

WINTER 2020

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.

WE WANT TO SEE EUROPE



FULL OF CHURCHES FULL OF PEOPLE FULL OF JESUS

CONTACT DETAILS:

ECM Britain

Unit 34-35 Moulton Park Business Centre
Redhouse Road
Northampton NN3 6AQ

tel. 01604 497603

email. ecm.gb@ecmi.org

web. www.ecmbritain.org

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

KENT ANDERSON

As I write this letter, people all over the world are self-isolating and social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Opportunities to travel are temporarily limited and the majority of flights have been cancelled or postponed. We don't know how long this is going to go on for so we thought, in this edition of ECM Life, we would bring you on a whistle stop tour of some of the most popular (and less popular) holiday destinations that our missionaries and national workers are ministering in, with the aim of fuelling your prayers for the people of Europe, especially at this trying time.



Europe is the UK's favourite holiday destination and Spain tops the list of desirable destinations with nearly 16 million visitors in 2019*, followed by France and Italy. And no wonder it's so popular: travel to Europe from the UK is cheap and budget airlines make it relatively easy to get to as it's got its fair share of sunshine, long sandy beaches, trendy hotels, historic cities and lots of interesting places to visit.

Over the last 25 years we have seen an increase in holidaymakers travelling to destinations in Europe that, for a variety of reasons, we wouldn't have considered travelling to 25 years ago. For example, the Balkans war stopped many people visiting Croatia until its conclusion in 1995, but since then tourism rates have risen from 13,000 to almost 300,000 UK visitors each year*. Likewise, Slovenia has steadily emerged as a popular holiday destination with many

people ranking it as the most attractive destination in the world.

Now that we have moved into the 2020s, who knows where the next hot spot in Europe will be. What we do know is that ECM missionaries are very likely to be there, as we have been working in the most popular and the most unlikely holiday destinations since the inception of ECM in 1904. Our missionaries have gone to Europe, not because they wanted to see the world, or wanted to see the next fashionable destination, but because they felt called by God to reach Europe for Jesus. Please be praying for our mission family, whether you have visited the country they work in or not. Pray for those who are blazing a trail into places where the gospel still remains mostly unheard, and pray for yourself, that you will be salt and light to those around you at home and when you travel overseas in the future.



INTRODUCING LUCIANA OLIVEIRA & GEORGE CHRISTOFORIDES



Luciana and George Christoforides are working in Greece and are two of ECM's newest members.

Greece has 0.4% evangelical Christians, in fact, religion in Greece is dominated by the Greek Orthodox Church, which represents 90% of the total population.

George and Luciana, tell us about your background and the work you are currently involved in?

George: I was born and raised in Cyprus. I have been living in Greece for a total of twelve years, where I also did my computer network studies for five of those years. Shortly after, it was clear to me that God was calling me to stay in Greece instead of returning home and to make myself available to what He had in store for me here. I decided to take the one-year programme of Theology at the Greek Bible College, which led me to be involved in the mission field in Athens.

During that time, I started attending a local church plant, Syntrofia (meaning 'Fellowship'), serving as a youth leader and for the past four years I have been directing our four annual church camps. I am currently working as an IT Administrator for a global ministry named Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel (or AMG International). I cover the technical needs of our headquarters (Cosmovision Center), our two community centres, our accounting office and our Logos Bookstore in Athens. I often help other ministries with the design and implementation of their network and give consultation on future deployments.

Luciana: I was born in Brazil and raised in Portugal. I studied Social Education and during my university years, I was active with the local Christian student union GBU (IFES in Portugal) which led me to go on a mission trip to Hungary, where I served with the Hungarian Christian student union and where I first met George. Soon after that, I returned to Brazil to continue my studies in Social Anthropology. After obtaining my



degree, I got a work placement in Northern Ireland and attended Crescent Church in Belfast. During my time in Northern Ireland I served in various outreaches.

Four years ago, I started feeling a burden to quit my job and serve God in full-time ministry. He called me to Greece and opened the doors to serve the Roma people by using my experience and the knowledge acquired from my studies in the mission field. Currently, I coordinate one of the projects of Hellenic Ministries (Greece) called "Petalouda Educational Center". This centre serves the needs of the Roma people (the largest ethnic minority group in Greece) through a Christ-centred educational programme.

