

**INSIDE:**

*A bumpy ride in Kosova;  
Chasing Rainbows in Portugal  
and take a hike in Waterford*

# Zorbing with God



# OUR MISSION

ECM Ireland's aim is to glorify God through the planting and development of churches that will evangelize and disciple the peoples of Europe. It is only through worshipping, loving, communities that Europe can really experience transformational change.

## WE BELIEVE

We believe that Europe needs to hear and see the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Europe has become a complex multicultural and multi religious continent full of challenges but God continues to work and His light still shines in Europe where He continues to move forward and build His church.

## WE BELIEVE

We believe that church planting is the strategy to transform Europe. God has chosen the church as His instrument to reach the whole world with His gospel of salvation. By having Jesus' love, people change, local communities change, then surrounding communities, regions, and through regions, countries are transformed and through countries the whole of Europe.

## WE PRAY

*Your Kingdom come ... in Europe,  
Your will be done ... in Europe. Amen.*



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*European Christian Mission Ireland is an interdenominational, evangelical, missionary organization working in Europe.  
ECM Ireland is a registered charity no: XN6 3416*



# The Director's Chair

by Charlie Anderson

## “ZORBING”

## WITH GOD

I was recently asked to draw an image of what I would like my relationship with God to look like and the verse that came to mind was *‘in Him we live and move and have our being...’* (Acts 17: 28). The image I drew was like someone inside a ‘zorbing ball,’ a person completely surrounded by God’s presence.

Now you may not know much about zorbing – I have to be honest and say neither do I but it is one of these new extreme sports where you are strapped inside a large plastic ball which is set rolling on various terrains.

It strikes me that this is a good metaphor for the Christian life generally and particularly life in mission. As you read on you will find the Avilas, the McCrackens, the Holmes and others who are all in a sense ‘zorbing with God’. Their stories reflect the sense of risk, and excitement, the known security yet perceived instability, as we journey with God. Looking back our missionaries see the bumpy patches in the journey and the panic, as we wonder ‘is God really in control?’ It is an ongoing faith choice to accept the path, trust God that He knows what He is doing, and recognise that we are all still safest, inside the ball.

# Chasing Rainbows

## Anna Crawford



I am a rainbow of backgrounds, diverse, fitting in everywhere, yet never totally comfortable anywhere, whether Africa, Asia or Europe. I was born in Kenya, where my parents had immigrated from Goa (a former Portuguese colony). I was brought up in all the Roman Catholic traditions. Yet, from an early age, I rebelled and questioned what was expected from me. At a Church of England boarding school in Kenya I encountered Jesus for the first time. It was a very dramatic and immediate conversion and changed my world.

My over-enthusiastic sharing of Christ to all and sundry was not appreciated by the Goan community. My friends, family and relations distanced themselves from me. My parents even asked me to leave home or give up this 'cult' I was involved in. During this difficult and intensely lonely time, the Psalms sustained me, especially Psalm 32 *"I will lead you and teach you the way you should go"*. Mind you, I cheerfully ignored the second part of the verse, *"Do not be like the mule etc."* Many painful lessons have been learnt because of this!

Because of political changes in Kenya at that time, like thousands of others born under colonialism and holding British passports, I moved to the UK. What an immense culture shock that was! I thought the advert, "Take Courage" was something to do with the War effort and not an English beer! I got a job in Harrods, London and entered a different world. During this time God gave me an amazing English friend, Margaret, who even today, is there for me. Her unstinting friendship and acceptance of me helped towards my maturity as a Christian.

God led me to Bible College in Glasgow, where I met this amazing guy called Peter Crawford, whose

strength of character and faith was and still is an example to me. My first visit to N Ireland with Peter was an eye opener. A dear friend of my late mother-in-law asked her, in front of me, whether I spoke English! Cultural diversity is not a strong point in Northern Ireland! What stands out most in my mind is being introduced to Lynda who, just accepted me as I was, and that was something beautiful.

