

WINTER 2023

ECM LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION IRELAND
NEWSLETTER

MULTIPLY



ECM IRELAND

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION IRELAND
IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL,
EVANGELICAL, MISSIONARY ORGANISATION
WORKING IN EUROPE.

ECM'S MISSION IS TO



EQUIP,
CONNECT
AND MULTIPLY
FOLLOWERS OF
JESUS

THROUGH
DISCIPLESHIP
AND

CHURCH
PLANTING
ACROSS
EUROPE

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

BY GEOFF DONALDSON



The word **MULTIPLY** perhaps brings to mind the mathematical symbol we are familiar with since school days, but in ECM mission terms it is not about numbers and statistics. Instead, it is seeking growth in some key areas. In this edition of *ECM Life*, we complete the series looking at our mission which is to 'EQUIP, CONNECT and **MULTIPLY** followers of Jesus through discipleship and church planting across Europe.' What then does multiply look like for the ECM Ireland workers?

Multiplying through Discipleship and Church Planting

I had some time recently with our ECM workers in Ireland and as I listened to their ministry updates, in common were the challenges they are facing. However these challenges are healthy ones as they are all about how to respond to growing numbers and opportunities for outreach. Multiplying in their respective settings involves seeking a new worker (in Ferrybank), seeking new ways to disciple and equip new people (in West Cork) and a new building project to facilitate the developing opportunities (in Claremorris). Exciting days ahead in all these places.

Multiplying in unexpected ways and places

There is a beautiful example of growth in the article by Noah and Suzi Bartlett and it reminds us that as we seek to multiply our work that God is sovereign and can do the unexpected. It shows how new opportunities are emerging in Europe, and locally here in Ireland, and for our need to

pray that our missionaries have wisdom and discernment in how to embrace these new Gospel opportunities.

Multiplying through partnerships

The needs of Europe are many and part of the ECM ethos is to work alongside others to help fulfil God's mission. Partnerships with other agencies and local Churches is demonstrated in the Gilkinson's work in Salou and demonstrates the great potential to multiply our Gospel reach by working with others.

As I have been pondering on this theme of 'multiply' I was looking at an account of the history of ECM from the founding of the mission in 1904. Time again we see how the work has multiplied through the faithful prayers and giving of our supporters as they responded to God's opening of new doors for mission. Thank you for all your support and we trust you will continue to join us in this journey of reaching Europe with the Gospel.



If ever there was a mission-field on our doorstep, it's the Republic of Ireland, the least-evangelised majority English-speaking country in the world. ECM Ireland have several national workers serving across Ireland – both north and south. Pray for them as they work for God in various places and different contexts, as they plant churches in a secular culture.



Colin and Ali Holmes
(Ferrybank)



Jonathan and Nicola McCracken
(Claremorris)



Tom and Grace Campbell
(Skibereen)



Noah and Suzi Bartlett
(Belfast, Northern Ireland)

POPULATION

5,005,000

35.6% rural dwellers

64.4% urban dwellers

Capital: Dublin

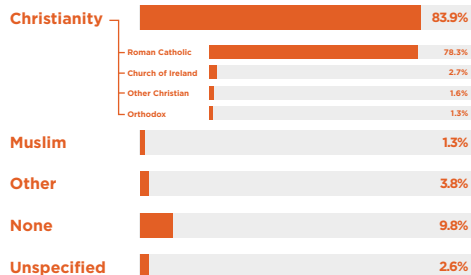
Births per day: 157

Death rate: 97

Life expectancy: 83



BELIEFS



Catholicism is the largest religion, but is in decline. In 1972 weekly Mass attendance was 91%, dropping to 30% in 2011.



Ireland is the only English-speaking Catholic nation.



WHAT'S YOUR STORY OF IRELAND?

Ireland is a place where stories are told and treasured. I wonder what story you've heard about the Republic of Ireland? Is it the secular story, where faith is increasingly seen as irrelevant or harmful? Or maybe it's the same old story, as tradition and religion still hold sway, suspicious of new expressions of Christianity? Could it even be the spiritual story, as people are seeking new forms of meaning or mystery, as the secular story is too shallow?

Too often in our modern world we tell stories that are either this or that. Too often on this ancient island we have told stories that are either us or them.