How did you get involved with ECM?

Our connection with ECM started at the European Leadership Forum in Poland after meeting Peter and Anna Crawford who are ECM missionaries now serving in Greece. Since then, we have been receiving member care and mentoring from them and have been greatly encouraged. We are both so grateful that the opportunity of becoming ECM Ireland Associate Members came up, as we can be part of a global prayer network and ministry family, through which we can serve and witness to people here in Greece.



INTRODUCING GORAN MACURA

Goran recently became a member of ECM.
He is a national worker in his home country of Slovenia.



Slovenia has just started to establish its name as a popular holiday destination with its beautiful scenery, friendly people, rich history and culture. Whilst the percentage of tourists to Slovenia is increasing, the percentage of evangelical Christians in Slovenia is extremely low with only 0.1% of the population in Slovenia describing themselves as evangelical Christians and its main religion, like many other European countries, is Catholic, with a total of 73% Catholics living in Slovenia.

Goran would describe his life before meeting Jesus as a mess. He came from an unstable home, with lots of freedom at a young age.

In his late teens, he became a drug addict and he was in and out of prison for the next 10 years of his life. At 29, he finished his sentence at prison and then went into rehab in Croatia. It was when he was in rehab, that he heard about the gospel of Jesus as he was encouraged to read John's Gospel and by doing that, he came to know Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. After that, everything changed.

When he finished rehab, Goran felt called by God to go back to Slovenia, to share the good news with his own community. When he returned home he started going to a nearby church in the city of Ljubljana, and this is where he met his wife Metka.

Goran and Metka both started working with Child Evangelism Fellowship in Slovenia. They both loved working with children and sharing the Bible with them. Through this, families began to ask questions and were intrigued to know more. Out of this, God put a neighbouring town on their hearts to reach out to the town of Domzale. Domzale has a population of 13,000, but it has no evangelical church and they only know of three other Christians who live there.

When witnessing in countries that are predominantly Catholic, like Slovenia, the main challenge is that you are sharing the gospel with people who think they have already heard it. So how do you overcome this? Let us share with you how Goran is doing it.

As Goran walked the streets of Domzale, God spoke to him through 2 Chronicles 7:14: *'...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then*

"We want people to get to know the real, true, living and loving God."

I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.'

The people of Domzale need to hear about Jesus and God has given Goran the vision and desire to share this good news by planting a church there.

Goran says 'We want people to get to know the real, true, living and loving God. We want to see people have a relationship with Him and we believe God has the power to transform this town for His glory. Currently Metka is doing a Good News Club and we are holding a Bible study group with the long term vision of planting a church here.' Planting a church in Slovenia can take time, but whilst Goran is waiting on the funding and the people to start this church, he is working in a restaurant across the road from where the church is going to be established. There he builds relationships and lets people know that he is a Christian and follower of Jesus. People are already asking questions and wondering what is different about Goran. Goran hopes and prays that the church will be populated with the people he meets through the restaurant.

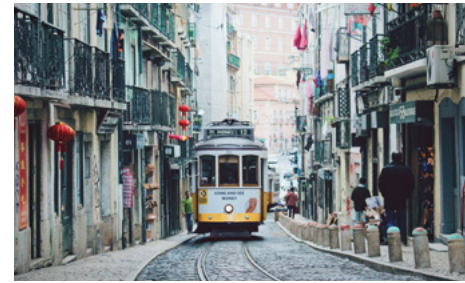
Please pray for Goran and his family. Pray that God would bring in the funds and the people needed to establish this church in Domzale, and that Goran would build really good relationships with those he works with and serves in the restaurant.



IN GOD'S HANDS

WRITTEN BY ANDRESSA BARIDO

Portugal is a growing holiday destination with over 16 million tourists* visiting the country in 2019. But with just over 3% evangelicals* living there, it is a country which needs to hear about Jesus.



Marcus and Andressa are from Brazil and they moved to Portugal with ECM in November 2019. Before they moved to Portugal, they lived in Northern Ireland for over a year. Here they write about the impact that their time in Northern Ireland has had on their ministry in Portugal.

