

ecm outreach

newsletter of the european christian mission

www.ecmbritain.org

LOVING EUROPE

TOGETHER



Inside...

Stories of God at work in Bulgaria, Portugal, Serbia and beyond

WE WANT TO SEE...

more people reaching UP to
receive Jesus' amazing love



more people
reaching OUT
to share Jesus'
love with those
in need



more people living IN caring
communities that show
Jesus' love



more organisations
working
TOGETHER
to love Europe
for Jesus



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GOD LOVES EUROPE TOO

THANKS FOR JOINING IN

From the British Director

Dear friends

When I read about God's love in the Bible it's clear that He wants the message of Jesus' love to be taken to all people in all nations. This includes those at the ends of the earth, but also those nearer at hand in Europe – our own Judea and Samaria.

How is this love usually expressed? Through real people. Through people who have experienced the love of Jesus and want others to meet him too. People ready to talk about His love as well as show it in practical ways. Within ECM these are people who many of you have faithfully prayed for and financially supported for many years.

In this issue we've asked a number of our workers to explain why they love Europe, its people, and their ministries to them. We hope you'll spot ECM workers you know and be encouraged as you remember that they couldn't be where they are, doing what they do, without people like you.

So while it may be their voices that fill much of this magazine, they are in many ways just echoes of you. **YOUR love for God moved you to generously give your time and money so that THEY can take the gospel to those who still need to meet Jesus.** You are together in this important gospel task.

Jesus promised in Matthew 10.42, "if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded." You have given much and I am sure you will receive a rich reward.

Stay up to date on what's going on in ministry across Europe with Twitter and Facebook for quick updates, YouTube for short videos, and of course ongoing news and more is always available on our website.

See you online!



Thank you.

Kent Anderson,
British Director





Projects News

EUROPE IN FOCUS

A glimpse of God at work across Europe today

Finally I
feel loved!

"My name is Annie. I've grown up in a Christian home, but for various reasons I felt very discouraged in life. I had no true friends, hated the way I looked, and that made me feel totally lost and confused!

"I knew some teenagers from a local church, but we weren't really close. Then one of them said, 'You really need to come to this teen camp!' (which was run by New Hope Bulgaria)

"The entire camp experience was one surprise after another. But the most important element was how the volunteers cared for us and really wanted to spend time with us. They shared personal stories of transformation and deliverance, and stories of victory in Jesus Christ!

I could really see Jesus in the way the volunteers on camp treated us.

"I have never felt so special, unique and loved in the eyes of God! We all came back changed! Today, we grow together in our faith, we minister to others in the city and meet every week for fellowship and Bible Study."

God's love goes online

Today's children don't remember a time without smart phones and tablets. That's why the launch of the *Bible App for Kids* is so important for Bulgaria.

For more than 15 years New Hope Bulgaria has invested its time and gifts in providing valuable resources for evangelism and discipleship for children and youth. After six months of hard work on contextualisation, they have now also launched the *Bible App for Kids* (created by OneHope and YouVersion) in Bulgaria.

Pray with us that many thousands of children will come to meet Jesus by downloading and journeying through the *Bible App for Kids* and its interactive stories about the great heroes of the Bible.

The *Bible App for Kids* is also available on Google Play and App Store in English. Why not take a look?



Missionary honoured as Gloucester “Mayor”

In a tradition dating back to the time of King Charles II, Lithuanian ECM worker Rita Rimkiene was inaugurated as Mock Mayor for a year in recognition of her work creating a place for new people coming to Gloucester.

Since moving to Gloucester in 2004, Rita has helped found the World Cafe community.

“Hospitality is a very important aspect of our lives and through sharing our lives we can make difference,” Rita said. “The World Cafe is not something you will find just walking on the street. It is created in people’s homes as well. We meet twice a month to celebrate, to help each other, listen, laugh and cry. World Cafe is more than just supporting refugees and asylum seekers or migrants. It is about making friends with people different from ourselves and embracing the difference that can change us from within.”

The Mock Mayor is selected by a committee to honour someone’s work in supporting the local community.

Adapted from a GloucestershireLive article



NewsBite

Giving love a home:

When Branko and Rada Tihojević moved to Zaječar, Serbia, in 2005 there were no known Christians living in the city of 50,000 people. This past October, after years of meeting as a house church in their home, they began services in the first building in eastern Serbia actually owned by a local church. Their building was constructed in a style similar to an Eastern Orthodox chapel but then sat unsold for ten years. When Branko and Rada purchased the building, the former owners were excited and said, “Now we know why we built such a specific kind of building.” Generous friends from evangelical churches helped provide funds for this new centre for worship and outreach.



