



**George Brown**  
Director — ECMI-USA

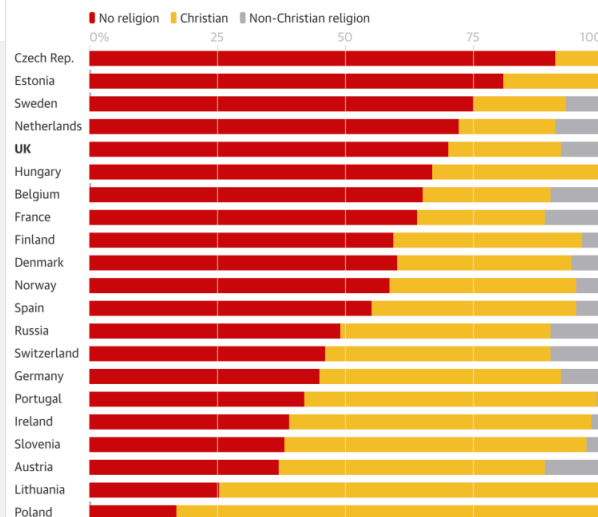
**IS THERE STILL HOPE FOR EUROPE?** A recent edition of *The Guardian* featured an article entitled “Christianity as default is gone: the rise of a non-Christian Europe.” The article says that in a survey of 16 to 29 year-olds in 21 countries of Eastern and Western Europe demonstrates the relentless march towards a post-Christian society. In the Czech Republic, the least religious country, 91% indicated they had no religious affiliation. The graph to the right illustrates this stark reality.

What can we do? The answer is a consistent witness on the part of Christ-followers to love one another and love their neighbor. ECM Australia Director, Matt George, wrote, “On the surface it looks like there is little hope for Europe. But when we are tempted to despair, we need to remind ourselves that gospel work is His work, not ours. In Romans 5:6, it says that ‘while we were still weak’ and without hope, God came to us in kindness and met our greatest needs. The good news of the gospel is that in God’s mercy He adopts those who have ‘no hope’ and are ‘without God in the world’ (Eph 2:2).”

This issue of *Mission Vision* is filled with stories where the hope of the Gospel is breaking through. We need not despair because God is in control and He is building His church. The need is great, and the workers may be few, but you and I can pray to the Lord of the Harvest to raise up workers to bring hope to a continent in crisis. *We want to see Europe full of churches, full of people, full of Jesus!*

#### 70% of young people in the UK identify with no religion

How 16- to 29-year-olds self-identify, %



Guardian Graphic | Source: St Mary's University, Twickenham

## Why Serve Europe?

**Europe is a continent in crisis.** Its 800 million people are desperately in need of hope. ECMI longs to see the peoples of Europe filled with the life-transforming power found in Christ.

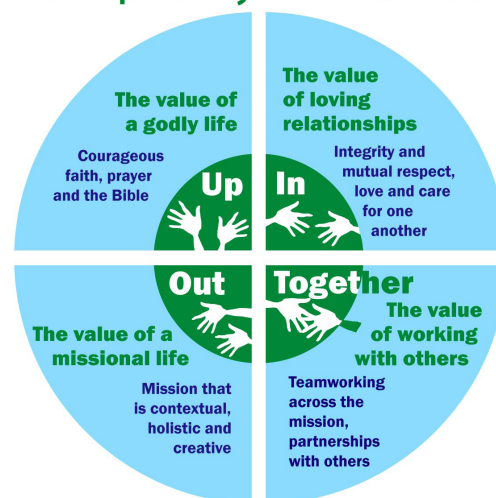
- We bring hope through communities of loving Christ followers - **Church Planting**
- We share the love of Christ in word and deed - **Outreach**
- We accompany individuals in their journey of life transformation in Christ - **Discipleship**

*We want to see Europe: Full of Churches. Full of people. Full of Jesus.*

#### Our Priorities

- A focus on discipleship and church planting for all of today's Europeans
- Partnerships with others in the Gospel at every level
- The mobilization, training, empowering and mentoring of the next generation leaders
- To speak the Word of God prophetically into our European contexts

## Inspired by the Gospel Shaped by our Values



Focused on church planting in Europe, evangelical, interdenominational and international

# Meeting People, Needs, and Jesus in Kosovo

Kosovo is a predominantly Muslim country where Christ-followers make up less than 2% of the population. ECMI has workers in Peja and Kamenica. Gani and Adile Smolica report that 2017 was a year full of blessings and challenges.

