



Newsletter of European Christian Mission Ireland
Winter 2019

Stats and Stories:

Find out how God is helping people to make 'more' of their visits to Europe.



**European Christian Mission Ireland
is an interdenominational,
evangelical, missionary
organisation working in Europe.**



Our Mission:

ECM Ireland's aim is to glorify God through the planting and development of churches that will evangelise and disciple the peoples of Europe.

Europe has become a complex multicultural and multi-religious continent full of challenges, but God continues to work, and His light still shines in Europe, where He continues to move forward and build His church.



We Believe:

That Europe needs to hear and see the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God has chosen the church as His instrument to reach the whole world with His gospel of salvation. Church planting therefore is ECM's chosen strategy to transform Europe. Through knowing Jesus' love people change. When people change, communities change. When communities change the communities that surround them also change, followed by whole regions. When regions are transformed, countries are changed and, ultimately, the whole of Europe.

We Pray:

Your Kingdom come... in Europe,
Your will be done... in Europe. Amen.



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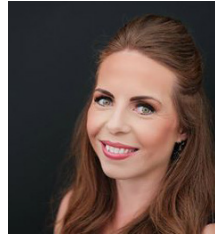
Director's letter

Welcome to the latest edition of ECM Life. Many of you will be reading this magazine whilst the evenings are drawing in as we move into the darker Winter months.

The dark serves as an important reminder to those of us who are interested in Mission to Europe, which is often seen as a spiritually dark continent. What the dark needs to dispel it is the light of the Gospel. As John 1:5 puts it: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

Give thanks that in this edition, there are stories of the light of Christ illuminating even the darkest of hearts. Pray that this would continue and that our workers would be encouraged as they bring light to the darkness in Europe, and seek to make Him known.

Lindsay Moorhead
Director





Wish you were here?

By Lindsay Moorhead

Postcards, in their current form, date from around the end of the 19th Century. Holidaymakers were able to send their loved ones a picture of the place they were visiting and typically, they signed off a short message with the phrase, 'Wish you were here'.

From 1974 until 2003, Judith Chalmers hosted a travel programme on ITV, which highlighted various holiday destinations and turned the old postcard sign-off on its head by adding a question mark and asking viewers did they 'Wish you were here?', suggesting that not all holiday destinations appeal to all people.





As we planned our exhibition spaces at a variety of conferences over the past few months, we kept that question in our minds. Is Europe a place where people wish to be? We hope so, not because it is a holiday destination, but because approximately 750 million people in Europe are living and dying without hearing about Jesus, who He is and what He has done.

To emphasise this fact, at each conference we gave each person we met a traditional-looking postcard of one of the places ECM Ireland works in, complete with statistics and prayer points.

Please pray for the impact of those postcards going out - pray that they will have encouraged more prayer and pray that the 'Wish you were here?' phrase will have caused someone to consider serving long term in the future.



More Baby News!

David and Samantha Gilkinson and little Maria have been in Spain since the start of this year. On the 11th of October they welcomed the newest member of the family, Baby Luca born at 8.30am and weighing in at 7lb 6oz. Congratulations to David and Samantha every blessing for the days ahead.

Christ the Saviour

A Reformed Church in the heart of Krakow, Poland.

Towering above the busy and bustling historic, religious, and culturally saturated streets of Krakow, a trumpeter plays the famous 'hejnal' from high up in the tall northern tower of the Bazylika Mariacka - St Mary's Church (top left of the picture). This famous anthem sounds forth, resounding not only across the market square, but also Poland and even the world, through its inclusion in daily Polish radio broadcasts.

This May, our family - 'Family Green' - took the decision to take a week-long holiday to Krakow, not only hoping to experience and enjoy the 'sights and sounds' and central-European culture, but also to build on a growing friendship with Saszko and Ania Nezamutdinov who are labouring in Krakow planting a confessional reformed congregation.

We had the joy of joining them in 'normal church activities' and experienced first-hand some of the ministries: Bible Study, Catechism Study Group, and Public Worship. Thanks to Saszko and Ania's hospitality our family enjoyed a great time of table fellowship chatting about the trials and joys of labouring in Krakow. Our three

children even enjoyed the privilege of being the first children to visit their home.