We are currently based in the city of Mora in Alentejo. My husband, Marcus, immediately started helping at the local church plant, both preaching and playing guitar and I started a Bible study with three children in the city. For the Children's Bible study, I wanted to use 'The King of Glory' material that I discovered in Lurgan, Northern Ireland, through a missionary called Jennifer Quinn, but this was not available in Portuguese.

We started working on the translation of the book and recording the dubbing of the movie. When the COVID-19 pandemic started and lockdown paralysed our activities, we were very frustrated and we even started to feel useless, but God had everything under His control and He began to put in my husband's heart a greater desire to produce evangelistic content for digital media.

“God again showed Himself to be the creative author of our history”

Marcus' work inspired me to think about the possibility of an online Bible study, where I could use the curriculum we already had to reach more children. From there, in May, I started the first online class for children from Portugal, Brazil, and Indonesia.

God brought to my memory the name of a young Portuguese boy in Northern Ireland, who was a member of Table Church in Tandragee. I had met him while he was on holiday at his aunt's house, so I spoke to his mother and aunt, who then promptly allowed him to participate in the online Bible study.

God again showed Himself to be the creative author of our history, bringing people and places to us, bringing Portugal to Northern Ireland and vice versa.

There are currently four classes ongoing; three classes for children aged nine to fourteen and one class for training adults who will multiply this work. Before the pandemic, there were three children and now there are fifteen children and nine adults.

Nothing has ever been in our control, it's always in God's hands, regardless of the country, with or without a pandemic.

May our sovereign God continue to guide us through the greatness of His plans, which are much greater than ours.



CONQUERING A SPIRITUAL FORTRESS

WRITTEN BY PHILIPPE MAYHEW

France remains one of the most popular holiday destinations in all of Europe. It entices people of all ages with some of the world's most iconic landmarks, world-class art and architecture, sensational food, stunning beaches, beautiful countryside and a staggering amount of history.

Philippe and Joanne Mayhew have been missionaries with ECM in France since 2008 and here they write about what God was doing just before the latest lockdown in the towns of Donnemarie-Dontilly and Provins.



Why not come and spend a holiday with us! You will enjoy the quiet rural town of Donnemarie-Dontilly, just an hour and half away from Paris. We could visit the beautiful castle of Fontainebleau or the medieval fortress of Provins. Our local cultural heritage is quite impressive but, sadly, our spiritual heritage has evaporated throughout the centuries, and the need for the gospel is great.

It has been a joy for us to witness God's work in many lives since 2008. It all started with prayer and a Good News Club in our home. In 2016, God opened doors in a mighty way and a local church started. With the support of ECM partners, in 2018, we were able to buy a carpenter's workshop and house and turn it into a welcoming church building. There are now approximately sixty people gathering on Sunday mornings and our congregation is growing steadily. We praise God for all He has done!

Over the last two years we have invested in preaching God's Word, training elders and preachers and strengthening every aspect of church life. Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a strong impact on all our activities, but thankfully most people are now back (respecting

strict safety rules), although some still watch services online. In early September, three new families joined the congregation, one with six children! We are also looking forward to baptising three people, including a mother and her twenty-year-old son. God's kingdom is reaching many hearts.

Two years ago, the church started thinking about the possibility of planting another church in the large town of Provins, 25 minutes away, because several of our church members lived in that area. We recruited and trained a young couple in church planting, but they have now decided to move on to another ministry in the South of France. Many Christians have prayed over Provins and have tried to start a church there, but there is still very little Christian witness in the town. Tourists flow into the medieval city to admire its ramparts, but we believe that God can conquer this spiritual fortress.

Could you pray with us for a couple who could come and work alongside us to consolidate the church of Donnemarie-Dontilly and/or become church planters in Provins?



EARLY DAYS

UPDATE FROM JOSH AND ALI REEVE



Albania might not be the first country that springs to mind when you think of going on holiday, but it is working hard at establishing itself as a holiday destination and many well renowned hotel chains like the Marriott and Hilton are making a presence there.

Albania has one of the lowest number of evangelical Christians in all of Europe at 0.5%* and this is one of the reasons why Josh and Ali Reeve are working there.