Easter 2017 was a blessed time as we invited friends and families to join us for the service and lunch. All our contacts are of Muslim background and it is very difficult for most of them to come to the church premises. We organized the service at a restaurant which served as a neutral location.

More than 150 people came from a variety of backgrounds. They enjoyed hearing about Jesus and His way of saving people from



their sins! In the Summer we usually have teams from the UK and Holland come to help us. They organize more meetings with people and children. *What a joy it was to baptize three new believers this past summer!*

We consistently have a hard time explaining to our Muslim contacts who we are and what we believe. Family members often persecute

and discourage those who have trusted Christ from being involved at church. Others leave our town looking for a better life.

Christmas is also a wonderful time to invite friends and families to meetings where we share the birth of our Saviour. More than 150 adults attended the meeting. Because of some threats, we had to have police present outside the meeting room. We invited them in and presented them with Christian devotional calendars.

*All in all, we can say that 2017 was a blessed year, despite growing opposition. We thank all of you for your prayers and support. God is building His church in Peja, Kosovo, and you play a vital part in it all.*

## Meeting People at Reformation Celebrations

Churches all over Europe had special events in October 2017 to remember the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, when Martin Luther posted his 95 thesis on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany.

Because the Council of Trent is where the start of the Counter Reformation took place (1548-1563), this Reformation commemoration had a special significance for us who minister

in this city. Over 300 people from various evangelical churches in northern Italy came together for the Reformation Day service.

It was certainly the largest ever Protestant service in the city. Events concluded in the square in front of the church where the Council of Trent met.



We closed with prayer and a symbolic representation of our connection with the Reformation and believers of the past.

## Proclaiming the Gospel in Bulgaria

ECMI workers **Dimitrie and Maria Todorov** are strengthening the churches of Bulgaria in their proclamation of the Gospel and involvement in taking Christ to the Nations. Dimitrie asks that we pray for the men in the picture.

*“These are faithful workers whom we equip for ministry with partners from Leadership Resources International and Hope for the Balkans Mission Network. We are excited to be able to begin our new phase in ministry to pastors and their teams. From March 12-15 we sponsored the training of 25 pastors which is our third session in a 4-year program that equips pastors and develops their leadership capacity. Leaders from 5 denominations and 10 churches from all over Bulgaria come together for in-depth training on expository preaching, fellowship, networking and corporate prayer. Pastors from 5 denominations and 10 churches come together for TNT on Expository Preaching. Your partnership builds up the leadership capacity of the church in Bulgaria.”*



## Meeting Jesus, Meeting Needs in Sweden

Zabi was born into a law-enforcement family in central Afghanistan. His family was under constant threat from the Taliban. One spring day, during a family wedding, the Taliban attacked the venue, exploded several bombs, and murdered many relatives. Zabi, his aunt and uncle, and several others escaped to the mountains. After a harrowing two-week trip, they arrived in Iran and later joined the millions who have immigrated to Europe.

Zabi and his aunt and uncle were placed in the refugee camp on Gotland. In the last two years, they've attended various outreaches at the FA church. Two months ago, Zabi, following the lead of his aunt and uncle, gave his life to Christ. Just two weeks ago, he bravely got baptized in his new faith. He continues to be an active member of our youth group, and he eagerly participates in discipleship.

The trials, however, are far from over. Immigration authorities will deport upwards of 80,000 newly arrived refugees in the next year or so... and Zabi is on the deportation list due to an age discrepancy in his paperwork. We are told that most Afghanistans have approximate birthdates, and many children aren't

registered with the government until 2 years after their birth, thus causing many age discrepancies. This discrepancy causes him to fall into a different immigration category - one that ultimately results in deportation. His aunt and uncle on the other hand, have both received their permanent residency.

We've spoken at length about courage and costly obedience. Though it's our desire and prayer that Zabi remain with us on Gotland, we feel we may be sending a young Christian back to Afghanistan, but this time as an ambassador for Christ.