Loving young people:

“Before we left for Austria, we had little experience of youth work. Soon after arriving, we were asked to take on a church youth group. At first we laughed. Then we prayed. Then we said yes. We came to love the young people. We loved teaching and discipling them. We then had the joy of encouraging and assisting many of them into ministry – some in Austria, one is a missionary to indigenous tribes in Brazil, three have joined ECM! Now in their 20s and 30s, we love the lasting relationships with them and their families.” – David and Linda James



LOVING EUROPE

A local look at European life and ministry

British churches and Christians have generously sent and supported people in ministry across our continent. Thank you! We thought you might be wondering:

“What does it feel like to live in a country like France or Romania or Austria?” So we asked them for you – look out for answers from people you know!



Loving hospitality in Belgium

One of the things we love about Belgian culture is *gezelligheid*. There's no good translation for this word in English, but loosely translated it means a sense of warmth, cosiness and togetherness. So a party with close friends could be *gezellig*, or a house or cafe could have a *gezellig* atmosphere or a family day out could equally be *gezellig*. As a family we love to create a *gezellig* atmosphere, and to invite friends to share the *gezelligheid* with us; it's a wonderful expression of Christian hospitality. Had Jesus spoken Dutch, I think he would have loved it too!

David and Holly

Loving friends in France

The *apéritif* is a great French invention and a great way of making new friends. Some of those friendships have proved lasting over the 27 years we have been in France, despite moving several times. One such friendship was with Mr W. One year we gave him a Bible calendar and the following year he asked for another. We have continued to send him one ever since and to visit him occasionally when in the area. Recently his daughter rang to tell us that he was dying (aged 99!) and that it would be good if we could speak to him. We were able to reassure him of Christ's love and encourage him to keep trusting Jesus.

Steve and Rosemary Cox



TOGETHER



Loving the music of Albania

Albania. *Shqipëria* – Land of Eagles. Yes! But a land of music too: traditional music for family celebrations; coffees and conversation over Albanian dance tracks. Unexpected music: a sunny Sunday morning, the radio turned up so loud in a home the whole lane hears it. Before long neighbours are out on their balconies, sharing news, laughing. I love that music creates a 'place' for connecting, for relationship. But learning to go where the music is has taken time – and often I long for quiet spaces, a gentle exchange of words without straining to hear, a moment to pray quietly with someone. What an amazing God we have who hears even the thoughts of our hearts – no matter where we are or which song is playing.

Chris and Sarah Downing



Loving community in Austria

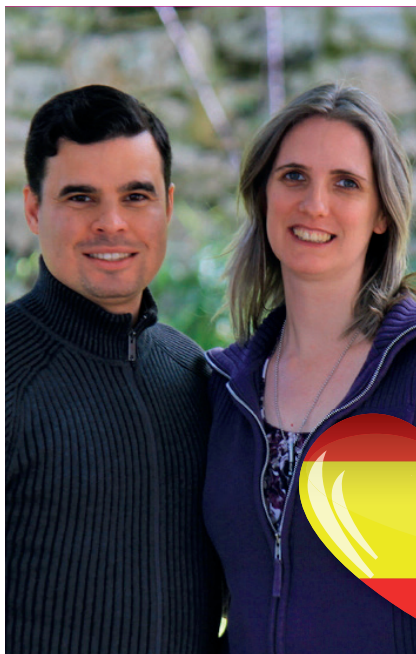
When the Lord called us to Austria over 20 years ago, I don't think either of us could have imagined the incredibly rich and varied life He would give us here. The stunning beauty of mountains and lakes are a constant reminder of His power and artistry, the spiritual darkness around us a reminder of why His Son had to die to set us free. It can take a very long time to win the trust and friendship of the Austrians around us, but once won their friendship is faithful and generous. In an age of increasing rootlessness, I deeply appreciate the still strong sense of community and tradition in the small towns and villages. Though at times a hurdle to people being open to the gospel in a new way, the gospel does indeed mean community and it's a privilege to be used to build God's communities in this spiritually needy country.