The truth is that in Ireland today there is a messy and mysterious mix of secular, spiritual and same old in the stories of this place and the people who call it home. The surprising story which doesn't dominate the media is how a growing evangelical / Christian Church from a beautiful breadth of backgrounds is breaking the tired old divisions of 'us and them' and allowing



space for people to find a home spiritually. A place where people are being equipped as disciples who will make disciples, as they come alongside others to walk with them towards Jesus. This is a story we are glad to be part of and contribute to.

PRAYER POINTS



Growing churches.

Give thanks for growth in churches in Waterford, West Cork and Mayo. Pray especially for Calvary Church Claremorris, as they take a significant step of faith in their building project.



Growing people.

Please pray for the growing of disciples who make disciples and leaders within churches. Pray for the ECM team as we seek to develop others in church planting and discipleship. Pray especially for someone to join the team in Ferrybank.



Growing partnerships.

There is a growing spirit of partnership in the gospel across churches, mission agencies and Christian organisations. Pray this might result in meaningful ways of working together.

NEW BUILDING PROJECT IN CLAREMORRIS



BY JONATHAN MCCRACKEN

In Claremorris, as elsewhere, we have been very happy over the years to keep an “open door” for anyone who wants to come and check out what we’re doing and the teaching in our church. As the Lord has brought different people in through the door of the Town Hall over the last year, we have been encouraged to embrace the vision to have an actual church building of our own.

At certain times, the Town Hall venue is not available due to the increased programme of shows and concerts that seem to be happening. Over the past year, we have met in 4 different locations for our Sunday morning meetings, our children’s/youth meetings and for our ladies’ meetings. You can imagine the care we need to take when communicating the time and place of our various ministries, especially when about half of the church family speak only Portuguese!

The increased numbers of people attending our church since Easter, this year, has also been a significant factor in clarifying the vision for a new place to meet. Six new families, plus one or two other individuals, have found their way to us now on a regular basis and we thank God for the freshness and joy they bring. We have never seen so many people come to church in such a short time and stay for so long! Truly, the results



of keeping the open door and witnessing to God’s truth are in His hands and not ours.

On 16th October, we were excited to launch our promotional video and brochure for a new church building, after consulting with our church members and with our mission partners. “Building for the Future” is the title and we invite you to pray with us that the Lord would continue to build His church in Claremorris and the surrounding area.

Please feel free to find out more about our ministry and new building project by visiting www.calvarychurchclaremorris.ie

Recovering Life



Interview with
Colin Holmes

? Tell us a little bit about your ministry to date?

I’m currently the pastor of Ferrybank Christian Community Church in Waterford, where my wife Ally and I have been part of the team which planted the church in 2011. I’m also the leader for ECM team in Ireland and Britain.

? You’ve recently written a book called ‘Recovering Life’. What is the theme of the book?

The book weaves together several stories of recovering life:

- my own health recovery following a bleed on my brain in July 2020.
- the wider cultural story of being stretched and speeding through life and looking to slow.
- the spiritual story of searching for something more than the secular story offers and looking for something deeper.

Each of these explores what it looks like to recover life in Jesus, as a healthy spirituality for the whole of our humanity, by listening to the story of Jesus in the Bible.

? What led you to write the book?

I had already been writing a blog on culture and faith and shared some thoughts from



a rich and deep time of learning with the Lord during my recovery. As I was set aside, I got to observe life from a fresh angle and sensed strongly some of what I was learning could be of help to others.

? Why should someone read your book that hasn’t experienced a hardship, crisis or difficulty?

Whilst a good measure of this book is my own personal recovery from a significantly challenging time in my life, my hope is the story is told from a place of honest and hopeful humanity. So, whatever our struggles we might find strength, however stretched we might feel we might be able to slow, and above all that in our searching for something deeper we might find more of life to the full in Jesus.

? Where can we buy your book?

