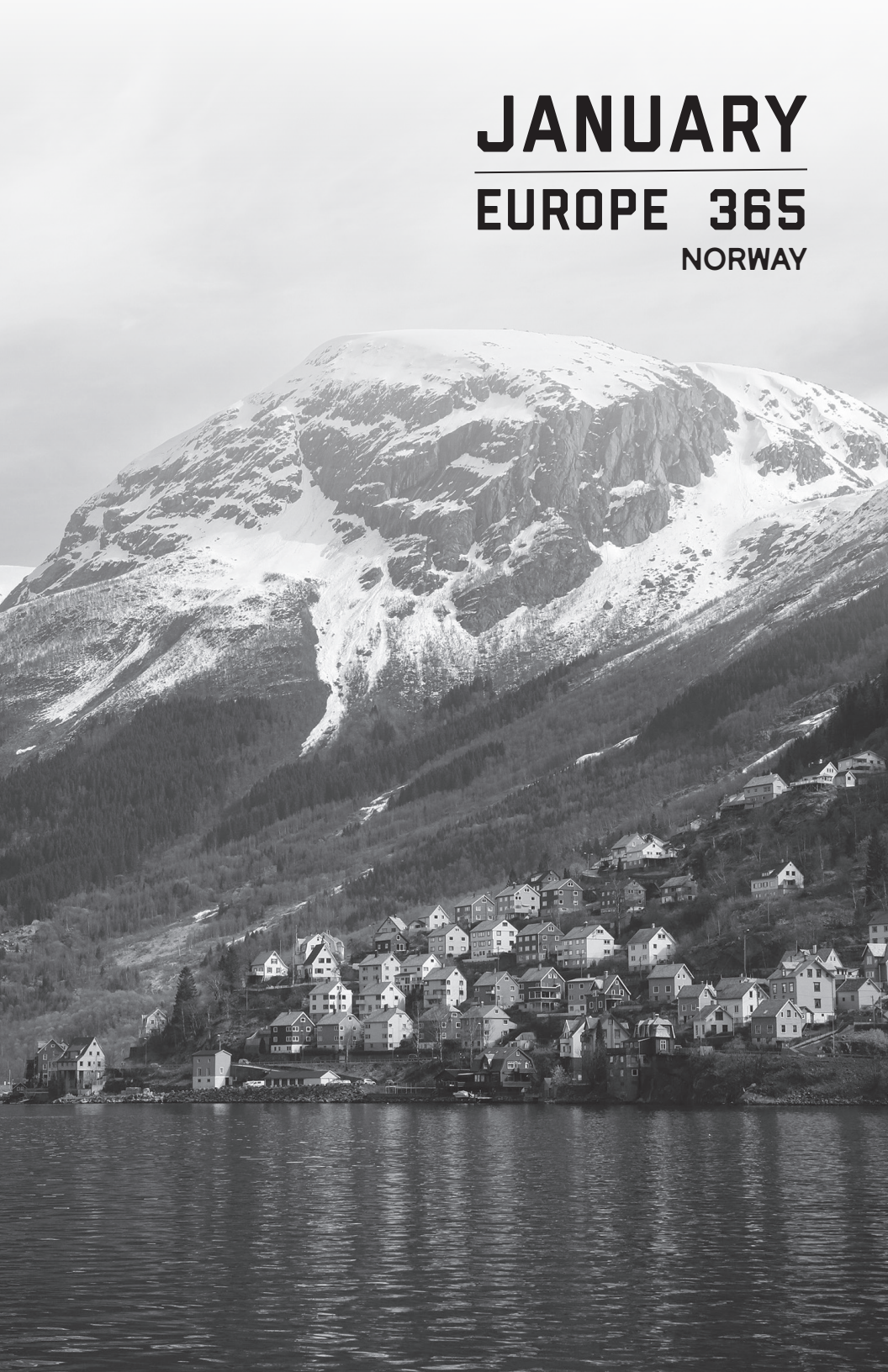
PRAYER FOCUS

- Pray for secularism to be replaced with Christlike values.
- Pray for the goals of new church plants to be directed and fulfilled by the Holy Spirit's power.
- Pray for local workers as well as missionaries to receive a fresh anointing and vision from the Holy Spirit.