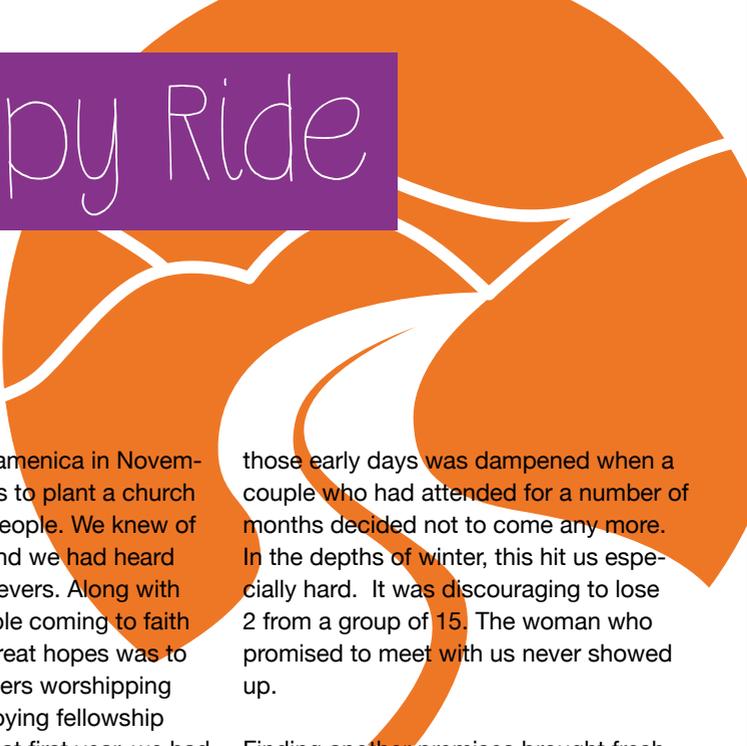
Our years in Pakistan in mission, following our marriage, was a difficult and trying experience, with occasional bursts of joy (our 3 children were born there), and a rich mission community. However, long term, I lost my sense of well being and confidence in myself. After 18 years there it was a struggle to adjust again to our home culture, (although in my case, it wasn't really home at all). However we experienced a sense of calm and stability and for me, personally, it was a time to re-build what I had lost, gaining confidence in who I was as a person.

Seven years later we felt God challenging us to move on and so we have been in Portugal for the past several years. I have witnessed God's remarkable power at work in the way the Park of the Nations church has come into being, and God has opened up many rich friendships and a wide variety of ministries.

Some years before our move to Portugal, during a debriefing session, I was encouraged to draw a road-map of what I wanted to be doing in 5 years time . What I am doing now is exactly what I dreamt about then. I am still chasing rainbows, still learning painful lessons, still rejoicing in the many blessings I experience and still learning to depend totally on God and experience the power of God within me.



# A Bumpy Ride



When we moved to Kamenica in November 2011, the goal was to plant a church among the Albanian people. We knew of one Christian family and we had heard about a few other believers. Along with our desire to see people coming to faith in Christ, one of our great hopes was to see the existing believers worshipping God together and enjoying fellowship with one another. In that first year, we had precious times in our apartment with one couple as we studied the Bible together. A young woman promised to meet with us when she came home from the capital city at weekends. We spent hours with the Christian family in the village when we visited a couple of times each week.

At the opening of the church in Kamenica, the town mayor welcomed us and said he looked forward to working together in the community. But then, a local religious leader preached against us, our landlord asked us to leave, and people really started to notice us. Local Christians could no longer be anonymous in society. Some other people came to those early services, probably out of politeness and curiosity. They said they liked what they saw and heard, but they didn't come back. The excitement of

those early days was dampened when a couple who had attended for a number of months decided not to come any more. In the depths of winter, this hit us especially hard. It was discouraging to lose 2 from a group of 15. The woman who promised to meet with us never showed up.

Finding another premises brought fresh hope, and our new landlord was very helpful. The students who had enrolled for English classes moved with us and many more enrolled. We soon felt established and settled in our new neighbourhood, but we were constantly thinking about those who had chosen not to be with us and praying that God would bring them back.

And God was working. A young lady told us she had decided to follow Christ as a result of what she had learned in the Bible studies in our home and through coming to church for a while. In the early spring, two young men started meeting for Bible study, eventually saying that they wanted to follow Christ. It was another burst of hope for the church. But, the hope faded somewhat when none of these three joined us on Sundays.



*Bringing Europe to Life*

And still God worked. The 2 older girls from the Christian family were baptised in the summer. New people occasionally came to the Sunday services. One man began to attend regularly, and after a while his wife and 2 younger boys came too. We were always welcome in their home, and soon Dan started reading the Bible with them. One of the men who had confessed his faith in Christ in the spring has experienced great opposition from his family and yet he meets often with Dan and speaks about Jesus with others. Recently he asked for a Bible

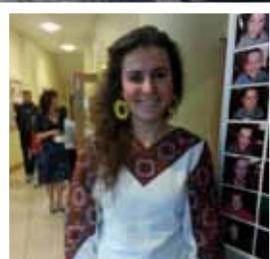
for his sister, and even more recently he wanted a new Bible for himself because he had given his own away!

God has given us favour in the eyes of our community: over 60 students in the English classes; over 150 young men at the latest football tournament; more patients at the dental clinic run by the church than our colleague can treat. We pray that one day these people will join with us in worshipping the true God.

*Dan & Primrose Avila*



## In the Mission of God



Recently I've wished I had been more attentive to the News in the

late 1980's as the Communist structures started to unravel and fall apart in Eastern Europe! Now so many of the countries we thought would never change politically are essentially free, yet at that time it was just more 'World News' much the same way as Afghanistan, Syria or Central African Republic are today. It seems all too far away to directly impact us, yet God sees his world very differently. He is "global not local" and he calls us to think "missionally not parochially". As Christians our world extends to the ends of the earth, while at the same time living locally in a tiny corner of Ireland or wherever!