- **In Northern Ireland**
Faith Mission Bookshops.
- **In Republic of Ireland**
www.teachsolas.ie
- **It is also available in ebook**
www.amazon.co.uk

MULTIPLY

THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP



BY NOAH AND SUSIE BARTLETT

M. and I sit in the lobby of a church in Belfast. He recounts to me the many ways in which God has helped him in his journey from Iran to Northern Ireland - he knows God is with him even today. I tell him this is wonderful and ask him how he came to faith. He thinks for a moment and then says, 'no no, I'm not a Christian, I'm not good enough yet!'. One hour later, with tears in his eyes, he finally calls himself a Christian. What changed? John 1:12 shows that all who receive Jesus are children of God. And a child does nothing to earn the title of 'child'. He was persuaded. But the story is not over...

Our theme in this edition is 'Multiply'. Well, the following week we agreed to meet and start a discipleship course together. The time came to begin, but we had a problem. There were two other Iranian young men we could not get rid of! They just wouldn't leave so we could start our discipleship session. I was resigned to the fact that we would have to reschedule. But then something strange happened. I watched as M. started to teach these two men how to read the Bible and spend time with God. He shared the Gospel with them, and they were so captivated they texted him later scolding him for never having invited them to do this before.

I got to share the Gospel with M., M. got to share it with the two young men, and we

trust in time they will each begin sharing with others. In the space of a week, we got to see a really exciting example of disciples multiplying.

Multiplication is a very fitting word to describe the Iranian Church and work with Iranians. There is an unprecedented growth in the underground church movement within Iran as well as among the Iranian diasporas. There is a multiplication of seekers, disciples, evangelists, teachers, pastors and churches. And with this there is a multiplication of opportunities; opportunities for evangelism and discipleship but also opportunities for Iranian believers to teach us, bless us and mould us more into the image of Jesus Christ.



MULTIPLY



BY TOM CAMPBELL

This is one of the earliest instructions God gives to his people - Multiply! After creating Adam and Eve, God blessed them and told them to be fruitful and multiply; to fill the earth and subdue it.

God calls His people to be stewards of His creation and there are echoes of this multiplication command in Jesus' instruction to his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Jesus is calling his disciples to multiply more disciples: to go and draw others into his Kingdom. That is our desire at Amazing Grace Community Church, and we have seen exciting multiplication over the last year. We were beginning to run out of space in our first venue, so we have moved our Sunday services to the Skibbereen GAA hall, where we now regularly have 80-100 people attending.

We have also seen God's work in multiplying ministries at Amazing Grace. Since we have moved to our new venue, we have been able to start Sunday school for our primary school aged children. We have

established a monthly kids club and a youth group for secondary school age kids. We also praise God for five people who have just been or are about to be baptised.

Multiplication in these ways has been a great blessing from God, for which we are very thankful, and with this multiplication come challenges of varying kinds. A need for more helpers and leaders within children's ministry. A need to care for and connect with new individuals and families who have begun to attend. A need for wisdom and vision within the leadership team as we experience growth and make decisions for the life of the church. A need for God's grace and help in all that he has entrusted to us as his stewards. We value prayer for us in all of this.

Multiplication is a gift of God in church ministry, and we trust him for the future, that we can continue to grow in our love for him and for those around us.



BY DAVID GILKINSON

It's impossible for us to tell our testimonies and calling into full-time missions without mentioning the impact of short-term missions. God had been planting seeds of missions long before we applied to ECM as full-time candidates: He used short-term teams to put a deep discontent about the spiritual condition of Spain years before He called us to live here.

Serving short-term creates a lasting impact on the lives of young people: take a young person out of their comfort zone, give them an opportunity to serve selflessly, provide dedicated devotional time, and the result is that God works through this process to make disciples.

I would like to share our experience of how to facilitate mission teams that are sustainable, multipliable and worthwhile for local churches.

Over the last 11 years 'La Iglesia Protestante de Salou' (where I'm the Associate Pastor) has hosted mission teams annually. Last year we hosted five teams with over 130 young people serving; over 250 children came to five holiday Bible clubs; thousands hearing the Gospel in evangelistic events in

parks and plazas. Unity between churches has been vital, with one pastor saying: "This is the first time in history this kind of unity has happened in the province of Tarragona." Perhaps the most significant impact has been a process of the local Spanish young people being fully engaged in the process.

Tips for making mission trips multipliable

1 Local leadership and collaboration

Pastors, members and young people of local churches must be fully committed- it's a whole community event. Leadership, direction, promotion and follow-up need to come from local believers. The team brings energy, extra hands, even some money, but the vision needs to be from the local church.



