



George Brown
Director's Corner
ECMI-USA

I have been so touched by the stories pouring in from all over Europe of what God has done this past summer. And you are part of that story because you prayed and you invested in the lives of those working to take the Gospel to all of Europe.

Orphans, refugees, families, the outcast and entire communities are all being touched by the love of Christ through the men and women of ECMI. Let me encourage you to read the stories of what God is doing.



On the last page of this edition of Mission Vision, you will note two events that took place – one in Poland and one in Greece. In Poland, we spent two days working with our national coworkers to explore ways that we can work more effectively together to empower and mobilize our national brothers and sisters for ministry in their home countries.

In Greece, the Lord allowed our International Leadership Team to meet with multiple ministries who desire partnership. God is opening new doors of opportunity. May we heed His call.

*Sharing Christ's Love in Europe
Bringing hope that makes a difference*

*Our Vision: To see the peoples of Europe transformed in the name of Christ!
Our Mission: To establish reproducing churches which evangelize and disciple the peoples of Europe*



***"Thank You that You gave me mom and dad!"
Oksana Savka with New Hope Ukraine***

A few weeks ago we received some photos and stories from families that attended our last Orphan Care Family Camp. I want to share with you a photo and a story which has touched my heart. The Stropysh Family entered our program in 2004. They adopted Bogdana and Petro who have mental disabilities. Parents Ruslan and Olena have faced many challenges in parenting their son and daughter. But they still love their children more than anything. Last year they adopted three more boys.

Ruslan and Olena shared their story: *"In July, God joined to our family 3 more sons: Ivan (9), Yaroslav (8), and Vasyl (6). The boys have mental delays. Vasyl also has rickets from not being outside. Vasyl has many problems with his kidneys and bladder so he sleeps in diaper. Also Vasyl and Yaroslav both have broken nasal septums, because their father hit them into their faces. There are many doctors who control the health condition of the boys.*

We were able to arrange for all the boys to attend a specialized school for children with visual impairments. Vasyl is in pre-school group, and Ivan and Yaroslav are in 1st grade. It is very difficult for the children to study. Yaroslav and Vasyl study by

special program for children with mental delays.

Vasil, Yaroslav and Ivan are very gentle children who really need attention, hugs, and tactile contact with us. We love our boys and thank God for them. Please pray that the Lord will give us wisdom in parenting our children and to be a good example to follow. An example of the love of Christ."

This year the family had opportunity to be at Orphan Care Family Camp 2017 with the whole family. And this is a letter to God from their little son Ivan.

"God, thank You that You give us food. Thank You for mom, dad, Petro, Yaroslav, Vasyl and Dana. They are my family. Thank You that mom and dad have adopted me, Yaroslav and Vasyl. Thank You, God, that You help us. Please save our mom Anya (boy's biological mother). Give her health. Thank you that You gave me mom and dad. I love You. I will never leave you."

This made me cry. I am so grateful to the Lord that He allowed us to be a part of His miracle. And may He bless you for your prayers and support which gives parents strength to adopt these sweet children.

The Foundation That Keeps You Afloat

A blog by Allie Everson in Austria

I moved to Austria in August . Let me tell you: when you move to a different country everything changes—*everything*. The way people interact is different, people’s humor is different, the food is different, the toilet paper is all of a sudden yellow, green, and purple. The coffee is small and strong. I thought European coffee was going to be the best. I am sitting here after weeks of looking for a coffee grinder *finally* drinking a cup at home after borrowing a friend’s grinder because I am too impatient to go to every store in Villach asking for a “Kaffeemule” and getting the same blank stare in response. People aren’t exactly sarcastic here. They are actually quite sensitive. I’m pretty sure I’ve upset a handful of people just from making jokes that were more offensive than funny. I had no idea I joked so harshly. In Austria, all meals include dairy. I’m lactose intolerant. Oh, and by the way, a bathroom is no longer a bathroom. Because you don’t take baths in the toilet. Here they have two separate rooms. One for the toilet and another for the shower.

Everything is different and everything is changing. It’s like when you get handed your dream job but suddenly you aren’t sure it’s the life you want anymore. Life changes. So do your dreams and how you think. But God has been with me throughout this entire transition. I see it so clearly. My friends have changed, my family is far away, and my daily routine is completely different. I am a mess but my God has never left my side. He is consistent, never changing, and always trustworthy. When everything changes, he is with me guiding me *through* it. And he’s using it to change my heart. The way I think, live, and breathe. He helps me to continue moving forward instead of falling back in fear. He is my rock, my foundation.

Our lives are so short and so vulnerable to change, but so often we don’t see that. We become so comfortable that when change hits us, it rocks our world.



