

AUTUMN 2024

ECM LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION BRITAIN
NEWSLETTER



WHY EUROPE?
**BECAUSE GOD IS
AT WORK THERE**

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

Europe doesn't look like it needs more churches. Our skylines are full of steeples, our art museums are full of paintings of the "Madonna and Child," and events like weddings and funerals are still held in churches.

However, if you go into many of these churches you will find them empty. Attendance levels in traditional denominations like the Catholic Church and the Church of England have declined for decades. Despite Europe's Christian heritage, only 2 1/2 out of every 100 Europeans are now evangelical Christian.

At the same time, God is at work! To quote Jim Memory's article later in this magazine:

- In France "on average, one church (has been) planted every seven days or so over the last ten years".
- "There are more Chinese Evangelical Churches in Italy than the total number of Evangelical Churches in the neighbouring country of Slovenia."

We want to join God in taking Jesus to the peoples of Europe. Why? Because He wants everyone to have the chance to meet His Son. What could be more important than bringing eternal life (and abundant life now) to those trapped in anxiety, fear and loneliness?

In this issue you'll hear from a variety of people, including missionaries, a prayer supporter and a church leader, about why they see reaching Europe as so important. If you are reading this, you share our concern for this continent. Thank you for all you do to spread the gospel across Europe — we value your prayers, your financial help, your encouragement and whatever else you do!

We want to see a Europe that is full of churches, that are full of people, that are full of Jesus. Do you?



WHY GO TO EUROPE?

ECM workers explain how God led them to Spain, France and Portugal

Why France?



Sarah Winterburn, France

Hello! My name is Sarah, married to Jack, mum to Benjamin, from the South East of England, but lived 9 years in Durham.

Why France? France is a secular country. What does that mean? There isn't religious education in school, you can't wear obvious religious symbols in spaces linked to the

government (e.g. parliament, schools) and most people know very little about Jesus. As one example, in the city in which we are serving there are 30,000 students (or thereabouts) and about 15 people in the student Christian union.

But God is on the move, as everywhere, calling people back to himself. A couple of weekends ago, at a youth weekend away, three of the young people there gave their lives to Jesus.

The church here needs encouraging – there are indeed people 'out there' who are hungry for God, whether or not they know who they are looking for.

So why did we go? I first encountered how secular France is while on a French exchange at age 16 and also developed a love for the French language. My husband Jack had a heart for overseas missions having done many short-term trips to Eastern Europe. Through prayer, discussions with wise people and visits, it became clear that God had work planned for us to do in France.



Only 1% of people in France are evangelical Christians.

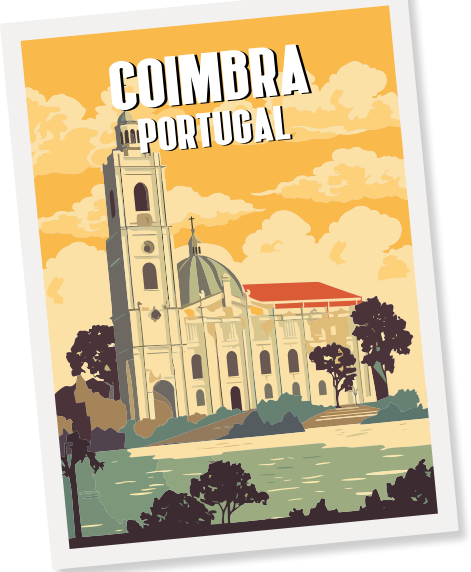
Why Portugal?



Steve and Lydia Cockram, Portugal

When we were first investigating the possibility of long-term mission for our lives, we began by speaking to organisations that worked in Latin America. At first, we only considered Europe as a sort of due-diligence – to make sure we were being thorough in our planning to ultimately go to Latin America. But as we properly got to learn about the current state of the church here in mainland Europe, in particular Portugal, God started to move our perspective.

The evangelical church here is tiny and under-resourced (financially and also in terms of training, support, etc). One of the unique challenges the church in Portugal faces is a quickly rising average age of church leaders. We work in a local church, and we have the amazing privilege and opportunity to invest deeply in the young people. We get to see them grow and



mature, particularly in their faith. We've introduced a one-to-one discipleship programme, something very common in our contexts in the UK but not as much here. We've been training and enabling other people to do this as well.