Keen that worship is both culturally sensitive and biblical, Saszko implements elements of historic Protestant Liturgical practices such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. It was a delight to participate in this, as both English and Polish voices were raised in prayer, praise, and confession of our common faith.

Besides Word and Sacrament ministry (Public Worship and Bible Study), the Church seeks to practice hospitality and relationship building ministries; engagement through English Classes; Literature and Cultural groups; and a publishing/translation ministry which is much needed and seeks to provide reliable reformed and evangelical literature not only in Krakow, but across Poland and to Polish speakers.

This article began with hearing the trumpet sound resounding across the Old City. My thoughts turned to the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 1:8: *'the Word of the Lord sounded forth... (and not only that, but their) faith in God has gone forth everywhere..'* May it be true of the ministry of 'Christ the Saviour', Krakow and the faith of the saints meeting there.

PS: Our European brothers and sisters need support, encouragement, and partnership every bit as much as we do in the UK and Ireland. Wouldn't it be great to meet with them should you be in Krakow either for a holiday or for business?

Andrew & Lauren Green and their children live in Newtownards and are members of Greenwell Street Presbyterian

Church, Newtownards. Lauren works part-time as a palliative care physiotherapist and full-time as a mum of three. Andrew works in Belfast as an Insurance Broker, specialising in the Church and Charity Sector.



Welcome Baby Cackowski

Stefan and Kamila Cackowski (Poland) welcomed the newest member of their family, Samuel, into the world on 31st of July at 3:16pm. **Weight:** 3400grams. **Length:** 56cms.

We are thankful to God for this wonderful gift to the family and congratulations to Stefan, Kamila and big brothers, Noah and Aaron - who will love and look after Samuel very well!!!



Changes for Miriam

After many years working in the ECM Ireland office Miriam moved in October to ECM International to work alongside Charlie in the SEE Network where she will help with admin. organising trips, and publicising SEE Network needs and opportunities. She will continue to serve on the Member Care and Biennial 2020 teams and would like to start writing up stories of how God intervenes in individual lives and situations, (if anyone has ideas, please get in touch).

ECM Ireland would like to thank Miriam for all her input, in many ways over the years, and we wish her God's blessing, help and guidance as she continues in ministry. Please pray for Miriam and Charlie over this period of change.

Opportunities to serve



Disciples who make Disciples, Albania

Interested in evangelism, discipleship, children's ministry, youth work, small Bible study groups, preaching and serving on church leadership teams? Do you want to see churches working towards maturity? So do we!!

Find out more under 'Service Opportunities' at ecmi.org



Internship in Krakow, Poland

We offer great internships in Poland from 2 weeks up to a year. This project functions as a 'greenhouse' for potential missionaries who want to discover church planting in a cross-cultural setting.

Check it out under 'Service Opportunities' at ecmi.org

A summer in Spain

By Jack Taylor *(short term worker in Spain who comes from Ballynahinch)*

This summer from June until August I spent most of my time serving in Spain in various contexts. A lot of it was spent with ECM missionaries David and Samantha Gilkinson and little Maria, and also with different Church pastors around Castellon, Salou and Huelva.



Back home, when not studying with Belfast Bible College, I am heavily involved with the local organisation, Exodus, and throughout the past year have been able to help set up and send out teams, which I then worked with, when I went to Spain.

The first week of July I was involved in leading a launch team for the summer teams, (one staying in a Church in Salou and the other in a Church in the nearby town of Cambrils). The team was a very special experience as it was my first time returning to the same place, I had visited on my very first mission trip, 4 years previously.

During that time one experience particularly stood out, involving a female team leader who had left a week earlier with her children, to visit her parents-

in-law (the male leader's parents). The day the team arrived in Spain she took seriously ill, and later found out she had Viral Meningitis, which meant that as soon as the team arrived, her husband joined her at the hospital and the team were left in my care along with another female leader who was present.

It was a very stressful time for everyone but thankfully through God's grace, our colleague made a miraculous turnaround and was able to re-join the team for the remainder of their time. She said she had struggled to see God's plan in the situation, but I saw the ultimate need to rely on God in times of hardship especially when I definitely couldn't have relied on my strength, and understanding, to see us through.

Summer break Germany

What do you do?

