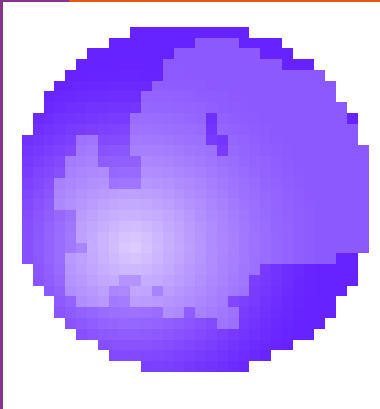




**SPECIAL FEATURES INSIDE:**

- *Say hello to new faces and good bye to old ones*
- *Can tourism be mission?*
- *Dried limes & flamenco in Germany*



# OUR MISSION

ECM Ireland's aim is to glorify God through the planting and development of churches that will evangelize and disciple the peoples of Europe. It is only through worshipping, loving, communities that Europe can really experience transformational change.

We believe that Europe needs to hear and see the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 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

## WE BELIEVE

## WE PRAY

We believe that church planting is the strategy to transform Europe. God has chosen the church as His instrument to reach the whole world with His gospel of salvation. By having Jesus' love, people change, local communities change, then surrounding communities, regions, and through regions, countries are transformed and through countries the whole of Europe.

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



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

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# The Director's Chair

by Charlie Anderson

## **WE SEE A DIFFERENT EUROPE:**

### **EVANGELISM NOT JUST TOURISM**

*If you are one of those people for whom the mention of Europe doesn't conjure up thoughts of imminent crisis or political wrangling but rather long warm days on the beach or visits to historic sites, or walks through spectacular alpine scenery, then you know that tourism and Europe are synonymous.*

*More than tourism, Europe needs Evangelism.*

*Don't misunderstand the point here, tourism is good, holidays are good and Christians should not feel guilty for enjoying the good weather, depth of culture and richness of history and indeed rest and relaxation as we admire the beauty of God's creation, but try to see beyond the surface to glimpse the spiritual reality.*

*It's good to remember that Christians on HOLIDAY are CHRISTIANS on holiday and we never stop influencing those around us. A kind word, a happy smile, taking time to notice the lady who cleans your room or serves you in the shop are behaviours which can give off the aroma of Christ to local people in their daily work. Why not ask where the local evangelical church is, who knows where the conversation will go? Then see how local believers worship, and encourage them by your presence.*

*Charlie Hadjiev on page 4 has an interesting take on this theme and hints that being a Christian on holiday can be as effective as a short term mission visit. Other articles from Kamenica and Krakow highlight the value of Christians coming on short term ministry. So whether you are on holiday, or on a team this summer remember God always has us on a mission.*

# Can tourism become mission?

*Originally from Bulgaria, Charlie Hadjiev (pictured right) studied law in Sofia, theology in London and completed a doctoral dissertation at Oxford. Prior to joining Belfast Bible College in 2011 he taught Old Testament at the Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute and served as the Academic Dean of the United Theological Faculty. At BBC, he has responsibility as Programme Leader for the QUB Undergraduate programme. He is also currently a visiting Lecturer at the Continental Theological Seminary, Brussels, Belgium. Charlie is currently interested in taking on research students.*



***We asked him the question, ‘How useful is short-term mission?’ and his answer might surprise you!***

“The question can be answered very differently, depending on whether you are at the giving or receiving end of it. For those who go, the short term mission trip can be an exciting opportunity to encounter a new culture, learn more about the world, see a strikingly different perspective.

For those on the receiving end, short term mission can be a mixed blessing. When it meets a real need on the ground (and there are undoubtedly many good examples of that) it can contribute a lot. However, at times, it may also turn out to be a destructive and discouraging experience for the receiving culture. This

is especially the case when people are left with the impression that what really matters are the needs and priorities of those who come, not the needs of those who welcome. If no genuine relationship, characterised by care, develops, then one side simply uses the other for its own selfish goals. Mission becomes twisted religious tourism, not Christian service.

The question whether tourism can become mission is an intriguing new way of looking at the issue. A tourist visit, is by definition, a mutually beneficial transaction.