David and Linda James

Loving the nations in Spain

We love the beauty of northern Spain, in particular the greenness. The climate reminds of us of the UK! But although the weather is colder than the South, the hearts of the people are not. Many Galicians emigrated in the past and so they are generally fairly receptive to welcoming foreigners amongst them. This is our home. We enjoy eating octopus and other seafood, but more than the food, we love the time of fellowship that happens over meals. In our church we have people from many nations and we also share with people from all around the world on the Camino de Santiago pilgrim route. In that sense, we take the gospel to the nations. But we also long to see more of these hospitable Galicians responding to the invitation to enter into God's kingdom.

Lemuel and Rachel Feliciano



Loving culture in Slovenia

I love that Slovenia is the meeting point of Eastern and Western Europe. The culture here embraces aspects from all its neighbouring countries: Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia, and mixes them together to produce something uniquely Slovene. I love that I can sit for hours in a coffee shop either reading, doing language homework

or meeting people. The café culture allows me to meet people for one-to-ones or Bible studies on neutral ground and we can spend as long as we need to talking and praying together. I also love that Slovenia is such a beautiful country. The view of hills and mountains I have from my window as I prepare for Bible studies always reminds me of the might and majesty of God. The work can be slow and hard, but I know that the God who made the mountains can move them and change the lives of Slovenes.

Sarah Deacon



We absolutely love the delightful country of Croatia, where God is allowing us to serve.



Loving relating in Spain

Love Spain? There are reasons for and against... try mentioning Gibraltar in a bar for a warm reception! Still, holiday brochures, golf trips, and tapas bars apart, actually living all our family life here as missionaries has been an enormous privilege.

People and relationships are important to most Spaniards, so broken relationships are catastrophes, even more so in the small towns in which we work. The good news then about restoring a relationship with God and your neighbour is vitally important for an increasingly post-Christian population. We love being with people in whom the Spirit of God is at work. We love the freedom to share Christ with those who have questions about who He really is. Our hope for Spain is that so many more may turn to Christ and lead others to love Him too.

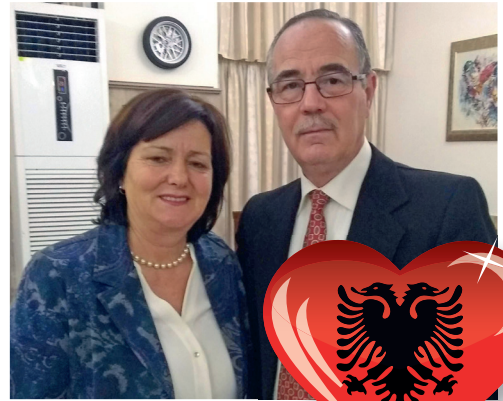
Peter and Kate Knowlson



Loving reaching out in Croatia

We absolutely love the delightful country of Croatia, where God is allowing us to serve. The stunning beauty of the countryside and coast is breath-taking. We also love how God is helping Tabita reach out to many young children who would never otherwise hear the gospel. We also love the opportunity that Stephen has to encourage Croatian pastors and churches from all over Croatia in church planting and evangelism with the Lausanne Network in Croatia. We are also privileged to be involved in three church plants in the Zagreb area and so encouraged that our three children have been so integrated in the Croatian church youth ministries and growing in the Lord.

Stephen and Tabita Bell



Loving needy Albania

Albania, a place of the Eagles, is a rare country that God has blessed. But the people here are living under sin and are destroying this country. I am from Albania and I love my country. The Lord has called me to share the gospel, to raise up His Church, and to merge spiritual beauty with the beauty of nature. Everything is the creation of God. My wife Tatiana and I, and all our family, are blessed to serve Him here.

Berti and Tatiana Dosti

Loving people in Romania



Romania is a wonderful country to visit. It has everything: beaches, mountains, ski resorts, history, vibrant cities, nature, hot summers, snowy winters, with restaurants and accommodation at low cost compared to the UK. But we love to live in Romania, amongst the Romanian people, who are very warm and hospitable.

We love being a part of the church family in Romania, a people who clearly love and depend on God, working tirelessly to make Him known. We love the children in Romania who are so appreciative of small things and make a big effort to come and learn about Jesus. We love the young people who are engaging in God's mission together with us. We love also the lost people in Romania, just as God does and sent His Son for them.