Vimal, Louise and family serve with ECM in Germany among refugees and are helping Churches and other Christians to engage with refugees in various ways. From 22nd July – 2nd August 2019 it was through Sports' Camp. Here is their update:

The Stats: Germany 2018:



185,853 applications for protection status.



25,000 were from Syria, Iraq & Iran



Of the total applications:
56.7% were Male
43.3% were Female



Staggeringly this included:
78,000 children & over
4,000 unaccompanied children.

What can we do during summer break, when school is closed for six weeks?

This is a question asked by many young applicants seeking asylum in Karlsruhe's urban and suburban areas. For the sixth year running, Refugee and Migrant Ministries-Karlsruhe (RMK) has organised a one-week integrative sports' camp every afternoon for more than 50 kids, youth and adults, from over ten different nations.

The week began on Monday afternoon with a free choice of a wide variety of sports. Volunteers from European Christian Mission, Refugee Ministry International, FeG Karlsruhe, and Per.Du Church, Durlach, supported the RMK staff along with help provided by a mission team from Tennessee, USA!!



Among the many different activities offered each day were; volleyball, soccer, basketball and american football. Then we continued with a bouncy castle, Kubbb, Ultimate Frisbee and skipping, (to name a few examples of the more unusual options.) Last, but not least, card and board games together with face painting, and braiding bracelets, were the quieter and more creative activities on offer.

Every discipline had mixed teams aimed to create a 'together' instead of 'next to each other', dynamic despite the cultural and other differences.

After the physical activities we gathered for the daily service with songs in both English and German. We thank God for the openness, and opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to a primarily Muslim audience through devotions based on Bible stories.

Dinner created the chance for valuable encounters and conversations, and we enjoyed good talks with old friends, new friends and people we had never met before, or hadn't talked to in a long time.

A special event was held during the final evening when guests from different countries presented traditional and country-specific songs. African rhythm was interspersed with European songs, and acts from Iran, and Sri Lanka.

So a successful sports' camp with plenty of fun and joy but more importantly, defined by God's blessing and protection, drew to an end. We feel gifted, strengthened and encouraged after this week. Thank you for praying!

The Story: of Ashkan, a young refugee from Iran

Ashkan's story is extraordinary and left us speechless. Touched by the services, Ashkan opened up and showed much interest in the Bible and Christian faith. Sadly, he told us that he was about to be transferred to Heidelberg, the next day. Since we were convinced God was not finished with Ashkan yet, we prayed for God's blessing and guidance over him and to everybody's great surprise, the next day, Ashkan arrived at the sports' camp! He told us that his name had been 'inexplicably removed' from the list. Praise God who does as He chooses.

Reuben**Most challenged by:** Getting sick.**Best Memory:** When we did the 'Baby Shark' song.**Prayer Point:** For the small church in Novi Travnik.**Miriam****Most enjoyed:** Visiting a family and praying for their health, strength and protection.**Most challenged by:** The Muslim calls to prayer and a feeling that life is not 'easy' for the youth.**Prayer Point:** That God would move in this land.

Remember that summer in Bosnia?

A team of 8 people (aged 13yrs to 70+) went to Bosnia at the start of the summer to do English Classes and help with a 5 day Club. Just a week before leaving, the Bosnian believers discovered they could not participate in the Bible Club but, praise God, translators were found and despite sickness, the team had a fun 4 hours with about 15 young Muslim teens who came daily to study English and hear about God. Read about our experience!

Bernie**Thoroughly enjoyed:** All my time in Bosnia. As the 'Senior Member' I loved the company of the teens: Jane, Daniel and Reuben - as well as the others, of course!**Best Memory:** Meeting with hospitable believers in their homes.**Prayer point:** That everything done in, and for, His name will grow and prosper while opportunities are still there.**The Stats: Bosnia:****Population:** 3,759,633**Muslims:** 2,036,217 (54%)**Largest religion:** Muslim**Evangelicals:** 2,207 (0.1%)



Rose

Most enjoyed: Teaching Bible truths to young people during the week.

Most challenged by: Language limitations - it was hard to have deeper conversations with people I met.

Prayer Point: the task of making disciples in Bosnia is enormous and the workers are few, so pray for the equipping of believers to reach into their own communities.

Keith

Most enjoyed: Preparing materials for teaching English.