God knows. He sees. He always has. He doesn’t like seeing us in pain. He’d like for us to have that morning coffee we long for during change and he knows how hard it is when our foundation is pulled out from under us. He does not want us to stumble and fall. He wants us to stand and rise above it all. And this is what He does.

Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever [...]” I Praise GOD for this.

Psalms 18:2 says, “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

Matthew 7:24-27 says, “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

He says he is our strong and mighty tower, our rock and our fortress. He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” It’s HIM. It isn’t finding out who I really am, what my dream job is, or what my place in the world is. Those things are always shifting. Life is found in Him. And if you haven’t experienced him— his love, his deep care, his faithfulness—then you don’t know the true foundation to your life. And even if you *have* experienced love and belonging in this world, all of this is from God. He is the source of it all. I 100% believe that. And I have seen it and believe it now more than ever before.



Follow Allie’s blog at:
<https://allisoneverson.wordpress.com>

Stories from the Field...



a church in that city and several other small churches in the villages of northern Oltenia. He was a devoted minister with an overwhelming influence in the lives of the believers in that part of Romania. Three years ago, he went to be with the Lord. Their children (most of them now grey or white haired) have their own families with children and grandchildren. And all, *all* of them follow the Lord!

One Family, One Camp Tinu Leontiu with New Hope Romania

After ten days spent together in a remote mountain campsite, one comes away feeling like family with other attendees. For more than 23 years New Hope Romania has organized and led camps for families and singles over 25. Bringing people to such a camp, far away from the comforts of daily life (no electricity, no hot showers and no internet!) is not an easy task. Running such a camp is an even bigger challenge.

But it is worth the effort because the spiritual experiences we have together always surpass the difficulties and challenges we face in running such camps. Just as important, these camps help the attending families strengthen their family relationships. I remember one year when one gentleman wrote after the camp: "I really liked the rainy weather spent in tent... I have had the opportunity to talk with my wife

more than usual!" And I can always point to a few families for which the camp was a turning point in their personal relationships. So, yes, after a camping experience like this, the entire group feels like a family.

But this is not the whole story. Not at all. This year is about a camp where all the attendees were from one family. A really large family! For several days, the Noua Speranta (New Hope) tent camp hosted a family from one city in Romania. It is a family I have personally known for more than 45 years now.

In the beginning, there were two young believers: Vasile and Viorica. They settled in Targu-Jiu, a city in Oltenia, the most spiritually dry region of Romania. They have 12 children. And while working a full-time job as railway engineer to provide for his family, Vasile was also

Stela, the second born, became the best friend of my wife and for 20 years a devoted volunteer in our camps. She told us that in the last three years they decided to have an annual family reunion. Their goal was very straightforward: to have fellowship in the Lord, but also to provide an opportunity for the younger generation to meet and know each other better. Choosing the New Hope camp as a host for their family reunion in 2017 was just the right step in helping achieve that goal.

What a great joy it was for us to host more than 50 members of this family (and some were missing...). They had three days of fellowship, rest, fun, singing, sharing memories, hiking, sports, sharing their testimonies and praying for each other's families. It was impressive!

So, the title is not a figure of speech. It was truly one camp, one family! May God bless this family! Pray with us for them and for their victorious walk with the Lord!

Sharing God's Love in the Day to Day Sharon Graves in Spain

When I returned to Spain in August, I began taking a Spanish class at the University of Alcala in a program known as Alcalingua. August is typically a slow time in Spain when businesses close and families head out for vacation. So for me, this was a great opportunity to take a one-month intensive Spanish class to improve my speaking and listening skills. I really enjoyed the instructors, the classes, and especially the opportunity to make some new friends -- this time from Asia. What I've learned is that as a whole, they are very polite and quiet yet, when you talk to them individually, they are happy to chat. From our conversations, I realized that they knew very little of God, so it was my prayer each day that the character of Christ would be reflected through me. Please pray for Shiori from Japan, Celia from Korea and Li Xiu from China.

God has also been putting Spaniards in my path at the bus stop. Usually, they want to ask me a question. Thankfully, I'm getting better at understanding them and can give an answer-- most of the time. Recently, I met a young girl in her mid-twenties at the bus stop in Alcala. Since we both lived in Camarma we continued to chat on the way home. As we got off the bus she said to me, "You seem very friendly, would you like to get something to drink?" The next thing I knew she zipped into a little shop and came out with a drink for each of us. We sat on a bench outside and chatted for almost 20 minutes. I've now seen her a couple of times at the bus stop. She has my phone number so I'm hoping that one of these days I'll get a chance to share my story. Please pray for Estefania and that God will give me the courage to share the gospel with her.