We believe that both the church in Portugal and Portugal as a nation need more of this, intentional Jesus-focused discipleship. Young adults with a mature faith, an understanding of how to discern the Holy Spirit's prompting and with a vision to see revival come to Portugal.



Only 3% of people in Portugal are evangelical Christians.



Why Europe?



Jules Mercer-Wilson, Spain

Why Europe for me? An act of obedience!

The Potter said to this lump of clay, "My plan for you is Europe." I had followed Him to Africa and Latin America, now to Europe. I could be anywhere in the world,

but I want to do the will of the Father, and He said "Europe!"

Why Europe for them? The need!

Everyone of us is broken. We live in a broken world, and we struggle to make sense of it. In many countries people see their need for a higher power due to a lack of resources, or lack of freedom. In Europe, we provide material substitutes for our core needs, masking our spiritual need to look to God to provide, yet we remain broken and unsatisfied. There is a need to show that Jesus is with us in our brokenness. He says, "Come as you are and I will restore you"; to Him, to yourself and to others. He rewrites our definitions: weak becomes strong in Him; being rich becomes about spiritual wealth rather than material possessions; success means to be still, lie in green pastures and get to know Him and His love. It's the answer people are looking for, but often they are unaware that they are searching for the Kingdom they were designed for.

Why Europe for the world? The potential!

Europe now includes people of all nations. If we reach them, they can reach their home nation in a culturally relevant way. Those living in Europe also have a wealth of cultural experiences, education and finances that can be invested in building God's Kingdom here on earth, making disciples of all nations.

Do you want to go? Find out more at www.ecmbritain.org

WHY IS EUROPE IMPORTANT?



Here's why we should never give up on Europe



Jim Memory, Co-Regional Director for Lausanne Europe

When you think of revival today, do you think of Europe? We know that God is doing amazing things in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but why don't we hear about that in Europe?

Europe today is often spoken of as "the Secular Continent". Mission mobilisation to Europe is predicated on the tiny percentage of Evangelical Christians. And conferences often include the unchallenged affirmation that Europe is post-Christian and in need of re-evangelisation.

But have we ever stopped to consider if these presuppositions are actually true?

Rather than holding to our eschatological hope demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when it comes to Europe, we have internalised an eschatology of despair.



Yet, out of the spotlight, an extraordinary re-evangelisation of Europe is underway.

I think we can identify three primary dimensions of that re-evangelisation and you can read much more about this in my Europe 2021 report (www.ecmbritain.org/resources).

1. Church planting movements

In almost every European country, there is an acceleration in the number of new churches being planted. Whether that is the result of denominational initiatives, through mission agencies like ECM, individuals, national church planting platforms, or ministries that are facilitating church planting processes, new Christian communities are sprouting up almost everywhere you look.

Just one example: the vision of the CNEF (National Council of French Evangelicals) "1 pour 10,000", meaning one evangelical church for every 10,000 people, has spurred on church planting in France and has seen, on average, one church planted every seven days or so over the last ten years.





2. Diaspora churches

We are living in the age of World Christianity. The centre of gravity of the world church has shifted from Europe to the Majority World. Yet over the last fifty years, millions of Majority World Christians have come to Europe and this has changed the face of European Christianity.

Latin American migrants have planted thousands of churches in Spain, Portugal and beyond. African-initiated Pentecostal churches number in the thousands in Britain alone. And Asian Christians have been no less industrious. There are more Chinese Evangelical Churches in Italy (31) than the total number of Evangelical Churches in the neighbouring country of Slovenia.



3. Next Generation

Amazing things are happening amongst Europe's youth and again I point you to the Europe 2021 report to read more about that. Here I would like to talk more broadly about Europe's future.

What will Europe look like in 2050, when those who are born today are in their early adulthood? Well the demographics of Europe's tomorrow are already pretty certain, because birthrates across Europe over the last twenty five years have collapsed. Some Mediterranean countries now have rates that are among the lowest in the world. Low birthrates are combined with a second demographic reality: a substantially larger older generation. Europe's Old Age Dependency Ratio, the number of people aged 65+ per 100 people of working age, is expected to rise from around 30 in 2015 to between 50 and 60, and in the case of Italy and Spain, to between 70 and 80, by 2050



(Source Eurostat 2022). In other words, for every five working people in Spain in 2050 there will be four pensioners.