Best Memory: The children singing a Christian song in Bosnian.

Prayer Point: That the tracts distributed in the apartment blocks will be read, and that God would speak through them.

Charlie

Most enjoyed: Working with a great team of people.

Most challenged by: the spiritual darkness in Bosnia.

Prayer Point: Pray for 'A' a young Bosnian believer as he continues to live and witness in Bugojno.

Daniel

Most challenged by: Sickness that limited participation.

Best Memory: Playing Uno with the kids.

Prayer Point: For isolated young Christians in Bosnia, that they would become connected and not feel alone in their faith.

Jane

Most enjoyed: Seeing all the friends I knew from last year.

Best memory: teaching the team-adults the actions to the 'Music Man' song.

Prayer Point: For 4 young Christians who have no other like-minded friends in their town.



Welcome to N. Ireland: Baby Barido!

On Thursday the 22nd July baby Ana Barido came into the world to join big brother and sister, Alvaro and Laura, and Mum and Dad, Andressa and Marcus. The family are nearing the end of a year in N.Ireland en route to ministry in Portugal. Congratulations to the family for this wee beauty and praise God for his goodness. See photo for important details!

A photograph of three children standing in a grassy field with trees in the background. They are all blindfolded with brown cloth. The child on the left is wearing an orange shirt, the middle child is wearing a light blue patterned shirt, and the child on the right is wearing a dark grey patterned shirt. Their hands are placed on the shoulders of the child next to them, suggesting a line or a supportive gesture.

Let your light shine

Reflections on the Balkans... (but which serve as a challenge wherever we are!!)

You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Sometimes it isn't possible, here in the Balkans, to preach the Good News with words. Sometimes there is no-one willing to listen to the words, and sometimes it isn't even permissible. And yet, when we experience the truth of God's Word and reflect on all He has done in our lives, we are compelled to speak. We cannot be silent; we must speak this wonderful message of hope, forgiveness and salvation. This is our calling, our commission: to go into the world, to proclaim the Good News and make disciples, for how can they believe if they have not heard?

So, how does this work in a place where the majority religion prohibits apostasy; the rejection of one's faith to embrace another? Such a decision here will typically lead to shame, hostility, ostracism, and on rare occasions even physical harm. While people often may not want us to speak of the hope within us, we know that they are watching how we live. And so, we take off our shoes before entering their homes, drink Turkish coffee and endless glasses of Russian tea, and eat from communal dishes, because we love them and the richness of their culture. We teach their children and teens, and promote societal

values that extend beyond culture. We reach out with acceptance to those who are marginalised, and seek to bring comfort to those who are hurting. We pray that God will help us to genuinely love the people in our lives. We want to be known as people who reflect God's light, doing good and living well in our community. As trust is built and relationships deepen, the conversations begin. The right to speak has been earned.

A number of years ago, a man who felt the joy of the music approached us after an open-air event. His disability has not hindered the relationship that developed out of that simple conversation. In turn, this has led to meaningful relationships with other people who are often excluded just for being different. A vibrant group of men now meets weekly for sport and social interaction. Being able to facilitate this group allows our light to shine so that they and others can see our good works, and has led to opportunities to speak at the appropriate time.

Over the years, we have learned that there is a time to keep silence and a time to speak. We have loved people who walked away from us with long periods of silence. And when they have returned, wanting to speak and wanting to listen, we have been ready to open God's Word with them again and listen to Him speak into all of our lives.

And all this so that they might give glory to our Father who is in heaven.



Discover East Germany... and fall in love with it.

We need help in the Patchwork Centre, you could assist in the kitchen/café, join the recycle workshop, or be part of a music band. The most important thing is being together with people, being part of their lives. Just be aware - you might just end up hearing God call you into a life-long love for East Germany!

Check it out under 'Service Opportunities' at ecmi.org

Coffee cup statistics & Slovenia

By Alen and Lila Kerckmar

Located in central Europe Slovenia is often referred to as 'the green heart of Europe'. Mighty peaks, picturesque landscapes, sweeping vineyards and lovely coastlines are just some of the attractions enveloped by our tiny country.

Statistics will tell you

- We are among the ten tallest countries in the world where the average male is 1.80m tall
- We are also among the oldest in the world, the average age is 43.5 years old.
- Coffee is one of the most popular warm beverages in Slovenia and according to the latest available data the consumption of coffee is growing.
- A household member in Slovenia consumed on average 3.5 kilograms of coffee in 2012.