Planting Trees and Discipleship

Jesse Ashmen in Sweden

“A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.”

This old Greek proverb illustrates the need for intentional, feed-it-forward, and selfless mentorship. Like the kind Jesus demonstrated: He gave up family for his mission; he never owned anything so he could travel light and be others focused. He often provided free food, helped fishermen with their work, and healed people asking nothing in return, sometimes deliberately telling people not to credit him publicly. He even demonstrated his love in dying for us while we were yet sinners.

This selfless mentoring contrasts with some churches' "what's-in-it-for-me mentality." Why commit time or resources on young men or women who won't immediately sign a membership contract to a local congregation? The leadership team at ECM has identified four strategic priorities that will guide our European teams going forward; one of which is promoting and developing a culture of discipleship in mission. It may at first sound like an intangible aspiration, especially for lone missionaries on an island. Yet, this strategic priority has in fact become a priority for us.

Some of the fruitful ecumenical ministries this summer have resulted in new and hungry believers who are surrounded by old and declining churches that want their share of the yield. As an interdenominational missionary, I've been given a unique opportunity to meet with and mentor these young believers without the hidden agenda of membership. It's my hope that I can not only mentor these young believers well, but also develop a culture of intentional and selfless discipleship...in short, to plant trees knowing I probably won't sit in their shade.



Refugee Ministry...Stories from Across Europe



Farid and Golnaz somehow got fake Spanish passports and fled the persecution they endured for their recent decision to become Christians in Iran. They made their way to Istanbul and then flew to Sweden where they were apprehended and put in jail for weeks. The authorities took away all of their possessions, including their mobile phones. Yet they were able to apply for asylum from prison. They were released and placed on our island in the refugee camp where they have faced yet more persecution for their new faith. They wish to join our fellowship on Sundays, but they need help to afford the bus tickets to town and back. They were boldly baptized last week!

Jesse and Krista Ashmen in Sweden



At the end of August, Günther was busy preparing for and leading a team of young people (aged 14 to 20 something) that came to reach out to other youth in our district of Vienna. The group spent one afternoon at the refugee home cleaning up the yard and outside of the buildings. We have been trying to find more opportunities to serve this particular home near us. And the other day, a social worker called Günther asking us if we would be able to come to their end-of-summer party and lead a kids program. This is the first time they've reached out to us first. A church member went there ahead of time to talk to the social worker, and he said that we weren't allowed to do anything Christian. She had the guts to say, "Well, it's either that, or we don't come at all." They didn't have any other option at that point, so he said okay!

Gunther and Mallory Fugger in Austria



“My name is Sabah. The Lord Jesus revealed Himself to me while I was living in Iran. At that time, I met a young man named Ahmad and he was a believer in Jesus Christ. Ahmad was jailed twice and beaten badly. The Iranian regime were convinced that Ahmad was a foreign spy. Then, one day we received a word from local friends that the secret police planned to arrest and jail Ahmad for indefinite time. I was 7 months pregnant, but we had to run away the same night. We crossed Turkey and came to Bulgaria. We found friends by the grace of God and I gave birth to my first child Daniel in Bulgaria where we found a second home. Today, we serve as volunteers with the refugee outreach and work with friends like the local church in Haskovo and New Hope Bulgaria.”

Dimitrie Todorov in Bulgaria



Disciples Making Disciples

Murray and Féy Cotter in Albania

Disciples who make disciples is at the heart of Murray and Féy's local church ministry in a densely populated suburb in Tirana, the capital city of Albania. Much of what they do is centered on discipling and mentoring one particular couple with whom they engage the most.



Two years ago, Bujar and Shkëndia attended church on a Sunday, but otherwise they were not engaged in either being discipled or in discipling others. Today, both of these are key components in their lives, and this has come about largely through the ministry of both Féy and Murray.

Murray began his work by seeking to gather the older men of the church into a discipleship Bible study. Bujar was the first to say 'yes' to being part of this and has been key in gathering the six men each week. Since September 2016, with Murray's support and encouragement, Bujar has been working to revitalise the dying church in his hometown Poliçan, which is a two hour drive from Tirana. Every Friday Bujar, Genci, Murray, and now Çlirim, are visiting Poliçan with the aim of developing a number of small bible study groups, and engaging the older men in their faith. Murray's role is mostly to mentor Bujar through guidance and encouragement.

Two years ago, Féy began a women's discipleship group with Shkëndia and two other women, with the understanding that when Féy is away, Shkëndia would lead the group herself. Over the two years they have studied an overview of the bible, a basic discipleship course, and now they are nearing the end of book two in a six book study of Matthew's gospel.