Gary and Ioana Stoll

Loving multicultural Netherlands

We love the multicultural life in the Netherlands and surprising connections. A Zimbabwean entrepreneur and psychologist who lives with her Dutch husband and three children in Namibia is taking a postgraduate course here at Maastricht University. For weeks she had been thinking about her relationship with the Lord. On arrival in the city last autumn she found All Saints Anglican Church on the web and as she was walking towards the church, for the first time, she heard Roland playing the hymn 'In Christ Alone' through the open window. She says that

precisely at that moment she felt ready to be baptised and on entering the church enjoyed a very warm welcome which helped as well and contemporary liturgy which enabled her to truly worship God. Her husband and children (who attend a German speaking school) flew over from Africa for Christmas and she was baptised on Christmas Eve here. Oh, and the minister of the church originally comes from New Zealand and knows some of our ECM colleagues through CMS. Oh yes – and the Dutch husband is the Honorary Consul in Namibia.

Carolien and Roland Smith





Loving food in Spain

What comes to mind when you put together good company, sun, good food and good conversation? One would immediately think HOLIDAYS! In a sort of way that's what living in Spain is like. However, I must say the Spanish DO work and very hard too! But no matter what time of the year it is, the one thing that is paramount in this country is FOOD, and very good food if I'm allowed to say so. Inevitably alongside sitting at a table at home, out in a sunny terrace or anywhere, is good conversation. I love the fact that around a couple or relatively easy plates of "tapas" one can talk about nearly anything... even Jesus. When food is in between nearly anybody seems in the right mood to talk the hours away. What an opportunity we have to share from our own traditions, our faith and friendship in the most conducive of environments... at the table! Didn't Jesus do a lot of this? We can see why...

Edgar and Jane Alvarez

Loving sharing in England

Gloucester is a city of many nations. Here we found ourselves in the midst of great need for a neighbourly love that perhaps we all long, but are not always able to demonstrate. Matthew 25:35-36 speaks of such love and we are enjoying sitting around a table that has been extended throughout the city from home to home. We are sharing our stories, where we believe we take people on a journey to find Jesus in their story. And as we walk the streets of Gloucester we pray for the people of Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America to find Jesus in their life through building friendships.



Loving fellowship in Spain

Much of our ministry time nowadays is taken up with ECM leadership and administrative roles, but we love being able to carry these out from the small Andalusian town which we have called home for many years. This gives us a chance to support one of the few evangelical churches in the area which holds weekly missional meetings in our town where believers and seekers come together in a relaxed environment. The men get together for breakfast and the women meet in an afternoon. Both groups enjoy Bible study, singing, sharing and prayer. For some, this is the only chance they get for evangelical fellowship as they are not able to attend church for different reasons. Oh and the food! The men devour a lovely Spanish breakfast consisting of toasted freshly baked bread dribbled with local virgin olive oil, crushed tomatoes and cured ham. The women enjoy Spanish hot chocolate and local pastries. What's not to love about that!

Jim and Christine Memory



We love our city where we go to birthday parties, weddings, funerals, child birth and breakfast.

Vidas and Rita Rimkai



Loving the disillusioned in Serbia

For those of us living in the Balkans, where three main religious groups (Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church and Islam) cut across each other, people are becoming disappointed with political rhetoric, nationalism, ethnic conflicts and even religious traditions. We regularly hear the question: "Will it ever get any better?" As church planters in Serbia this is a great start for evangelism and opens a wide door for discussion and the opportunity to be salt and light in the community. People are willing to talk and even take literature, but how to encourage them to come to our church is a question that we do not have the answer for.

Please pray for us to persevere and present the gospel as the only hope for disillusioned people in the Balkans. Also pray for helpers, as we urgently need workers because we have a wide open door for spreading the Good News.

**Branko and
Rada Tihojević**



Loving the beauty of Spain

We love the Orange blossom coast/Costa del Azahar of Spain where God has called us. We live between the mountains and the sea with a mild winter climate. We completely understand why the locals see no need to leave for holidays elsewhere and will take any job to stay! We have a part in bringing the gospel to them and showing them a God who is bigger than their traditional Catholic faith. It takes time to build up trust (and the language) to not just be seen as weird foreigners, but we know God goes before us and we praise Him for the ways He's opened up people's hearts and lives to us, and ultimately, to Him.