For the tourists it provides a space for recreation and pleasure, but in return they invest in the economic wellbeing of the place they visit. There is already a connection in place between visitors and hosts based on mutual agreement. It follows clear, well-defined rules, and may provide a natural context in which the Gospel can be shared. Of course, not every tourist destination lends itself easily to this. We will need to choose places that are not faceless and commercialised, places where language will not be a barrier and people are open to talk and engage with visitors.

A tourist who respectfully engages with his or her hosts, shows genuine interest

in them, and shares the good news is a much better witness than a 'short-term missionary' whose purpose in visiting is often difficult to comprehend and accept by local people. I am not suggesting that evangelism should be the only reason why we go on holiday. Enjoying the sun and having a rest is a totally legitimate exercise in and of itself. It does not need to be justified with a reference to a 'higher' purpose. Yet, there may be occasions when God in his sovereign wisdom will use it in ways that go beyond what we ask, expect, or imagine."





GBU group from Barcelona at the conference

YOU NEVER  
KNOW WHO  
YOU'LL BUMP  
INTO...



from left; Bostjan, Aislinn and Lidija

Aislinn (ECM Spain) along with Bostjan and Lidija (ECM Slovenia) met up with each other for the first time at an IFES Conference for students, in Germany at Easter.

*“Together with over 1700 other students from over 40 different countries across Europe, we celebrated our risen Lord at the conference ‘PRESENCE,’ in Germany! The purpose was to raise the awareness among students as to the need for evangelism and to encourage them to take part in the Great Commission at University and beyond. We’ve done leadership training, discipleship training and learned how to respond to the trends of our times.*”

*Please pray with us that this time in Germany will bear much fruit in the coming weeks and months.”*

## **INTRODUCING COSMIN PASCU**

**NEW COMMUNICATIONS CO-ORDINATOR FOR  
ECM IRELAND**



Born and raised in Romania, I never imagined that I would one day call Northern Ireland home! After becoming a Christian as a teenager, I had a sense that I wanted to learn more and study at Bible College. This led me to travel from the heart of Transylvania to Belfast Bible College where I completed my theological training. It was also the place where I got to see what God was doing through His people around the world.

In 2005, whilst still studying, I joined the ministry team at All Saints' Church, Belfast, as a student worker. This was a formative time as I learnt how to serve God in a different country among people who had a very different culture to my own. My heart for students led me to Dublin to work with the Christian Union movement (known at that time as IFES Ireland). The time I spent in the Dublin area enabled me to serve alongside people and students who were more

than eager to see God being known and glorified on campuses across the country. Ireland was once a country from where missionaries went to the rest of the world, and today, the Island dwellers are seeing a place where others are being sent by God to be His Good News.

In 2011 my connection to Northern Ireland became permanent when I married a local lass and I moved back north to work with Friends International. As I worked alongside international students, I was excited to see God bringing the world to our doorstep. Two years later, God gave us a daughter and being a parent has taught me much about God's limitless love for His people, as well as His grace and mercy. Whether we are serving God in Budapest or Belfast, Lisbon or Lisburn, we are all called to be part of His mission.

we want to  
**THANK  
YOU**  
very much

Lucy Hutchinson has been working with ECM for many years. Formerly she was our Youth and Communications Director and for the past few years she has been working away in the background designing and putting together our ECM Life Magazines, pullup display boards, videos, giving and team leaflets and many other wee jobs that we think 'we will ask Lucy about that.'

Since Comin's recent appointment as Communications Director it is hoped that he will take over this work but Lucy is very helpfully facilitating this change and we wanted to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt 'THANK YOU' to her for all her work with us. We really appreciate it and it has been a pleasure to work with you. For those of you who know Lucy well here is an update on what's been happening.



**Lucy on the water in London- her new hometown!**

**Lucy, where have you been and what have you been doing since you finished working with ECM Ireland full-time in October 2011?**

Well, I've certainly had an unusual career path since! I worked for just over a year at the Crumlin Road Gaol as a tour guide when it first opened. Then about 3 years ago I made the big move over to London. Since then I've been working for an international development charity as a project officer up until recently. I was working on a government funded volunteering programme called International Citizen Service for 18-25 year olds. My focus was on countries in Central America so a little different to the Europe focused work of ECM and my Spanish language skills are still as useless - I really should have listened to Charlie more!





