

SUMMER 2021

ECM LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION BRITAIN
NEWSLETTER

EUROPE

IS NOT JUST A HOLIDAY DESTINATION.
IT'S A MISSION FIELD.



ECM BRITAIN

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION BRITAIN
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

KENT ANDERSON

If you only listened to the news, you'd think that God and the church had died out in Europe long ago. But nothing could be further from the truth! Jesus promised, "I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it." He then commanded, "Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples." But what does that mean for ECM today?



"I will build my church": The reason that we are planting and growing churches is that we want to join into what Jesus is already doing. Only Christ can take a diverse group of people who started out as selfish sinners and turn them into a family of love that both gives and forgives. If Jesus is building the church, joining him in that is always the right thing to do.

"Go to the people of all nations...": ECM feels called to reach out to the people in the nations of Europe. Europeans face many kinds of problems: addictions, broken relationships, poverty, worshipping things that only enslave them... So going to needy people and showing them the love of Jesus is always the right thing to do.

"...and make them my disciples": Jesus loves people enough to help them change and grow. Think of how he invested time and teaching in Peter, James, John and his other disciples. But Christ wasn't content with only a handful of followers. Jesus wants people everywhere to grow to be more like him.

That's why making disciples is always the right thing to do, too!

These words of Jesus are at the heart of all we do at ECM. But it's still not easy to plant churches or grow strong disciples in Europe today. So how do we keep going? Because Jesus also promised, **"with God all things are possible"**.

We hope that you are seeing God making things possible as Jesus builds the church where you live, too.

In this issue of ECM LIFE you'll read about Romania, Croatia, Bosnia, Spain and Kosovo. You'll see how a family in crisis was helped, how children are being shown love, how a church is growing and how people came to Christ. All of this is taking place because of the prayers and financial gifts of people like you. Thank you for helping to make our varied ministries possible!



THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT

Romania was growing in popularity as a holiday destination with 13 million visitors in the year before the pandemic.* While breathtakingly beautiful, its spiritual state is complex. Romania might be “one of the world’s most Christian nations by percentage, but it is difficult to see this in society”.**



Gary and Ioana Stoll work primarily with children and young people in Piatra Neamt and the surrounding villages in association with the Christian Baptist Church. But really loving people also means helping them when tragedy strikes, as Gary explains.

2 Dec 2020:

“This afternoon the house of Iuliana, Teodora and Ioana Lalau has been burned down in a suspected arson attack. The girls are regulars at our meetings in Bodesti, and Iuliana is a part of



our Team Training programme. Thankfully nobody was injured. They managed to salvage only a

few items of clothing from the house and everything else has been lost.”

17 Dec:

“The Lalau family have been helped by the local council to find temporary accommodation and even a computer so that the girls can continue school online. The local community and the church have been involved practically in supplying clothing and food. The old house was not insured and shall be demolished in the next few days. The family have asked the Baptist Church in Piatra Neamt to pray and to help in whatever way possible to raise funds to reconstruct the house in the new year. The family are really thankful for the concern, help and prayers of people in the UK and the US.”

19 Jan 2021:

“The family are in temporary accommodation and have been supplied with clothing and food from different sources. We as a church are trying to raise funds to help reconstruct their house. The foundations have recently been laid.”

29 Jan:

“The walls are up! The local community and council have pulled together, along with family members, to construct what you can see in the picture. But local funds have run out, and now it is time for the Church to step in and help out financially. We thank God that through this difficult situation there is an open door for the church to be

a light and share God’s love with people in Bodesti. The project has put us in close contact with many locals, and this is a fantastic opportunity to witness.”



23 Apr:

“The reconstruction of the Lalau family’s house is progressing. We have been able to partner with a

local charity to have the roof covering completed. Going forward the family are really depending on our church to see this project through. We are very thankful to God for the many generous donations we have received.”

9 June:

“The local church has also sacrificed practically in donating clothing, food, material and labour. We will be fundraising again locally and asking people for furniture. 67% of donations have come from overseas and 33% from local people.

“Please pray for the continuation of this work and for the hearts of this family to be open before God. We are encouraged to see that the mum is coming to church on Sundays and her three daughters are involved in the children and youth outreaches.”

But other ministry also continues.

“We are planning three local children’s camps and a youth camp during the summer. Please pray for the hearts and minds of children, young people and leaders to be opened to the love and generosity of God.”