During 2008-2011, Josh and Ali were involved in leading short-term teams to Albania to help churches reach out and support children with learning disabilities. From these trips, God created in them the desire to serve long-term in one of Europe's few Muslim majority countries.

The proclamation of the gospel has a long history in Albania. In Romans 15:19 the apostle Paul writes, "from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ." Illyricum is the ancient Roman name for the region of Albania, so it is possible that Paul preached in Albania, and local tradition holds that he planted a church in the port city of Durres. Certainly, there were churches planted in Albania by the second or third century A.D., but sadly, in recent history Albania has been difficult territory for the gospel. Albania was under the rule of the Islamic Ottoman Empire for 500 years until 1912, and shortly after World War 2 Albania became a communist state under the regime of Enver Hoxha, who aggressively stamped out all religious practices. As a result, it is only since the collapse of the regime in the early 1990s that gospel proclamation and church planting have flourished.

Despite Albania's historical connections to the early church, the modern Albanian church is very young and in much need of discipleship into maturity. There is also a great need for more churches to be planted. Josh, Ali and their family arrived in Albania in early 2018. They have been learning the language and developing an understanding of the Albanian culture with a view to getting involved in church planting.

They would love to continue developing gospel-centred ministries to people with learning disabilities. Many Albanians who have disabilities never get the chance to attend church and hear about the Lord who made them and loves them. They have a passion to help the church reach these people with the good news about Jesus.

JOSH & ALI WRITE...

Last year, our family joined forces with an American missionary family and a local Albanian family to plant a new church in the capital city, Tirana. It is early days, of course, but we are very encouraged by the way God has been working in us and through us. Although we are small in number (roughly ten adults and ten kids), we have seen a good number of unbelieving friends and family join us to find out more. In the warmer months we have been doing community barbecues in the local park on Saturdays, and these have been a good opportunity for making connections and building relationships. In fact, because of the distancing measures required to prevent COVID-19, our church has now vacated its premises and is meeting for worship in the open air of the park each Sunday.

Josh says 'It is a real joy to see the gospel declared and the name of Jesus lifted up openly in a country where it was once forbidden.'

Please pray for Josh, Ali and their family as they continue to reach out to the people of Albania.



NO WORD FOR DISCIPLESHIP

MEMORIES OF SHORT-TERMER ROSELYNN

I woke to my alarm at 5am, I said goodbye to the Lambanana* at Liverpool airport. I hopped on a plane and arrived at София Airport in Sophia, Bulgara.

When I arrived I spent a week with the ECMers Kate and Andrew Blackwell in Sofia, then I travelled to Blagoevgrad. There I met Bill and Lisa from the Navigators as well as Radi and Ani. Radi is a Bulgarian Roma with a passion for equipping the Roma to reach other Roma people with the gospel through discipleship and storytelling. As I spent more time with them I realised the challenges and the need there is for this in a language that does not have a word for discipleship.

Whilst I was there I spent some time with the American University Logos club (Christian union). It was encouraging to

see the relationships Bill and Lisa have built in the university over their many years in Bulgaria. It was great to spend some time with the students who were all at different stages of their faith. I also met a local teacher named Сашо who heads up a youth group at the local church in Blagoevgrad. It was really encouraging to see the intercultural relationships that are being built and the unity and relationships between different organisations being built and working together for the sake of sharing the good news of Jesus with others.

Although worldwide we may be in a pandemic, and travel and reaching those in Europe looks different at this time, throughout my time in Bulgaria one truth remained the same — God is the same yesterday today and forever.

* Famous local sculpture

LEAVING A LEGACY



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

1. Residuary gift:

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

2. Pecuniary gift:

a specific amount of money.

3. Specific gift:

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

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

Thank you for investing in ongoing ministry in Europe!

GIVING TO ECM BRITAIN

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please send me:

- ☐ ECM Life (twice yearly) ☐ 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 acknowledgment.

You can also donate on line
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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- ☐ I would like you to Gift Aid my donation and
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Full name: **Date:**



PRAYER



Thank God for:

- God is still at work
- Churches are reopening
- New ways are being used to proclaim the gospel

Pray for:

- The health of field workers
- The challenges they face
- Creative and practical ways to reach into our communities during this difficult time.



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