JANUARY

EUROPE 365

NORWAY



JANUARY 1

JESUS IS COMING SOON

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done."
Revelation 22:12, NIV

Years ago, my wife, Lisbet, and I were on a trip to Norway, my wife's home country. We visited the town of Kristiansand for a day, and while walking around the old city center, a gentleman passed by, and looking directly at us, said, *"Jesus kommer snart."* I looked at Lisbet and said, "Did he just say, 'Jesus is coming soon'?" She answered that this was exactly what he had said. When we turned around to see that man again, he was gone! We searched for the man, but could not find him. We felt like it must have been an angel reminding us that our Lord's return is soon and that we were to live with that urgency.

Some years after this, I was at our annual church network conference in Oregon. The missionary speaker gave an altar call for those who would be willing to go to the nations. I went forward to show my willingness to the Lord, if He were to call me. At the altar, I was overcome by the presence of the Lord. I felt the Lord telling me that we were to go plant a church in Norway, and He brought to my mind that particular moment in Kristiansand from so many years before. God was calling us to leave a wonderful church we had pastored for many years and to go plant a church in Norway.

And now, as we just celebrated the third anniversary of the church we have planted in Norway, we are thankful for what the Lord is doing. At this anniversary service, 131 people celebrated with us. Thus far, people from sixty-three different countries have come through the doors. The gospel is being heard.

As believers, we are to live our lives with an upward focus, as stated in Colossians 3:1–4, and we are to reach outward to the lost around us. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16, NIV). As we look forward to the imminent return of Christ, can I encourage you to live with an urgency to share the gospel? Are you willing to change direction as God leads and to consider how God has uniquely gifted you to serve Him? “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10, NIV).

—Jeremy Siebert
Norway

PRAYER FOCUS

- Pray for Holy Spirit-guided creativity and favor as we reach out to Norwegians and foreigners living in Norway.
- Pray for the Lord to add workers to His harvest field in Norway.
- Pray against the spiritual darkness in Norway.

JANUARY 2

STARTING THE NEW YEAR

“I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.” Job 42:2, NIV

“Three, two, one . . . Happy New Year!” How did you celebrate the New Year? Perhaps you shouted the countdown at a

friend's party and prepared to kiss a loved one. Maybe you watched the ball drop in New York City's Times Square on television or watched fireworks light up the sky.

If you had been celebrating here in Europe, you'd likely have eaten some interesting delicacies as part of your celebration. People in Spain eat grapes on New Year's Eve to have good luck in the coming year. Spaniards must eat one green grape with every chime of the clock at midnight, stuffing all twelve grapes in their mouth by the end of the countdown. The Spanish legend is that if you're able to eat all twelve, you'll have good luck all twelve months of the year.

Usually this tradition is celebrated among family and friends, although some hardy souls will venture out to stand in the local town square and eat their grapes while the church bell chimes. The tradition dates back to 1909, when there was such a record crop of grapes that vendors created this ritual to sell their overstock. But now, it's been a tradition so long that most Spaniards can't imagine a New Year's Eve without their *uvas de la suerte* (lucky grapes) at the ready and their mouths watering!

Interestingly, many cultures have New Year's traditions based on a desire for good luck or fortune in the coming year. People feel vulnerable and limited in predicting or controlling what the coming year will bring. Hence, their superstitions bring them comfort, even if it's partially in jest, that the coming year will be better than the previous one.

As Christ's followers, our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ. We count on God's sovereignty, providence, and guidance every day, not just on the last day of the year or the first day of the next. Even if we should face difficulties in the coming year, we have the certainty of our faith, that the all-powerful God has a purpose in all circumstances; we know that He can work in all things for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). Why not make trusting God your tradition for

New Year's Day each year, offering Him the year ahead to achieve His glorious purpose in your life?

—Ariel Rainey
Spain

Prayer Focus

- Pray for this year to bring in the greatest harvest of souls that Europe has ever seen!
- Pray for Christian believers in Europe to stand strong in faith this year, in spite of any difficulty.
- Pray for the purposes of God to be revealed in the lives of every believer as they serve the Lord.

JANUARY 3

FROM SULKY TEEN TO A NEW IDENTITY

The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.
Romans 13:12, ESV

She didn't want to come to teen camp. She was sullen and withdrawn on the bus ride to camp. Her mother was making her attend. Her mother had called me the night before and asked, "Can my daughter bring her cigarettes to camp?" As I responded in the negative, I thought to myself, *Wow! This is a new one. I wonder what this kid is going to be like. Sounds like I'll have my hands full*.

Our Croatia camp team started praying extra hard for this rebellious teen. And God showed up! By the end of camp, she had been delivered from her cigarette addiction, and she stood

in front of the camp to witness about her newfound freedom in Christ. Her mother called me a week after camp ended. “What did you do to my daughter? She is a changed person. She is reading her Bible and has stopped smoking!”