THE GROWING CHURCH THAT FAITH BUILT

Given its beautiful beaches, historical landmarks, gorgeous national parks and delicious food, it's no surprise that almost 20 million tourists enjoyed Croatia during 2019.* But while it may be easy to spot a tourist, finding an evangelical is much harder. Only four people out of every thousand are one.**



Carla Šestak originally came to Croatia from Brazil as a short-termmer to support church planting efforts in and around the beautiful historic city of Varaždin. Nearly a decade later she is still there, working hand-in-hand with local Croatian believers to see God's kingdom grow.

A church is so much more than a building. But in a country where evangelicals are frequently considered a sect, a building can give a church significant credibility. This was the issue facing Baptist Church Emanuel just a few years ago.

Carla tells the background of the church:

"The church started 20 years ago as a small house group. After 5 years, its senior pastor rented a place in the centre of the town and started with offering Biblical counselling, resulting in new contacts and new believers. When church leaders eventually started looking for a building in the town, everything was too expensive. But, four years ago, God led us to the building that we have been renting.

"When the owner of the building told us that he was selling this building, we started to pray. After many discussions, meetings and prayers we decided to step out in faith to buy it! The problem was that we'd only been given a short time frame to collect money for the deposit and this seemed impossible for our small church. We prayed and on the "offering Sunday" we collected exactly enough! When this miracle happened, we understood that God was going in front of us in this project!

One year later: "God is showing us that He is in control! We are living miracle after miracle! The project is helping the church to grow in prayer, unity and self-sacrifice. We have received help from Baptist Alliance, churches and people in USA, France, Switzerland, Germany as well as ECM. The local church donated €17,000. Now we only need €10,000 to pay the last part. "I would like to thank you on behalf of

Carla Šestak in Croatia for your support for the Varaždin church building project. Apart from a small loan from the Baptist Union still being paid off, the money has all been raised and ECM's financial part has been completed. We join with Carla and the church to celebrate this success and thank you all for getting behind the project, particularly in the last few months as we got it over the finishing line."

The new chapter for this church begins and the excitement is tangible:

"Being part of God's plan for our community and buying a building is an indescribable feeling." **Danijela Sakac**

"I know that God will use it to be more and more glorified and make free those who are slaves to sin who will learn in this building to walk in His ways!" **Goran Papak**



"It was wonderful to see the growth of individuals and of our small church! Poor retirees giving out of their poverty, youth working in the summer for it, some took bank loans, others sold personal effects, others took extra jobs.... I am sure that the church needed to experience this to know God more!" **Carla Šestak**

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

By Radovan



Some 9,000 British nationals visited Bosnia every year before the pandemic. But it still bears the scars of the Balkan conflict of the 1990s. “Unexploded landmines remain a real danger” and “terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks.”* As less than 0.1% of the population is evangelical, this is truly a nation in need of Christ’s love.**



After over 20 years of church planting and literature distribution, Radovan is now semi-retired. But he still continues to travel regularly to Bugojno, a town of 30,000+, to teach the Bible and be a disciple maker to its grateful believers.

"Neighbours? Relationships? COVID-19 has certainly reminded us of our need for relationships and to be together.

"We were able to engage with many people when a number of Samaritan's Purse gift boxes arrived for distribution among the families we have contact with in Bugojno, where a small group of us are reaching out with the gospel and studying God's word.

"At the end of April, we had the joy of making the boxes ready and it was truly a 'neighbourly venture' as Ketj (Croatian), Zijo (Muslim) and myself (a Serb/Macedonian) worked together to prepare for the big distribution.

"On Gift Day a good crowd met with us in the church building and listened attentively (despite the excitement) as I spoke of the compassion of the Good Samaritan for his neighbour when he did everything that was needed, and more, to care for the man who had been attacked (Luke 10:33). What a great reminder that the Lord Jesus did all that was needed for us when he died on the cross to take all our punishments.

"You can see the anticipation of the children and the faces of the families as they received their boxes. The gift of the word of God went out with each box in the form of a children's book of Bible stories. One lady was given enough for all of her seven children."



- Praise God for these boxes and the compassion of the Samaritan's Purse donors in bringing them to Bosnia. Thank Him for this opportunity to show the love of Christ and for the joy that this brings to the families who receive them!
- Pray that the word of God, shared on distribution day, will sink deep into hearts and bear fruit. Pray also that both the adults and children will read the children's Bible booklet, be curious to know more, and ask questions of those at the church about Jesus.
- Pray for God to move in the hearts of the people of Bugojno and to protect and encourage those who want to know more and seek to follow Jesus.
- And finally, please ask God to raise up more mature Christian leaders and workers to help us share the message with our neighbours.