Andy and Andrea Warner



Loving friends in Spain

Wandering through the streets of Cordoba city at 2am returning home from a music concert or hanging out with friends after an English language exchange seeing people of all ages spending time together in cafes and bars relaxing and having fun together is something we love about Andalusia. The lively atmosphere, the timetable that is so totally different and the way people love any excuse for a party or a get together with friends. There may be work to be done but the priority of relationships and cultural traditions impregnate the whole of life. When we arrived in Spain nearly 16 years ago little did we realise how quickly we would imbibe this reality and make it our own. It's hard not to imagine Jesus in the cafes and bars and spending His time with the people speaking about His kingdom and it's an amazing privilege to follow in His footsteps.

**Terry and
Christine Miller**





Missionary focus

MOVED BY LOVE

Ready for something new in Portugal



Meet Lydia and Steve Cockram. They recently joined ECM and are preparing to swap Exeter for Portugal. Rachel Gurney, ECM's main recruiter, chatted to them about the road ahead.

Rachel: Hi! what keeps you busy in Exeter?

Lydia: I'm a student worker at our church and I also work at the YMCA. I've recently completed a Masters degree at All Nations Christian College.

Steve: I'm an engineer. Outside of work, friends and food are a big part of our lives. We love inviting people over and cooking for them.

R: You're happy in Exeter. Why leave?

L: Overseas mission has been on my heart for many years. Although Britain is rather secular today, I think the need for evangelism and discipleship is even greater in Portugal.

S: As Christians, I don't think we're called to live comfortable lives. We enjoy life in Exeter, but that's not a good enough reason for us to stay if God has other plans.

R: Where are you going and what will you be doing?

L: We're heading to Coimbra, a city located between Lisbon and Porto. We'll take language courses and learn about the culture there. Then we'll decide whether to settle in Coimbra or move somewhere else that ECM works. I love working with students, so that's likely to be a key

part of my ministry. Portuguese students need discipleship. I'm excited about helping students understand the Bible and live out their faith in everyday life.

S: The company I work for does business in Portugal, so I will work remotely for them. I plan to be active in local ministry too.

R: Why did you choose to go with ECM?

L: We knew that if we committed to cross-cultural mission, I'd serve full-time and Steve would combine an engineering job with local ministry. ECM views Steve's situation positively, recognising the opportunities he'll have to connect with people through his job. Rather than forcing us into a mould, ECM is encouraging us to serve God in the best way we can.

R: How do you feel about asking people to support you financially?

L: It's challenging, but it can be very encouraging. Every time somebody chooses to support us it's a confirmation that God wants us go.

R: So, how can people support you?

S: Pray for us – for the practicalities of the move and saying goodbye to friends here. Also, if people want to give to our support fund, we'd be grateful.

R: Any advice for others considering cross-cultural mission?

L: Talk to godly people who know you. Identify your gifts and develop them. Start by trying short term mission.

If you'd like to support Lydia and Steve please use the response slip at the back of the magazine.

If you're interested in short or long term opportunities with ECM, why not email Rachel (personnel@ecmi.org)?



UNEXPECTED BLESSING

God moved in a marvellous way

Who knew! Just at a time of stress and pressure, when the commitment and burden of ministry seemed too heavy, God moved in a marvellous way with an unexpected financial blessing.

I don't know if I ever even met Horace and Bet, but when they decided to leave a legacy to our mission work with local youth they could never have known how God would use that to bless others. Alongside their gift they sent words of encouragement explaining how they hoped it would free leaders from financial pressures so they could focus on reaching out to young people. What a blessing it was that our unpublishised need was so graciously met through their generosity.

Horace and Bet had invested a lasting legacy in many of the people around them, including in the lives of their family. Their great nephew Stephen is a trustee of ECM and says, "Family has been such a blessing to me and God has shown me so much through their example and devotion to God, serving the Lord and serving others."

Stephen's parents, Jonathan and Diane Thompson, remember Aunt Bet and Uncle Horace as kind, caring 'chapel folk', thoughtful with their hard-earned money. It wasn't unheard of for a local homeless

man to have a portion of fish and chips delivered to him by them when they were able! They lived and worked in a close-knit rural village, known and loved by many who knew them – yet even now their legacy continues to touch the lives of people they never met.

You could bless others with a legacy that outlives you too. We would be so honoured if you would include a gift to ECM in your will, allowing your support of our ministry to go on and on. If you would like any further information, please contact me. Thank you!

Annette Bull

Fundraising and Marketing Manager



The blameless spend their days under the LORD's care,
and their inheritance will endure forever. Psalm 37:18



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☐ for use where most needed

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