

7/17/2025

Dear Friends and Faithful Ones,

The message I received that day via WhatsApp was, to me, like a soaking rain on a parched garden. In the message was a link to an article that appeared in a Croatian news publication last April. It started like this:

I come from an atheist family. We didn't celebrate religious holidays; our holidays were May Day, Republic Day, and New Year's. I not only didn't know the Christian faith, I despised it.

*However, life's shipwreck landed me precisely in a Christian community for the treatment of addicts, **Teen Challenge** - first for three months in Zagreb, then for about a year in Lisbon. Fleeing from catastrophic circumstances (police, courts, debts, various psychological traumas and thoughts of suicide...)*

The article was written by a man named Drazen, who is the editor of the news publication. He entered our program in the middle of his personal crisis. I hadn't heard from Drazen in years, and now he was writing about finding Christ in Teen Challenge—the best Easter he ever had. Drazen continued:

The basic teaching [at Teen Challenge] suggested that we must die to our previous life and destroy the deadly focus on our own pleasure. Then we had to build a new personality based on the principles of love, peace, and self-control. The seed of ego must die so that new fruit can grow from it and a new man or woman can be resurrected. I began to open up to Christian teaching, I wanted to be like the counselors who, for no money, dedicated their lives to helping people at the bottom of society.

Most remarkable, is that all of this took place 30 years ago when we started a Teen Challenge work in Croatia – 1995. The Balkan war was raging, but we at Teen Challenge were seeing an abundant harvest of new converts—many out of the drug culture.

Drazen's article helped me remember those trying days so well. We had 12 beds in our center and 300 names on the waiting list. We were sending desperate young men and women to centers all around Europe. We had no money and even sometimes no food, but God provided everything we needed and more! I could tell dozens of stories!

Now, I am amazed at the work of the Holy Spirit who keeps those who are His in the clutches of God's grip! Thank you God for the privilege of working in your harvest and to hear stories like Drazen's.

Terry and I have been serving on the mission field since 1979. Some of you have supported us through all of the years. I hope and pray this little testimony will be for you as it was for me: a soaking rain on a parched garden. You have helped us to do what we do through all of the years! We thank God for each of you.

In His Grip,

Tom