PERSON TO PERSON

By Terry and Christine Miller



Spain is by far the most popular destination for British tourists, with more than 18 million visiting there during 2019*. With sunshine, tapas, history, wine and more, it's easy to understand the attraction. But despite an increase in the pace of church planting, only one in 100 Spaniards is an evangelical.**



Terry and Christine Miller live and minister within the ancient city walls of Córdoba. Their passion is introducing Jesus to secular Spaniards who would probably never enter any type of church.

"The summer season has arrived in Córdoba. Shorts are now out of winter storage and fans are blasting out cooler air. This week we get into the late 30's knowing we have at least 10 or 15 degrees still to go! With the reduced restriction and the mentality of summer holidays being around the corner, it is even more evident the desperation to get away from life in the city. Over the summer we plan to be spending a lot more time in the countryside taking advantage of the great desire people have to escape the "masked" existence in the city.

"This last week Christine revised the way in which the English exchange (a gathering where people can practice their English) meets, moving to alternating between it being in person and being via zoom. Just this week via zoom one of the discussions was about why we create art. It was amazing to watch people struggling to identify a real reason as there was no obvious need for it. Eventually somebody said it was in our DNA, which created a beautiful opportunity to explain about us being made in the image of a creator God and that's why we have an innate desire to be like him; just as children often do things like their parents without always realising. Whilst not a call for people to put their faith in Jesus at that moment, these opportunities are slowly providing an understanding of life from God's perspective and people are being able to see how, without God as part of the answers, their life doesn't make sense.

"...people are being able to see how, without God as part of the answers, their life doesn't make sense."

"Terry has been to two meetings with some local men to look at the Bible with them. The first was quite positive and focused solely on the Bible passage. The second was more complicated as it was clear that many of them were filtering everything they read in the Bible through a pre-conceived theological grid of salvation by receiving the sacraments and doing good works. It should be a challenge to all of us to not read scripture with a fixed idea of what it will tell us.

"Last week as the restrictions had lessened to a limit of ten people, we returned to our "tapas on the terrace" albeit with a reduced group. This Sunday we are meeting as the church family in the countryside and inviting friends for a low key chance for testimony in relating with one another, as we're currently allowed up to 30 people together in that context."

There are so many creative ways to keep introducing Jesus and discipling believers, whatever challenges come along. How are you doing it where you are?



MORE COME TO CHRIST IN KOSOVO



“Kosovo is a fascinating land at the heart of the Balkans rewarding visitors with welcoming smiles, charming mountain towns, incredible hiking opportunities and 13th-century domed Serbian monasteries brushed in medieval art,” according to Lonelyplanet.com. But today 80% of the population is Muslim and there are only about 35 evangelical churches in the entire country.*

Gani and Adile Smolica have been part of ECM since soon after the fall of the iron curtain. In more recent years they have been church planting in Kosovo’s fourth largest city of Peja, doing evangelism, discipleship, preaching, leadership development and literature distribution.

But have they managed to continue seeing success despite the pandemic?

A few months ago Gani shared, “Praise God for the great Easter Service. The room was full, with Covid measures in place. Two ladies accepted Jesus publicly as their God and Saviour. Immediately after that, the meetings have been closed and we are meeting online. Pray for the coming weeks to go back to meetings in the premises.”

A few weeks after that Gani wrote: “We are glad to be back and continue our ministry at the church. We are planning to do more

visits in the second week of June, now that COVID restrictions have loosened a bit. Pray for those we are going to visit as most of them are not believers. Pray for the youth ministry that we are hoping will continue during the summer months too! Pray for the plan we have to reactivate men’s and women’s meetings and the food parcel distribution.”

Praise God that the church across Kosovo has grown from only around 80 believers in the late 1990s to more than 2,000 today!*



THANKS TO YOU!

Last year many charities were struggling to survive as donations dropped during the pandemic — but ECM Britain did not! You, our faithful supporters, continued to sacrificially provide for our workers and projects across the continent.

As a result, not a single missionary returned home due to financial reasons. Thank you!

That meant that our workers could remain where they are, sharing the gospel and discipling people right through the challenges of COVID-19. Because of your

faithful help, more people like the ladies in the previous article could come to Christ.