I am particularly concerned about what is happening in Ukraine. The stand-off between the pro-Europeans in the west and pro-Russian parties in the east continues daily with protestors sloggng it out against the government's riot police in ugly fights while the pro-Russian government manipulates legislation to foil the opposition. During the former Soviet

Union, Ukraine was known as the 'bread basket' of the USSR and then in the 90's it became the 'spiritual epicentre of Europe' with massive church growth. Now the country is being ripped apart.

In our tiny corner of Ireland it feels a long way away but to Olia Kryvtka (pictured top left) a student at Belfast Bible College who was staying with us in December, it is all too real. Olia comes from Lviv in the west near the Polish border, and her father has been to Kiev to join the protests. There is so much sad history with Russia, and a hundred years of bad experiences living under Soviet rule during which millions died of systematised starvation in the 1930's. I will also be meeting up in Krakow with Sasko Neznamutdinov (a missionary in Poland, introduced to you in our last ECM Life). Sasko is watching the same bloody scenes on webcast that are all too real for him too. Could it be that my friends' feelings about what is going on in their country is a microcosm of how God aches personally for His world, into which He has invited us to be co-workers with Him in the Mission of God?

*Stuart Rowell*

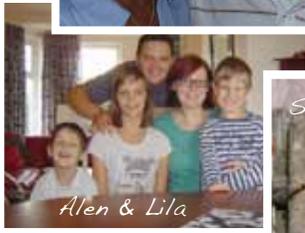
*Peter & Anna*



*Novica and Tamara*



*Alen & Lila*



*Szczepan & Kamila*



*Charlie & Tania*



## PRAYER ~ PULL OUT

### **Sasko - Poland**

- for clear vision about the long-term commitment. Praise the Lord there is a general conviction that the city I would like to focus on is Krakow.
- pray for a good and healthy church-planting environment and team for me to be a part of.
- for ECM's vision and strategy for Poland.

### **Szczepan - Polish Outreach, Northern Ireland**

- Pray for English students and opportunities to engage in their lives and with the gospel.
- Marriage course (23 Feb. - 20 April) and our Bible studies
- Polish Mission Church - Pray that we recognize God given opportunities and walk into them in obedience, rather than get involved in things that are simply doing more stuff.
- Family -Health for all of us. Wise decisions re: moving (looks like our house may be sold before summer.) We are grateful for the time God allowed us to be here.

### ***Alen & Lila Kerčmar - Slovenia***

- We are thankful for all who are coming along to the various Bible study groups. Pray that these people would come to know Jesus and serve Him, and be encouraged in their walk.
- The Family church services and coffee time are well attended. Our prayer is that people are challenged to think about their walk with the Lord and that He would move mightily in their hearts.
- Our prayer letter is available on request from ECM office. Thank you for your all your prayers, support, and encouragement.

### ***Colin & Ally Holmes - Waterford, Ireland***

- Give thanks for all participating in 'Christianity Explored.' Pray for courage to commit as we consider what it means to follow Jesus at the end of the course (24th March).
- Those who are in final year of primary school will be invited to join the Pulse Youth group after Easter. Pray they would be welcomed.
- Pray for wisdom as we consider moving our Church meeting to the morning for a trial period.
- Pray for a suitable Summer team to help us serve the community and particularly continue to share with children and youth.

### ***Charis Tully - Tramore, Ireland***

- Praise God that I have been working in Tramore for 1 year! Praise also for continued prayer and financial support!
- Please pray for decisions as to what ministries to continue, change, get involved with, or start during this year and for kids club on Wednesday afternoons .
- Please continue to pray for the Tramore Bible Church current leadership (especially elders Daniel and Ian) that God will raise up more leaders and people to take on more responsibilities.



### ***Charlie and Tania Deering - Madrid, Spain***

- Praise God doors continue to open for English classes. Elena, our neighbour asked Tania to help her 6 year old boys. Pray for that relationship.
- Our Spotlight English Club has 10-15 attending every Thursday night discussing various topics. Pray they will start asking questions.
- Pray for our home group as we ask "What is the vision God is giving us for the town of Mecó?" Pray for a spiritual hunger and openness to the gospel in Mecó itself.
- We'd appreciate prayer for perseverance for Naomi as she completes her Masters, and for Mark as he gains experience as an outdoor pursuits instructor

### ***Sebastian & Gloria Forjan - Radovljica, Slovenia***

- The doctors found another brain aneurysm in Sebastian's head at the end of last year. It really challenged us both in faith. Please pray that we won't fear, but trust that God is in control, that we would grow in character and will continue to use this life struggle to share our hope with others.
- Thank you for praying for our family and investing into the ministry in Radovljica, please keep praying.