Nevertheless

- It is still highly unlikely that you will randomly bump into another Christian believer on the street and be able to share a coffee with him/her.
- There are only about 2000 Evangelical believers in the country, which comes to about 0.1% of the population.*
- Putting it into coffee imagery we would have to invite 1000 random people out for coffee before we found another believer.
- This puts us at number 14* among the countries of the world with the lowest % of Evangelicals.

N. Ireland:

Invite 5 random people on
a town street for coffee and
1 is likely to be a Christian

Slovenia:

Invite 1,000 random people
to have the same likelihood
of 1 being a Christian!

These facts make any Christian ministry and outreach very challenging however, as national workers, we are determined to follow our Lord's command and reach our people with the Gospel. We hold on to the words of Ecclesiastes 11:6, "In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike, will be good."

This summer we were encouraged, and strengthened in sharing our faith, by two teams coming to help with children's, youth and family outreach events and camps. Around 150 people in total, including children, youth and a number of families, heard the Gospel and were encouraged to turn to the Lord and walk with Him. As we seek to continue to work with these people, we do not know how

many of those seeds will prosper but we trust that the Lord can do abundantly more than we can hope for or imagine.

We ask you to stand with us in prayer that many will come to know, love and follow our Lord Jesus Christ. And perhaps one day soon, by the grace of God, Slovenia may have a different statistic no longer among the lowest but the highest % of Evangelicals for His glory.





Jeruzalem

The same... only different

By **Charlie Anderson**

Around 10 pastors and church leaders from Northern Ireland met with around 20 Christian workers from Southeast Europe, in the beautiful surroundings of Jeruzalem, Slovenia, at the end of May this year.

The basic ethos of the 'Pastors to Pastors' Conference is creating a mutual learning environment in which both pastors and Christian workers from Northern Ireland, and South East Europe (SEE) can share their stories, learn from one another and, of course learn together from the Scriptures.

With topics such as, "Understanding our Calling in the light of Disappointment"

and "Surviving as a Family in Ministry", (some presented by N.I pastors and some by SEE partners), it was great to experience the sharing of wisdom distilled out of shared ministry experience, and to see how scripture can be applied across cultures and circumstances.

As the SEE partners shared their stories and ministries however, it was startling to consider how different their contexts are.

The Stats

The stats speak for themselves as we consider the situations of two team members from Northern Ireland, compared to those of two of the SEE Network partners. The Rev. Tom Greer is from Molesworth Presbyterian Church, in Cookstown, County Tyrone, and Geoff McIlrath is from Castlereagh Fellowship. Radovan, in turn comes from the "county" of Central Bosnia, while Bostjan works in the Evangelical Church of Maribor, Slovenia.

	Central Bosnia	Compared to...	County Tyrone
Area	3190 Km2		3150Km2
Population	250,000		180,000
No. of evangelical churches	2		100+
Average attendance	15 (I've counted)		50 + (guess)

	Maribor Municipality	Compared to...	Castlereagh Council (as was)
Area	41 Km2		85 Km2
Population	90,000		70,000
No. of evangelical churches	4		40+
Average attendance	<50		75 +



So! What's the point?

Well it's NOT that there are too many churches in Tyrone or Castlereagh, or that there is not much work to be done in these areas.

The point IS simply that our brothers and sisters in South East Europe need OUR help.

Media Intern, South East Ireland

Do you have a passion for social media, websites and making videos? Do you want to use your gifts to see others come to Jesus? Would you be willing to work and learn as part of a team in an outward looking church plant?

Find out more under 'Service Opportunities' at ecmi.org

We need your help

We would love to stay connected with you!

One way we do this is through the ECM Life magazine, which is packed full of inspirational stories from our mission partners who are serving in difficult places across Europe. If you would like to continue receiving the magazine you don't need to do anything, but if you no longer want to receive ECM Life please unsubscribe by emailing us at ecm.ni@ecmi.org or complete this slip and post it to:

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Date: / /

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and know the Lord's richest blessing in 2020.



'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

John 1:14

If you would like to invite us to speak at your church, please contact us at:

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