**As Youth & Communications Director Lucy visited many of our projects overseas, here she is (above left) leading a music therapy session in Albania (January 2011) as part of the learning disability project**

### **What have been some of the highlights and challenges of your work?**

The organisation I was working for closed down at the end of March due to funding cuts so it was quite a challenging work environment overseeing the closure of an organisation. I certainly learnt some new skills but hopefully won't have to repeat the process any time soon.

I have loved continuing to work for ECM from afar. It has kept me up to date with everyone and has also been very encouraging seeing all the new faces that are now part of the ECM family.

### **Have you any plans coming up for the summer?**

I've just spent the last 3 weeks in Cuba travelling around so I will probably have to stay fairly close to home for the next few months - although don't hold me to that!

### **How can we pray for you?**

I'm about to start a new job as Project Coordinator at the Family Rights Group (still in London). It's a voluntary organisation based around social care - not a sector I'm very familiar in! I would appreciate prayers that I settle into the team quickly and that my brain is able to take in all the new information.



## Dried Limes, Iranian 'flamenco' and the Gospel



It was the turn of the Iranian community to do the cooking at the International Café in Karlsruhe, Germany. I had the privilege of being part of one of the initiatives led by Vimal at the Evangelical Migration Centre. What a challenging, flavourful taste of Iranian culture and music the night turned out to be.

The Centre is a collaborative project supported by a group of churches in Karlsruhe which provides a space for workshops, language classes, bible studies and other community contact initiatives like the International Café. That evening a small team of Iranian believers cooked up a traditional Iranian meal – beef stew containing lots of onions and flavoured with the distinctive taste of dried limes, it was served on a bed of rice with yoghurt dressing. Other nights are hosted by the Tamal community.

As the meal was prepared another Iranian brother played his guitar singing Christian songs which although traditional in style, sounded like a middle eastern version of flamenco to me. There was certainly an attraction to clap your hands or stamp your feet but it brought a very emotive reaction from the people present as they obviously experienced a tugging at the heart strings, a longing for home and familiar ways. Some cultural interchange also took place as Vimal sang a solo.

This was not an overtly evangelistic event but somehow sitting there sharing fellowship, eating together, the positive conversations, the building of relationships, the respect of culture and identity, certainly had something of the aroma of Christ about it all. It reminded me of how we also need to build bridges with our neighbours especially those of a different cultural identity from ourselves, so as to be able to share the Gospel message.

*BY CHARLIE ANDERSON*



## Lila Kercmar goes to Romania for training in children's work.

At the beginning of June Lila (circled) is leaving the rest of the family to go and study in Romania where she will complete her Child Evangelism Fellowship training so as to be better equipped for children's ministry in various areas of Slovenia. The training is quite rigorous and will last for 3 months so although there are visits arranged, the family will not be back home together again permanently until the end of August.



Please pray for Lila that God will bless this time, help her to focus, and to gain as much as possible from her studies and training. Pray also that she will be able to cope with being away for a longer period from the family. Do cover Alen and the children in your prayers as well as they all adjust to this change which is a sacrifice taken on by the whole family.

PS We do hope there is some time for Tourism Lila amidst all your evangelism studies!!

## ECM News

### Ally Holmes on her experience of Cognitive Coaching

"I found the training invaluable due to its relevance in my everyday life. I continue to offer support and a listening ear, but now with a greater awareness of myself and with tools that enable me to "get out of the way" and allow God to bring about change that he desires. I'm thankful for the opportunity to become better equipped as I serve God here in walking alongside others."

*Sharon Graves runs these courses for ECMI. Contact her, or the office, if you would be interested in the training.*



***Congratulations to Dan and Primrose Avila on their 10th Wedding Anniversary on 12th May 2017. Wishing you both many more blessed and happy years!!***



## Service Opportunities

*ECM offers you a great opportunity to discover your gifting and place within the Kingdom of God. For more information and a more detailed project description please check out our website [ecmireland.org](http://ecmireland.org) and follow the links for opportunities.*

### **LONG TERM TEACHERS // LOCATION: SOFIA, BULGARIA**

Duration: Long term      At: Sofia Christian Academy

Teaching missionary kids at Sofia Christian Academy Bulgaria, is a unique way to serve God. Ideally you would have a teaching qualification with some years of teaching experience.