Last week, I sat down in church next to an elderly man I hadn't seen before. Tony is a widower. His wife died just 18 months ago. He told his children he didn't want to be a burden and he was very happy to go to an old people's home. Tony used to be a Baptist minister, and now in the old people's home, he has a queue of people waiting to visit him. The door to his room is always open and spiritually needy old people are seeking him out. *"I have never had such a fruitful time in my ministry as I do now"*, he said. Tony is 85 years old.

In tomorrow's Europe there will be more needy old people than in all its history. Lonely people, people who have lost hope, people living with fear, people who need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. What an opportunity God has set before us.

God has not given up on Europe. It may be out of the spotlight but church planting is accelerating, diaspora churches are everywhere, and in the next generation, young and old will have unprecedented gospel opportunity. And we know how the story ends: with every nation represented before the throne (Revelation 7:9).

Why Europe? Because God is working in Europe. So let's change the story we are telling about mission in Europe. Let's stop talking about Europe being post-Christian. Europe is not post-Christian. It is pre-revival.

Jim will be teaching on "Mission in Europe" at All Nations Christian College 22-25 April 2025 (www.allnations.ac.uk)

RESPONSE SLIP



I want to help multiply ministry in Europe

PLEASE SEND ME

- ☐ ECM Life Magazine
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- ☐ ECM Britain Monthly Prayer Diary
- ☐ post ☐ email
- ☐ ECM Britain Legacy Leaflet
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- ☐ For use where most needed:
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I have donated:

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Bank name: _____

Bank address: _____

Postcode: _____

Account name: _____

Account no:

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Please deduct £ _____

from my account on / /

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

Pay this sum to: European Christian Mission Britain

A/C: 03056715 **Sort Code:** 30-96-09

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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.

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I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GOING

If God has been guiding you to consider serving Him in Europe, please get in touch for a conversation!

Explore where we work and the opportunities available at:
ecmbritain.org/long-term or ecmbritain.org/short-term

CONTACT US:

online at ecmbritain.org/get-started

by email at personnel@ecmi.org and we will get in touch with you by completing the information below and returning it to us

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Country of interest: _____

Length of service: ☐ less than 1 year; ☐ 1-2 years; ☐ 3 years; ☐ 3+ years; ☐ not sure

Type of ministry desired: _____

By submitting your personal data via this form, you agree that ECM may use your data in accordance with the ECM Privacy Statement (find at ecmbritain.org/privacy-statement)

WHY PRAY FOR EUROPE?

Here's why one ECM supporter takes the time to pray regularly for Europe



Vreni Briggs, ECM prayer supporter

Why Europe? Being a citizen of two European countries, this continent is very much on my heart, so I pray for it.

The secularisation of Western Europe saddens me greatly and I want to see this change back to being God-fearing countries. *"In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. In your anger, remember your mercy."* Habakkuk 3: (NLT)

There have been prophecies of revival spreading once again across Europe, I keep asking God to bring these about. I remember being in a very memorable prayer meeting some years back when we prayed for Europe. The Holy Spirit was moving among us in a powerful and mighty way, many visions were shared, all in the same vein, of how God wants to revive Europe again (this is where I shout: *"Come on, Jesus, do it again!"*)

When I don't know how to pray I ask the Holy Spirit for help.

Praying for Israel is also part of my prayers for Europe — Gen. 12:3: *"I will bless those who bless you"*.

God answers prayer across geographical boundaries. A person in another European country knew Jesus as her personal Saviour, but was a bit afraid of the Holy Spirit. I have been praying for her for nearly 40 years. She recently told me that she was getting to know the work of the Holy Spirit in her own life! Such a wonderful answer to prayer! Keep praying!

Sign up for our free monthly Prayer Diary on the response form on page 7.

WHY SEND TO EUROPE?

Here's why one church sends and supports missionary workers in "sophisticated, well-off Europe"



Debbie Lyden, Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church

What is your idea of a "proper" missionary? Shouldn't they be under a palm tree wearing a pith helmet teaching the Bible? So why would we send and support missionary workers to sophisticated, well-off Europe?