That's why we want to show how the Lord provided during 2020 by sharing the pie charts below. Each is a testimony to your steadfast commitment to seeing Europeans have the opportunity to meet and grow in Jesus.

*A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will
be refreshed.*

Proverbs 11.25

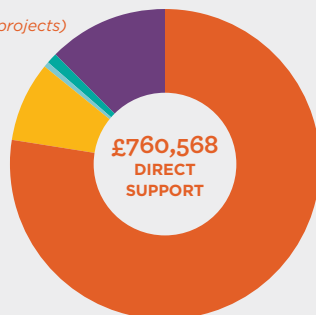
2020 Income

- **Mission Donations**
£824,251
- **Legacy Income**
£65,390
- **Other**
£11,898



2020 Expenditure

- **Direct Support**
(Missionaries and projects)
£760,568
- **Missionary Support Service**
£80,178
- **Governance**
£6,032
- **Fundraising and promotions**
£11,670
- **Administration and Office**
£120,268



GENERATION TO GENERATION



We have reached a significant moment in ECM's history, with the recent calling to glory of the Reverend John Cecil Young. Cecil was one of the last people to know ECM's founder Ganz Raud. Here are some brief highlights from his lifetime of faithful ministry.

After receiving his Diploma of Ordination at a Bible College in Wales, Cecil was accepted into the European Christian Mission and left for Paris. In 1951 he married Catherine who joined him in full-time missionary work.

In addition to starting a house church in Paris, Cecil was often engaged in Tent Evangelism outreach in northern French towns. At one point he supported visiting Billy Graham teams. In the early 1960s he planted a small chapel on their house grounds. This small congregation grew and continues to this day, now in a purpose-built church building.

In 1968 Cecil moved to Kent to serve as British Director of the ECM. He travelled extensively to places as diverse as Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia and South Africa.

In 1973 he took over the running of Heightside, the Christian Conference Centre in Rossendale. In 1980, he became pastor of in Merseyside, Stuart Road Baptist. He also rejoined the Billy Graham team for Mission England in 1984.

There isn't room to say everything else Cecil did. But while Ganz Raud planted ECM ministry in Europe, Cecil Young watered it as it grew. May we continue to care for it so that it can bear fruit long into the future.

*Even when I am old and grey,
O God, do not abandon me, until I
tell the next generation about your
strength, and those coming after me
about your power.*

Psalm 71.18



A LASTING LEGACY

Since the time of our founder, Ganz Raud, the relay torch of ECM's ministry has been passed through the generations. Please will you help to keep it going by praying, giving or serving with us?

This October many UK charities will be promoting legacy giving as a vital part of maintaining their work long-term. If you haven't yet considered your lasting legacy, now could be a good opportunity.

We promise that any gift bequeathed to us will be well used to keep sharing the love of Christ in Europe. If you have any specific wishes to restrict how a gift is used, please contact us first so we can plan together.

Thank you for whatever you do for God's Kingdom — past, present or future!

GIVING TO ECM BRITAIN

Name:

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please send me:

- ☐ ECM Life (2-3 times a year) ☐ post ☐ email
☐ ECM's monthly prayer diary ☐ post ☐ email

SINGLE GIFT DONATION

☐ £5 ☐ £15 ☐ £30 ☐ £50 Other £

☐ For use where most needed:

☐ Towards the work of:

☐ I enclose a cheque/charity voucher payable to **ECM Britain**

☐ I do not require an acknowledgement.

You can also donate by card online
www.ecmbritain.org/donate

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GIFT AID DECLARATION

I would like you to Gift Aid my donation and

☐ I have previously given ECM Britain a Gift Aid Declaration **OR**

☐ I wish European Christian Mission Britain to reclaim tax on any gift I have given in the last 4 years from the date below and from now on. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and 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 or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 and that I will let the charity know if any of the details on this declaration change.

Full name: 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 £

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 Britain**

Pay this sum to: European Christian Mission Britain

A/C: 03056715 Sort Code: 30 96 09

Lloyds TSB, George Row, Northampton, NN1 1DJ

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 Britain in my will.

☐ I would like to consider including ECM in my will, please tell me more.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

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Full name: **Date:**



PRAYER



Thanks for you!

"I thank my God every time I remember you. ...I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now..."

Philippians 1.3-5 (NIV)

Please pray for us!

"Be sure to pray that God will make a way for us to spread his message and explain the mystery about Christ.... Please pray that I will make the message as clear as possible."

Colossians 4.3-4 (CEV)



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