### **CHURCH PLANTERS // LOCATION: AROUND LAKE GARDA, ITALY**

Duration: Long term

ECM is looking for people to start new church plants in the towns around Lake Garda many of which have no known evangelical witness.

You would need to raise up prayer for the town, start to make contacts and then start bible studies before pioneering a new church plant. It would be possible to be bi-vocational, having a job in order to make contacts and give validity to your living in the area.

### **TEACHING ENGLISH // LOCATION: KRAKOW, POLAND**

Duration: 1-2 months or longer

At: English Clubs

We are looking for English teachers, preferably native English speakers. You need to be willing to reach out to university students, build relationships and share your life - and the Gospel.

### **IN COUNTRY CO-ORDINATOR // LOCATION: GREECE**

Duration: long-term open

ECMI wants to open a new field in Greece and needs a team coordinator who will establish themselves in Greece then help oversee and support ECMI teams whilst also relating to the Greek evangelical churches.

**THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE GOD THROUGH ECM. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE AND MANY OTHERS VISIT: [ECMIRELAND.ORG/GETINVOLVED](http://ECMIRELAND.ORG/GETINVOLVED)**





## Former Inmate honoured for Ministry in Prisons

In September 2016, former convict Antonio Rodrigues Ortiz (52) was awarded the Bronze Medal for 'Penitentiary Social Merit' by a delegate of the Spanish Government in recognition of the ministry he has carried out in the prisons of Andalusia since 1992.

Antonio was sent to prison for armed robbery, drugs and other crimes. 'I was afraid when I discovered I had used the pages of a Gideon New Testament to smoke marijuana,' Antonio says. But there in prison Antonio heard the gospel for the first time and in February 1988 he gave his life to Christ.

ECM Spain's field leader, Francis Arjona, explains;

“ *Ten years ago, we tasked Antonio with developing teams for ministry into the 17 prisons in Andalusia, Spain. There were only 10 people doing prison ministry in 2006, but now all 17 prisons and around 3200 prisoners, receive ministry from 220 chaplains and assistants each week. There have also been 484 baptisms.* ”

God is at work in the prisons of Spain, please remember to pray for Antonio and for the message that he shares.



## “There are more interesting places than Kamencia. Why would anyone come to here?”

In a conversation with a friend recently, I was talking about a group from our home church in Ireland who will join us for 10 days this August. She was curious, wanting to know their ages, their professions, their backgrounds. Then she had two more questions, ones I’ve come to expect over the years. The first reflects the directness of the local culture: “Who pays them to come?”

When I explained that they are friends of ours who give up part of their holidays, pay their own expenses, and contribute towards the costs of the work they’ll be doing, she was silent for a few seconds. “Oh!” she said. “They must be good friends! Why would they come here? There are more interesting places than Kamencia.”

This is one of the reasons we love hosting groups and teams. Inevitably, we’ll get this question over and over. It gives us the opportunity to explain that our friends, and often people we haven’t yet met, come to Kamenica with the desire to serve God and others. They want to let the love of God that they’ve experienced in their own lives overflow into the lives of others. They want the people of Kamenica to meet Jesus and experience his love and salvation.

My friend looked at me, slightly bewildered. I, knowing that I was speaking of something she knows little about,

wondered whether to continue or wait for her response. She broke the silence and asked if overseas work is required of all our church members. After I explained that people want to come because of their love for God and people rather than out of a sense of obligation, she recalled the Bible verse she had seen on the wall of our rented church building: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...and your neighbour as yourself.”

Pray that our witness and work will be marked by sacrificial love for Christ and others. This kind of love is unexpected here. It’s our motivation to continue reaching out in this community, and the reason our hearts delight when a church wants to send a team to work alongside us. A team from last summer has left a lasting impact on the teen girls we work with. Just the other day, the girls told me something that brought me much joy. “Those students didn’t know us but they loved us like we were their sisters.”

*(A team from Carlow will be in Kamenica August 4-13, helping to run a Holiday Bible Club, and doing practical work in a local school.)*

**Primrose Avila**

# God's ways of working

## - Zimbabwe, USA and Claremorris, Co. Mayo

It is amazing how God works things out and puts people together. After several years of being in different asylum seeking hostels in Ireland, and many years of being parted as a family, a Zimbabwean family eventually got a home together in Claremorris, Co. Mayo. The housing officer had organised a house in neighbouring Castlebar, some thirty minutes away, but on the morning they were due to move, a more spacious house became available in Claremorris and they took it. In the hallway of the house was an invitation to come to our church and I'm delighted to say they have been worshipping with us over the last year.