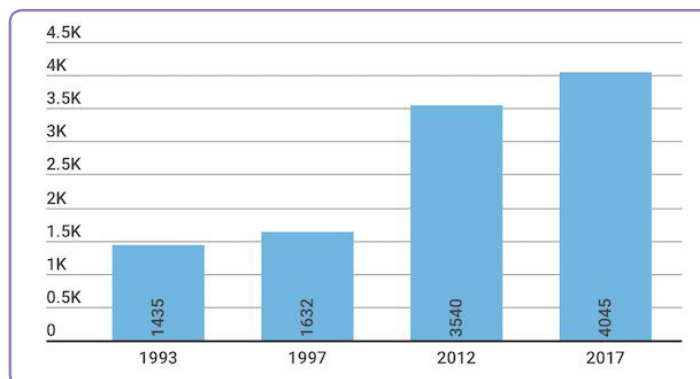
# Spain Surpasses 4,000 Evangelical Churches!

God is at work in Spain with 87 new places of worship opening within the last six months of 2017. The recently published semiannual report of the Observatory of Religious Pluralism (of the Spanish Justice Ministry) shows that places of worship in Spain continue to grow. There are now 4,045 evangelical places of worship throughout the country.

**It is the first time in history that this figure has been reached.** Data shows that there has been a sustained growth throughout the decade, despite the economic difficulties and the obstacles that many congregations face when requesting permits for the construction or opening of places of worship.

Statistics indicate that there are six churches per month planted in Spain. That's a church and a half per week which comes to 82 churches a year and the figures keep growing.

*This is exciting news for church planters, pastors in Spain, missionaries, sending churches and supporters like you. Praise God that we are seeing fruit!*



(Above) Number of evangelical places of worship in Spain by year, according to Observatory of Religious Pluralism/ Evangelical Focus.

## Raising Up the Next Generation of Leaders



Dan and Anna Julian minister in Valencia, Spain with a focus on developing leaders through the ministry of the Escuela Evangélica de Teología (Evangelical School of Theology).

David (next to Dan, who is on the far right) is one of the young leaders Dan is helping to mentor and train. Earlier this month, David organized a student gathering for those living in and around Valencia, and Dan

led a brief seminar on discipleship with an eye towards believers in their 20's and 30's.

Also being trained are two students (on the far left of the picture) who work at a rehab center, and many of

their residents fall into this generation. The student sitting fourth from the right (in photo) pastors a church with several congregants in this age range.

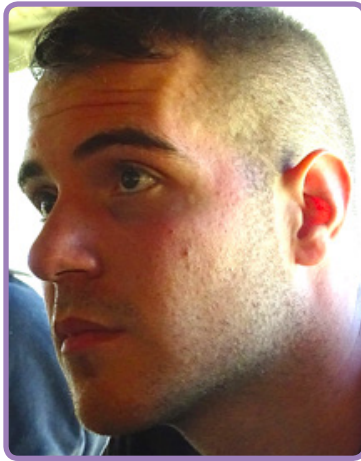
It was very encouraging to hear them celebrating the good and unique things about Millennials, and it was equally encouraging to work with them to develop plans for edifying and nurturing these men and women.

***Pray with us that they would implement these plans and that God would be pleased to work through this generation to draw many in Spain to Himself!***

# Finding Faith at Camps in Romania

**Yes! He may become a true believer! From Tinu Leontiuc:** Winter is almost over, and I am thinking of a new location for the camps this year. There are many details to consider when planning the camps. In this process, I came across a picture...

That picture brought into my memory the face of a young man who attended the family and singles camp last year. His name is Razvan and I followed him during the 10 days of the camp. He is a serious and disciplined young man, maybe a little too quiet and introverted, but well integrated among the campers. (By the way, not all the campers succeed in this integration.)



Razvan is an orthodox Christian, but a nominal one.

He did not practice his nominal faith. This was the first Christian camp (with a large majority of campers as evangelicals) he ever attended. Razvan confessed that though he was from an orthodox family he “seldom attended a church service.” But, he added, “here it was well, really well.” He told us on the camp’s last day, “I would like so much to attend camp once again.”