There are other questions as well. Why would we send anyone anywhere else whilst the church is in decline in our own nation and our own people are struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis (my church foodbank now gives out more food bags in a week than we did in the whole of 2012). Also, if we are going to send missionaries, shouldn't we be prioritising more economically vulnerable nations in the Global South, and those nations at the top of the World Watch List¹ where Christians face the most persecution (of which only one of the top 50 for 2024 is in Europe — Turkey, which comes in at number 50).

Why Europe when our own nation is struggling?

Yes, economically we are struggling more as a nation than in recent decades. However this is a worldwide trend, and we are not the worst affected (ECM workers in Ukraine, for example, are serving a nation that is dealing with this alongside a war that is significantly reducing their ability to produce food as well as to import goods). This does not mean we do not seek to serve those at home. The two are not mutually exclusive. It is important as Christians who are called to be Jesus'

Crisis:	Kingdom solution:	How ECM workers are involved:
Migrant Crisis	Hospitality	Suzi and Noah Bartlett (Belfast) work with asylum seekers and refugees
Conflict Crisis	Restoration and peace	The Irpin Church (Ukraine) serves their city while preaching Jesus in words and deeds to a people in pain
Mental Health Crisis	Hope	Julia Mercer-Wilson (Spain) and the 'Acueducto' team partner with Healing Care Ministries to bring spiritual healing
Loneliness Crisis	Community	Delyth Sutton (Spain) and the Good Samaritan Association offer care to those on the margins of society
Spiritual Crisis	Truth and good news	David and Linda James (Austria) for years connected with young people offering an alternative to alcohol by engaging in discussions about life and faith
Environmental Crisis	Good stewards	Mike and Daveen Wilson (Portugal) seek to model a sustainable way of life by caring well for the land God has given them

witnesses in Jerusalem (our towns), Judea and Samaria (our and neighbouring regions), and to the ends of the earth² that we maintain a *global* perspective (combining the importance of our local and global identities and responsibilities).

Similarly, as the church declines in the UK, other European nations are experiencing the same trajectory. Whilst 70% of British young people say they have "no religion", that was only the fifth highest percentage, behind the Netherlands on 72%, Sweden on 75%, Estonia on 80% and Czechia on 91%.³ It is also worth noting that even if 99% of a nation professed to be practicing Christians, we follow a God that places the remaining 1% at the top of his priorities.

Why Europe when other parts of the world are struggling more?

Whilst there are great needs in the

Global South, there are also significant opportunities for us as the church in Europe. I believe we are being called to be Jesus' hands and feet in responding to this. Here are 6 crises currently plaguing Europe — and the alternative values God's Kingdom offers, which ECM workers are seeking to offer across the continent.

Why Europe?

We support and send workers because through them we are able to partner in building God's Kingdom throughout Europe as we seek to share Jesus' love with a world in crisis.

Debbie Lyden is Discipleship Team Leader at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church, which supports ECM workers in Portugal and Spain. She is also a Trustee of ECM Britain.



HOW YOUR GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

You are making exciting projects possible across Europe. Here's a report from a ministry in Spain receiving funding from the UK.



B.J. Whitaker, Spain

In the hills of Guadalajara, Spain, 67 men came together for our first ever Wild at Heart men's retreat. And the result was WOW! While I could tell you about some of the aspects of the masculine soul and journey that we covered in the sessions, or some of the activities they enjoyed during free time, I think it's better for you to hear from some of the men themselves:

"I thought I was coming to learn more about adventure, but it turned out that God wanted to heal me deeply first."

"Through this retreat God saved me and my family. I'd been living a lie that was destined to destroy my life, my family and my ministry, but God now has me on the path to recovery and restoration."

"I thought I knew this stuff already, but God's father-heart broke through my arrogance, led me to repentance and brought me even deeper into His heart."

"Since the retreat, I've been intentionally spending at least an hour a day with my young son, and I am loving it."

*"I don't know what you did in the retreat, but thank you, thank you, thank you — my husband isn't the same."
(from a thankful wife)*

We are deeply grateful for the people who have supported us financially to get this necessary ministry off the ground, as well as for the countless people who have been praying with us and for us during the past year. God is clearly on the move to restore and strengthen men's hearts here in Spain.



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