In early 2015, we were put in touch with a couple in America who were thinking about church-planting in the West of Ireland. After due process of coming over to Mayo and visiting with us, they and we, were encouraged to firm up the move and set the wheels in motion. In the summer of 2016, Ann Urich came over for a week, with an estate agent friend of hers, to view properties and sort out a suitable place. It seemed quite a tall order, in just 7 days, to find suitable accommodation at a time when rentals, generally, were few and far between, especially with a dog to consider as well. There was plenty of disappointment and tears on day one, as nothing seemed to show itself and then we eventually got in touch with a kindly landlord living in Dublin, whose house had just been painted, was just the right size and had no problem with dogs! It was the only house that ticked the boxes. Needless to say, the deal was done quickly!

Just in the last 2 months, these two families, from very different backgrounds and places, were used to befriend and invite another Christian couple to our church in Claremorris. Our Zimbabwean friends got to invite the lady, who was babysitting next door to them, whilst our American co-workers met the same couple through visits to the local play park with their children.

*What a great privilege it is to be involved in God's ways of working in His church and amongst His people...He is not far from each one of us!*

BY JONATHAN & NICOLA MCCrackEN



"From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though He is not far from each one of us."

Acts 17 v 26-27







# Seeing light in darkness

*BY JENNY DOUGLAS*

Hi, I am Jenny (pictured above) from the not so little village of Richhill, County Armagh where I am part of Richhill Presbyterian Church. In February this year I took the two and a half hour EasyJet flight across our little continent to live and work in Krakow, Poland until April. My purpose was to support the 'Christ the Saviour Church' plant as they engage the local "Krakowites" with the church.

My role also involved studying the people of the city, to help the church discover how best to reach out to them through practical work such as teaching English, running English nights and simply grabbing coffee with students.

Having visited Krakow previously, I thought I understood something of Poland and its culture, but now as a 19 year old just finished a two and a half month mission stay in Krakow, during my gap year, I am very aware of how truly wrong I was.

On the surface, life in Krakow appears much like our own; people work, go for walks, eat in restaurants and love a good cup of tea (minus the milk, which is totally bizarre I know!!). But living there and forming wonderful relationships with people, it became so evident to me how culturally different Poland is compared to our Island.





Anything outside of the Catholic church is generally considered “a cult” and not Christian. In this context, with this perspective, the church plant’s challenges are very great indeed. God provided glorious opportunities for me to show and speak the gospel of Jesus Christ through teaching English, lecturing students and helping Sasko in the English Club ‘Vox Box.’ We were presenting the gospel of truth and justice, a gospel in which people are saved by grace through faith not works, and a gospel of hope for all people of all nations.

Our misconceptions within Ireland about eastern Europeans, are vast and wide. Many of us have preconceived opinions and speculations, and sadly we show little grace towards people who are not that different to us; be that in language, man-

nerisms or ethnicity.

Our own country has many churches and traditions, yet hundreds of thousands still do not know Christ. Poland is the same. By going out to invest in the church there for a short time; my misconceptions have been extinguished, and God has taught me how much every single person needs the gospel. Although there are 38 ‘churches’ within 1.5 miles of the city centre, Krakow still remains spiritually darkened by unbiblical traditions and fear.

There were and are many challenges in trying to reach Polish people for Christ, but the ultimate encouragement is knowing that the gospel transcends all cultural barriers. When the church proclaims biblical truth, many will come to know Jesus in a real, personal and intimate way.

WOULD YOUR CHURCH GROUP LIKE HELP IN  
DISCOVERING MORE?



# ECM ON TOUR

invite us to your church.

We would love to visit your local church to meet you and tell you more about God's work across Europe.

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

 **028 92 666 044**

 **ecm.ni@ecmi.org**



[ecmireland.org](http://ecmireland.org)

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A similar presentation 'Bringing Europe to Life' has been well received in over 40 churches in the past 4 years. The full presentation lasts 75 minutes but can be shortened if necessary.

This multimedia presentation includes:

- videos
- missionary interviews
- prayer challenge
- short message