But it wasn’t me. I didn’t do it. God did! All I did was say yes when God said, “Follow Me, and I’ll make you a fisher of the craziest people group on the planet . . . teenagers!” If we show up, God will show up . . . then, lives will be changed!

—Winnie Coleman-Horvat
Croatia

Prayer Focus

- Pray for the high number of teenagers in Europe who are struggling with addiction.
- Pray for teenagers to commit their lives to Christ.
- Pray for more workers to come to Europe, focusing on reaching middle and high school students with the gospel.

JANUARY 4

BREAKTHROUGH!

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14–17, NKJV

Burrel is a remote, northern city in Albania made up of hard people, but that didn't stop Pastor Ergys from establishing a church among the Roma people there. The work was slow, and he struggled to gain momentum; something needed to change.

The pastor had felt led to come to the Assemblies of God Bible school in Tirana, where he sat under experienced, Spirit-filled teachers for two years. He was strengthened in his faith and grew in the knowledge of the Word of God.

After his education was complete, Ergys returned to Burrel, giving full-time effort to continue planting the church. But there was a problem—the church lacked power. Ergys was the only one who was filled with the Holy Spirit. Not even his wife was Spirit-filled.

About that time, my husband Kurt and I took a group of students to the church in Burrel to pray for a move of God. While there, they felt led by the Holy Spirit to direct the church into a time of corporate repentance. They gathered the people together in a circle, held hands, and one by one began to confess the sins of the church and community. The sweet presence of Jesus filled the room, and something shifted in the spiritual realm.

Immediately following that, Ergys preached a three-week series about the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and then led his church to pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Over the course of one weekend, seven people in the church were baptized in the Holy Spirit, including Ergys's wife! It was the breakthrough they had been seeking. The church is now filled with joy at the newfound presence and power of the Spirit in their midst.

—Stephanie Plagenhoef
Albania

Prayer Focus

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on Albania and the Balkans.
- Pray for pastors who are planting churches to be filled with the power and authority of God as they proclaim Christ among the unreached.
- Pray for a breakthrough in spiritually resistant cities, towns, and villages across Albania.

JANUARY 5

EUREKA! CHRISTMAS ISN'T OVER

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." Matthew 2:1–2, NKJV

As I was growing up, I would have explained the definition of *epiphany* as a "sudden realization." You can tell I wasn't from a high-church background, right? I eventually learned of a celebration called Epiphany held in January, but it wasn't anything tangible for me.

Coming to live in Spain, I was delighted to discover that the Christmas season actually culminates here with Kings' Day, *Día de Los Reyes* (Epiphany), on January 6. This is not simply a service in a church; this is an all-out anticipated event. It is not uncommon to hear children ask, "What do you want the Kings to bring you?"

On January 5, a town of any size in Spain will have a parade for the Kings—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar—who are coming to town. These Three Kings bring gifts to baby Jesus—and all the good boys and girls. In Madrid, this event brings thousands of people—similar to Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. It's crowded, dark, and cold. All the floats are lit up in a grand display. Children have their favorite of the Kings and call out their name; names I didn't know without looking them up before I got here to Spain.

I love the connection to God's story of Christmas this tradition brings. I love the long season of anticipation the celebration of Ephiphany creates. Often, depending on the family, Christmas Day is celebrated only with a family dinner, but the big day of presents being given and received is January 6 when the Kings come.

With school holidays lasting from late December through January 7, more and more families have incorporated Santa Claus, Papa Noel, so that the new toys are given earlier in the holiday season. It is not unusual for Santa to make an appearance in the Kings' Day parade either. I guess we can have it all for this holiday!

So, as you pack up your holiday decorations, perhaps you too will have an Epiphany—thinking about all the things that happened surrounding the birth of the Christ child and all the gifts He gives with new mercies every day.

—Denise Godwin
Spain

Prayer Focus

- Pray for those who are far from you, that they would "see the star" and meet Jesus Christ.
- Pray for traditions to be examined with new eyes so that hearts can find God's hope.
- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel in small, everyday ways as we interact with people.

JANUARY 6

JESUS REVEALED TO THE NATIONS

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:1–2, 10–11, KJV

We were on our first term on the mission field in Bavaria. The Christmas and New Year celebrations were seemingly over. In the little Bavarian village where we lived, snow was heavy on the ground, making it still look like a Christmas postcard. The doorbell rang, so I walked to the entrance of our duplex. Standing before me were five Bavarian German children, each dressed in biblical costumes resembling the three kings of the Christmas story. They all wore kingly crowns, and an older child was carrying a large comet-looking star on a long pole.