So, we have a new item on our prayer list: Razvan! Please pray that the Holy Spirit will work in him, bringing the Gospel alive and then strengthen his faith in another New Hope camp in this year.

*And please pray for us, too. We need wisdom, strength, and power; we need volunteers, resources and funds (mainly to renew our old, old camping gear). Thank you very much for your support during 2017. We really need it in 2018, too. May God reward you richly and keep you in His grace and in good health during this year!*



**From B.J. Whitaker:** It is counter-cultural for men in Spain (and probably anywhere, non-Christian or Christian) to share challenges, fears, broken relationships and difficult life situations, but this was a weekend where many men found the safety and freedom to do just that.

Praise God with us that He was

## Meeting Men in Spain

more than just present among us:

attended the camp included:

He stirred us and moved us to be real and to keep growing through our imperfections into the image of our perfect Hero, Jesus.

At our men’s camp we had about 35 men from various area churches, as well as some men who aren’t yet followers of Jesus. Men came together and enjoyed friendly competition over foosball, took part in a discussion after watching Hacksaw Ridge, all while enjoying a Spanish cured ham and cheese board.

Some feedback from the men who

- *“I came feeling loaded down with burdens, but I left them at the foot of the cross with Jesus, and I’m going home with renewed strength”* (from a pastor who participated)
- *“I really felt something different: I want to bring my whole family to an evangelical event like this!”* (a non-Christian for whom this was his first exposure to evangelical Christians)

*Please pray for us as we continue to point men to Him!*

# The World Cafe: Connecting Community in England



**Rita and Vidas Rimke** work in the city of Gloucester, England, alongside Brunswick Baptist Church. In 2010, this missionary family from Lithuania joined ECM to work alongside churches in Gloucester.

World Cafe started in their neighborhood. It began by reaching out to a Polish family and welcoming them

into their home. Mundane conversations turned into prayer, discovery and openness to the Spirit of God. Refugees and asylum seekers now come for a meal at church and have opportunity to have basic needs met. The World Cafe meets every two weeks and is a vibrant time of fun, food and connecting with people.

Out of this, a new project has emerged called “The Table of Christ Church.” The vision is a ‘Give-what-you-can’ cafe run at a local Anglican church, in partnership with the church and community there. The hope is to build on the World Cafe’s success and create a place where refugees, asylum seekers and other members of the local community can come together. Rita reports, *“We never thought we would be part of such an exciting journey. We are reimagining church!”*

## Meeting the Lord’s People in Germany

From **Christiaan and Kseniya Kooiman, Ellis Koelewijn** in Schwerin, Germany:

The workers of ECMI find themselves engaged in Spirit-filled, Spirit-led innovative initiatives that are reaching the peoples of Europe. One such project can be found in former Eastern Germany, in the town of Schwerin. This area is filled with social challenges including high levels of unemployment, poverty among families and children, and large numbers of immigrants.

A year and a half ago, the ECMI team bought an old, broken-down building and started renovating it with people who were also “broken.” They called it the Patchwork Center. During this time, an amazing community has grown up. They see each other every day, and work and eat together. People from all types of backgrounds come to receive help including mothers with small children, school children who are failing in classes, men with drug and psychological problems, and the homeless. At the Patchwork

Center, many are developing life skills that include developing a daily structure, new work skills and perseverance to finish tasks. Through conflicts that have arisen, the team has had opportunities to talk about the Lord and how He can help.

Lord willing, the group will finish the renovations by the end of April 2018. At that time the Patchwork Center will have a cafe, a place for music, and workshops for men and women. They also hope to rent two rooms for “Kindertafel” (a place where children can eat a warm meal for free).

**Most importantly, the Patchwork Center is a place where all people can meet God; everyone at his or her own tempo.**





# Bringing Students to Christ in Ukraine

In January, the New Hope Ukraine team summed up some of the work done in 2017 with students using this amazing statistic: **they reached 41,546 students in public schools and universities.** We are very excited because this is the largest number in the history of the New Hope Ukraine ministry.

Reaching thousands of students continues to be important. Most recently, training for public school ministry took place in the city of Kherson, which is very close to Crimea. There were 24 participants, mostly from southern parts of Ukraine. The coordinator of this ministry is friend and coworker, Nazar Ilkiv.