2 Prepared for Success

We partner with Exodus from Northern Ireland annually and the thing I love most is the preparation phase - the teams have already met for 5 months for a weekly Bible study before they arrive. On the first day, we 'Launch' which is a day of training and prayer together. This breaks the ice and sets the vision and expectations for the week ahead.

3 Discipleship is the Goal

Every team have a time protected each day to have a team meeting with the purpose of the members growing in their knowledge and experience of God. Protect that time and keep the discipleship of the young people a cornerstone of the experience.

4 Get the Team Busy

I've seen teams serve in a kid's club for a couple of hours and the rest of the day becomes a holiday. If the team has prepared well, paid to come, then it's essential that there are plenty of service

opportunities for them which are suitable for their ages, abilities and maturity. Young people will surprise you with how much they want to serve if you facilitate the right opportunities.

5 A Simple Budget and Timetable

Local churches set a price for hosting the team per person per night. They organise food, transport and accommodation with the budget they've been given. The teams are together for 'Launch', a day off and three outreach events, other than that they are with the local church.

If you have a group that is bringing energy, the desire to serve, the money to make the ministry happen AND the team can be guided in the right direction, that is the sweet spot in which repeatable and multipliable mission teams can happen.



Follow @ebs_salou on
instagram for more details

WORK AMONG REFUGEE WOMEN



BY LOUISE VIMALASAKARAN

For 22 years, I have been in contact with refugee women from the Middle East and Africa. Other women are not here as refugees, but are living as migrants in Germany, from Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. Even though they differ in cultural norms, the heart cry of each one is to be accepted, to be seen as beautiful, having good character and be recognized for their giftings as homemakers and neighbours and they all aspire to be competent language students.

I meet most refugee women in the camps as well as at ladies' cafés in our community. Other migrant women are met in school grounds, at parents' evenings, at conversational language cafes, with some of them needing help with exam preparation or childcare.

Since I have had the privilege of being exposed to the diversity of culture, I have seen values and customs which I have embraced as positive and conducive to a biblical lifestyle. These have had an impact on me as a Christian woman as much as I would hope that my lifestyle as



a Christian, would have had upon them. The relationships I have made with these women have been based upon a mutual trust and respect, intentionally initiated by myself, to help them with their integration processes in Germany. It has always been with women and children, and the Muslim women have been especially impacted and have shared their appreciation of my work with the same sex, which has given my testimony the integrity needed as a Christian. It has given me influence, as I pray with them and share my life, family values and time.

The biggest inroads I have made, have been when I have made myself vulnerable, disclosing my own struggles living in a foreign land and having to discover things for myself. I have shared meals, coffee and clothes with these women and children and receiving second-hand items and clothing in return and this has impacted them, as they have seen me treating them as equals.



Pray

- For the women to find Christ as their own personal Saviour. I send messages of encouragement, comfort and bible verses, as well as information to help them integrate more smoothly into German society. Before the Pandemic, I was fortunate to have been on an "Al Massira" Foundational Bible Course, to help evangelize Muslim women and their children, which was of incalculable worth. equipping of myself and resources available on winning souls for Christ, is for me of utmost importance and of course, having and maintaining a personal, vibrant walk with the Lord goes without saying.
- Pray that my testimony will be one of integrity and that I might not be misunderstood and that as far as to the nature of my relationships with these ladies.
- During the time of the Iraqi war and now recently with the Ukrainian crisis I had opportunities to pray and help as well as resource the ladies with humanitarian aid, so pray that these items would be seen as tokens of empathy and sympathy for the lostness and a means of offering hope to the hopeless and that the ability to have compassion for these broken lives, will always abide with me.

PASTORS2PASTORS



BY GEOFF MCILRATH

Pastors2Pastors (P2P), as it is somewhat misleadingly called, has been an enormous source of encouragement to me in recent years. Although I missed the inaugural get-together in 2014, I have been privileged to attend the last four – three in Slovenia, and the most recent gathering in Serbia.