Refika joined the women's group part way through the year a few months after she and her husband Çlirim moved from Berat (near Poliçan) to Tirana early this year. Refika has been a Christian for about five years. About a month after Refika joined the bible study group, she and Çlirim were out walking when they bumped into Bujar and Shkëndia. They started talking and it didn't take long before the conversation moved to Bujar and Murray's weekly visits to Poliçan. Çlirim was bored and lonely living in Tirana, so he bluntly asked if he could go with them so he could meet up with some of his friends who lived in the town of Poliçan. Refika was mortified that he had asked to

go, as she thought his meeting up with his friends would involve drinking lots of raki, and this was a 'ministry trip'

Bujar and Shkëndia encouraged Refika that it would be fine for Çlirim to go, if not just because he would get to know Bujar, Murray and Genci during the two hour drive each way.

Çlirim did meet up with his friends on that visit, but only for a short time before he joined the bible study group in Poliçan. Amazingly, he is now a regular member of the team that goes to Poliçan and is learning about the Gospel and what it means to be a Christian. He is an avid reader and diligently does his homework in preparation for each study, and he is also attending the weekly church services in Tirana. His family is amazed at what is happening as it is obvious that God is working in his life - all because Bujar and Murray took a small risk in taking Çlirim with them to Poliçan.



Murray and Féy's work with Bujar and Shkëndia is strategic because they are empowering them to become disciple makers, and in the near future to be confident enough in themselves to lead independently without missionary input.

Children's Summer Camp

Dan and Primrose Avila in Kosova



For the past five summers, we have organized a summer day-camp for 5-11 year old kids. It's a week filled with fun activities, games, crafts, music, and dancing. More importantly, it's a week where children get to learn truths about God, sing songs about Him, and learn parts of His Word by heart. It's a week that is much anticipated by children in our community. It's also a week we can't run on our own. We depend on the help of others, and this summer we were very thankful to have a team of eight from Ireland.

Do you have any idea what a special opportunity it is to teach God's truth to children who have never heard it? Or to children who are growing up with a wrong understanding of who God is? We are thankful to God for the parents who entrusted their children to us this summer. Some of those children regularly attend the Saturday kids clubs throughout the year, but many only come to the summer activities.

One of the highlights of the week was the moment when we were explaining the craft activity for the day, and pointing out the words printed on the template: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart". Almost instantly, a number of the children continued on: "and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and he will direct your paths." We were utterly surprised that they had remembered so clearly the verse we had taught them back in February at one of our Saturday clubs. God's Word is powerful, and our prayer is that these precious children will indeed learn to truly trust in the Lord and acknowledge Him in all their ways. Please join with us in praying for them and for their families.

Making a Difference

Our Strategic Priorities

- ◆ Discipleship and church planting for all today's Europeans
- ◆ Make the most of partnerships at every level
- ◆ Mobilize, train, empower and mentor younger leaders
- ◆ Speak prophetically into our European contexts

Our Values

- UP** - A Godly Life - courageous faith, prayer, and the Bible
- IN** - Loving Relationships - integrity and mutual respect, love and care for one another
- OUT** - A Missional Life - contextual, holistic and creative
- TOGETHER** - Working With Others - teamworking across the mission and partnership with others

Forging Partnerships with our National Brothers and Sisters

We asked you to pray that the Lord of the Harvest would raise up workers and indeed He has. Today, ECMI has more than **240 members** in **24 countries** of Eastern and Western Europe. Of those members, **70 are nationals** working in their home countries, and **170 are international members** coming from all over the world. We desire to work more effectively together which is why we met for 48 hours in Poland to wrestle with this very subject.



A preacher on Mars Hill



The ILT prayed over the city of Athens

"Come over to Macedonia and help us!" Acts 16:8

The International Leadership Team met September 12-17 and talked with more than a half-dozen ministry leaders in the Athens area to see their work and discuss partnership possibilities. Pray that the Lord will raise up workers in our ECMI family who can provide leadership and direction to meet these opportunities.



Roman Matviyiv from Ukraine shares his group's perspectives



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ECMI longs to see the peoples of Europe filled with hope through the life-transforming power of Christ. Since 1904, our more than 240 workers in 24 countries of Eastern and Western Europe bring hope to the peoples of Europe by establishing loving communities of Christ-followers (Church Planting), by sharing the love of Christ in word and deed (Outreach), and by walking with individuals in their journey of life-transformation in Christ (Discipleship). Our missionaries and workers come to us from all over Europe, North, Central and South America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, and South Korea.



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