We are really excited about one particular person for



whom we have been praying for more than ten years. This is Nazar's father, Stepan. In December he made a decision for Christ and wants to be baptized as part of the new church we are planting! Stepan is one of three people who want to be baptized and join our new church. Bible correspondence courses have also begun in 2018 with many blessings!

From Olya Senkev: *"I am happy to say that in January, the Bible Correspondence Course Program had a good start with 25 new students. I received letters from 107 students, and 7 of them made decisions for Christ. And that is only in January! God by His mercy gives us more than we can expect."*



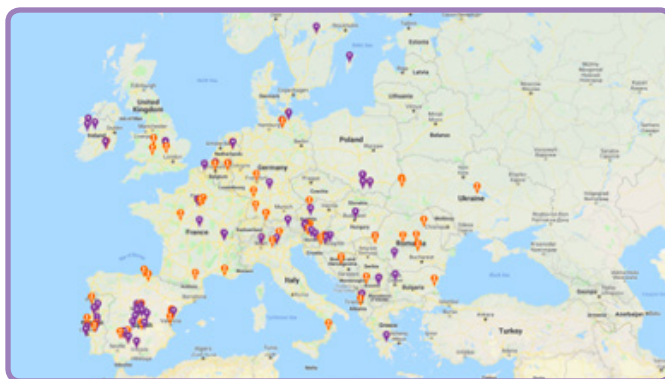
# ECMI Annual Report

As the stories in this edition of “Mission Vision” depict, 2017 has been a year where people in Europe are **meeting people, meeting needs and meeting Jesus**. Here are a few facts and figures to help you see that the story is much bigger and these are only beginning to scratch the surface of what God is doing!

- **George Brown, ECMI Director**

## Countries where our ministry is happening:

Albania	Italy
Austria	Kosovo
Belgium	Malta
Bosnia	Netherlands
Bulgaria	Poland
Croatia	Portugal
England	Romania
France	Serbia
Germany	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
Ireland	Ukraine
	Pan-European



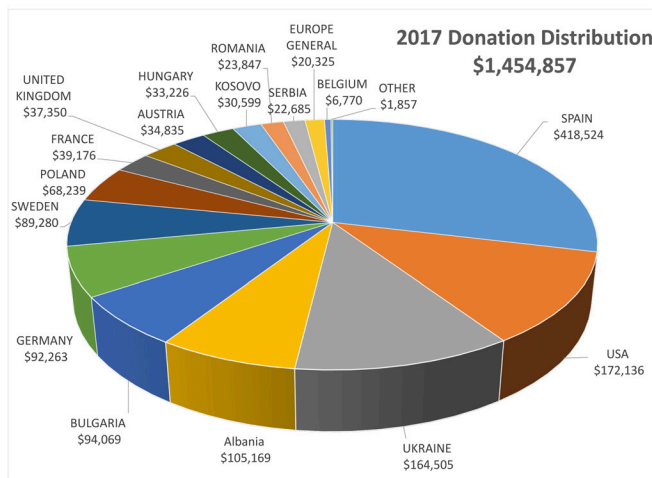
## Mission-wide

**214** long-term missionaries  
**75** home or national workers  
**139** expat missionaries

*\*Numerous short-term individuals and teams not included*

## ECMI-USA Section

**57** USA Section Workers in Europe  
**37** home or national workers  
**15** long term US workers  
**5** short term workers  
**5** new workers deployed for ministry  
**1** new candidate for Germany



**Main Office**  
 5550 Tech Center Dr Suite 307  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80919-2308

**Financial Office**  
 PO Box 2217  
 Monument CO 80132-2279

Phone: 877-874-3264  
 E-mail: [ecmi.usa@ecmi.org](mailto:ecmi.usa@ecmi.org)

[www.ecmi-usa.org](http://www.ecmi-usa.org)

ECMI is an international agency whose mission is to establish and develop reproducing churches that evangelize and disciple the peoples of Europe; its vision is to see the peoples of Europe transformed in the name of Jesus Christ. ECM International has more than 200 missionaries working in 24 different countries in Europe, using creative and innovative mission initiatives. Missionaries come to ECMI from Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Korea, and Africa, as well as North, Central and South America.