From one perspective I attend in my capacity as a local church pastor and council member of the ECM Ireland, but the primary reason for my involvement is the desire to see what the Lord is doing in such a spiritually needy part of our world (the Balkans) and to come alongside those isolated workers who have dedicated themselves to seeing their spiritual landscape transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

P2P provides a wonderful mechanism through which gospel partnership is put into practice. Meaningful relationships are birthed and matured as mission-minded individuals from Ireland join with fellow-workers from the Balkans for several days of teaching, prayer, praise and many conversations in which hearts are knit together by the Spirit of God. I can say, without fear of contradiction, that others who have travelled with me have experienced this Spirit-sponsored togetherness which, in turn, has led to genuine connections between church

communities here and in the Balkans. It feels very much like we are witnessing the Lord laying the infrastructure of His kingdom through these relationships.

If we take our lead from Scripture, then it follows that we will view our world through a broad lens. We will be open to the needs and opportunities of mission and will be ready to respond to God's invitation to partner with Him in what He is doing. And what do we find as we accompany God's Spirit on this missional adventure? We discover that in giving ourselves away we receive back so much more than we could ever have imagined. We see God at work, we know what it is to be used by Him and we delight in deep gospel fellowship this side of glory.

Pray for the strategic ministry of P2P. Is it something you would consider supporting financially? Is it something that you, or your pastor, would wish to investigate further?

LEAVING A LEGACY



If you are willing to leave a gift to ECM in your will, there are three main ways to do so:

1. Residuary gift:

a share (or all) of what remains of the value of your estate once your family and friends have been dealt with. This has the advantage of staying the same over time and therefore your will won't need to change to keep up with inflation.

2. Pecuniary gift:

a specific amount of money.

3. Specific gift:

a named item such as a piece of art or jewellery.

If you want to leave a gift to ECM, or want to know more about doing so, please tick the appropriate box on the response form.

Thank you for investing in ongoing ministry in Europe!

GIVING TO ECM IRELAND

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please send me:

- ☐ ECM Life (three times per year) ☐ post ☐ email
☐ ECM's monthly prayer diary ☐ post ☐ email
☐ Eurolink (ECM Ireland monthly prayer resource) ☐ post ☐ email

Signature: _____

SINGLE GIFT DONATION

☐ £5 ☐ £15 ☐ £30 ☐ £50 Other £ _____

☐ Euro Amount € _____

☐ For use where most needed

☐ For the Christmas Appeal

☐ Towards the work of: _____

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to ECM Ireland

☐ I do not require an acknowledgment.

You can also donate on line

www.ecmireland.org/give

GIFT AID DECLARATION

☐ I wish to gift aid to ECM this and any gift I have given in the last four years, until further notice. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year.

giftaid it

Full name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

REGULAR GIVING

- ☐ For use where most needed:
☐ Towards the work of:

STANDING ORDER DETAILS

Bank name:

Bank address:

.....
Postcode:

Account holder:

Account no:

Sort code: -

Please deduct (amount in words) pounds

from my account on / / **and then each**

☐ **Month** ☐ **Quarter** ☐ **Year (tick one) until further notice.**

This standing order (tick as appropriate)...

- ☐ Replaces
☐ Does not replace an existing standing order to ECM

Pay this sum to: European Christian Mission

A/C: 40615008 Sort Code: 98 09 60

Ballymacoss Avenue, Lisburn BT28 2GX

Signature: **Date:**

For bank use only: Paying bank please ensure all backdated payments are made and the following reference number is quoted with all payments.

Reference No.

LEGACY GIVING

- ☐ I have included ECM in my will.
☐ I would like to consider including ECM in my will.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

☐ I wish to gift aid to ECM this and any gift I have given in the last four years, until further notice. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year.

Full name:

Signature: **Date:**



PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the ECM Ireland Office Team as they provide practical and pastoral support to our 44 workers across 10 European countries (Lourdes, Lorna, Stephen and Geoff).
- Pray for the resourcing of the work as we continue to nurture and develop our support of first cultural workers across Europe.
- Pray for the recruitment of more missionaries to help address the challenges to the Gospel in Europe presented by Islam, secularism and nationalism.
- Pray wisdom and direction as ECM Ireland Trustees continue to work on the strategic development of the work of ECM Ireland across Europe.
- Pray for opportunities to network and work alongside other agencies both locally and across Europe as they seek to reach this diverse mission field.



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