The children began to recite poems about the *Die drei Heiligen Könige* (The Three Wise Men), who visited Jesus at His birth. They also sang a song about this biblical event. At the end of this door-front recital, they asked for a donation to help the poor. After giving our donation, as is traditional, the "Three Kings" gave a blessing. One of the children wrote the date above the door in chalk and "C+M+B"; an abbreviation for "Christ bless this house," but also, according to tradition, the names of the three Wise Men—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

We enjoy experiencing this yearly tradition. It's a Christmas custom that has been around since the Middle Ages—a great reminder of that important biblical event. Today, this custom of the *Die Sternsinger* (The Wise Men Star Singers) mainly happens in the small villages and towns of southern Germany.

January 6 in Germany (and most of Europe) is celebrated as the day the Wise Men came to worship Jesus. It's called *Dreikönigstag* (Three Kings Day) in Germany. It's a public holiday in southern Germany. Christmas celebrations continue until the end of January 6, the last day of Christmas.

As missionaries, we hold this holiday especially important. When the Wise Men traveled from the Far East to worship Jesus, He revealed himself to the Gentiles. God, in His great love, wanted the nations, the Gentiles, to know His Son, Jesus, the promised Messiah. At the birth of Jesus, God revealed that He wanted the nations to know and experience the Savior, Christ the Lord. It was a foreshadowing of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). God also wants us to share the good news about His Son to the nations. That includes Germany, the rest of Europe, and the rest of the world. This year, our goal is for more Germans to hear the good news and be born again!

—Richard Crabb
Germany

Prayer Focus

- Pray for more Germans be reached with the good news of Jesus this year.
- Pray for God to call more church planters to southern Germany.
- Pray for many to respond to the truth of Christmas—Jesus providing salvation.

JANUARY 7

WAS SOMEBODY PRAYING?

You are helping us by praying for us.
2 Corinthians 1:11, NLT

It was Sunday evening, June 4. We had gone to a neighboring town in southeastern Spain to assist a fellow missionary with an evangelistic meeting. The meeting had ended, and some people were enjoying leisurely conversation while others were crossing the street to load chairs into our van.

Our three-year-old son, Daniel, was following the men carrying the chairs. As he stepped into the street, a driver saw him and braked—but it was too late! He could not avoid hitting Daniel and throwing him several yards away onto the pavement. Running toward him and expecting to pick up a bruised and bleeding child, I found Daniel had barely a scratch on him. It was as though the hand of God had caught him.

As the driver accompanied us to the hospital to confirm Daniel's good condition, we were able to testify to him and the doctors of the miraculous protection of our loving Father. And I couldn't help but wonder, *Was somebody praying?*

A few months later, as my husband was visiting a church in Michigan, a woman named Katrina introduced herself to him and related the other side of the story.

Katrina and her husband had “adopted” us as their missionaries and had prayed faithfully for us for many years. One Sunday in June, they were lingering at the altar as their church service was coming to a close. God gave each of them a heavy burden to pray for us. Individually, they responded, praying for each one of us by name, not knowing that the other was also praying for us.

A month later, they received our newsletter and read with amazement the account of Daniel’s accident. They quickly checked their calendar and discovered that the accident was on the very day and time they had been praying at the altar!

Now, many years later, Daniel is actively preparing for ministry, sharing his faith, and ministering to people all around him.

Do your prayers make a difference? Yes, they do! Only eternity will reveal all of the lives your prayers have touched!

—Karen Prevost
Spain

Prayer Focus

- Pray for God’s leading to the missionary you are to adopt and pray for.
- Pray for the missionary’s protection and a spiritual harvest (2 Thessalonians 3:1).
- Pray for boldness and anointing on the missionary (Ephesians 6:19).

DAILY DEVOTIONS

EUROPE 365

MISSIONARY STORIES OF FAITH, PERSEVERANCE, AND MIRACLES

Get ready for your faith to be encouraged by what God is doing in Europe through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Europe 365* is a powerful year-long devotional written by Assemblies of God World Missions missionaries serving on the front lines of evangelism. You will be inspired by devotional thoughts and dynamic testimonies of the Holy Spirit in action, answers to prayer, miracles, divine protection, supernatural provision, the call to missions, and more.

As you read the stories of Holy Spirit-empowered evangelism, be challenged to pray... for Europe, for the missionaries, and for your own life, church, and city. The God who works in the mission field of Europe is at work around the world.

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RELIGION / Christian Living / Devotional

ISBN: 978-1-60731-912-2

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