### ***Peter and Anna Crawford - Lisbon, Portugal***

- Anna attends a Member Care Conference in Germany for ECM (end of March). Pray it will be of help in her ongoing relationships with ECM's member care facilitators.
- We need wisdom and guidance as we help out with the Alta Lisboa and Bairro Alto church-planting projects, while continuing to be involved with the Parque das Nações church, "A Ponte".
- Peter's role of co-ordinating ministries across ECM is becoming clearer. Pray as he works with Jim Memory and Fey Cotter for unity in long term decision-making.
- We are grateful for continued prayer and financial support. Pray that this will continue.

### ***Jonathan & Nicola McCracken - Claremorris, Ireland***

- Please keep praying for the regular, "Truth to Live By" studies on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm and for Nicola's one to one times with Samantha.
- As a family, we're looking forward to the ECM Biennial Conference in Croatia. It is encouraging to see David & Sarah's enthusiasm to meet up with friends there and we pray they will be really blessed during this special week.
- Pray too for wisdom in knowing how we could use a team during the summer as we continue to think about reaching out in our new situation.

### ***Stuart Rowell: 2013 - a year of multiple opportunities***

- March 2nd Ballydown Presbyterian Church morning service
- 14 -23 March: Visiting supporters and missionaries in Germany
- 23-27 March: European member Care Consultation -Germany
- 28-1st April: Albania for ABI board meeting
- 5-12 April: ECM Biennial Conference -Croatia
- 19-26 May: Albania & 28 May - June 3 Pastors to Pastors vision trip in Slovenia

### ***Dan and Primrose – Kamenica, Kosova***

- Praise God for the many contacts each week through English classes, youth and sports activities, and the dental clinic.
- Pray for the family that Dan reads the Bible with each week.
- Pray for the Christian couple who recently renewed contact with us and would like to spend time with us regularly, but not at church.
- Pray for the planning of short term summer teams—one to do a practical project in a local school, and the other to do children's / youth work and practical work



### ***Vimal and Louise - Germany***

In an accident at the start of the year, Vimal's sister broke her leg severely requiring screws to be inserted. This complicated surgery cost a lot of money. It was then discovered that her gallbladder also required surgery. Please pray for this lady and her children. They need God's help and care. Please pray for the bills to be covered.



### ***Novica and Tamara Srbulovic - Serbia***

- Please pray that God will help folk grow closer to Him in the women's meetings recently started at churches in Zajecar and Bor. Pray that we will know God's guidance as we start an International Community Bible Study Course (CBSI) soon too.
- Pray for God's leading as we plan the general work and teams for this year.
- Pray for the support to come in for the children and youth camps in the summer.
- Please pray for my mum's hernia operation in February, that God will give a quick recovery.

### ***Charlie & Office***

- Pray the Biennial Conference in Croatia (April 5th-12th) will be a blessing to all involved.
- Please pray for some new missionaries to come forward in ECM Ireland.

# ECM NEWS

*Bringing Europe to Life*



## **Rachel Gilmore and Christophe Coural CONGRATULATIONS!!**

“Christophe Coural became a Christian through the church in Tours about 6 months after I arrived. On 4th January this year, we got engaged and are planning to marry in late May 2014! The plan is that he will come here, study English and hopefully find work, so that we can settle in N.I for the longer term.”

**Lourdes** is sitting her first Accounting Technician's exams in May and will be doing this in her second language (Spanish is her first.) With new vocabulary and concepts to grasp she would be very grateful for your prayers that all will go well.



## **Mizpah House**

We would like to thank all who contributed financially and with clothing to the Mizpah House Project which ran in the summer through to just before Christmas. The Cocars have now found a house to rent where these Romanian women and their babies can find refuge and safety.





"Take delight in the  
Lord and He will give  
you the desires of  
your heart".  
Psalm 37 v 4

## Getting the desires of your heart

It can be a bit dangerous to set your heart on something. What if it isn't the right thing? The fact is that early in the process of trying to sell our house in Tramore and move to Mayo, this verse in Psalm 37 lingered unusually in my mind. Perhaps, the reason for that stretches right back to the early stirrings regarding a missionary future when the idea of being involved in setting up a church from the beginning, fired my Christian imagination. Two periods of ministry in Carlow and Waterford from mid- 1998 until mid-2013 gave us many insights to ministry, people and church development. Looking at the experience, we can see that we have gone progressively back in the process to a pure church-planting role, something that attracted us to Christian work in the first place. We can only say that those 15 years were years of training, shaping and moulding for the next stage....the learning has just begun again in a new way and if you've been "blessed" with an Irish view of providence.... maybe we'll get it right the third time!

After several months, we now have a regular Bible study going on in the town centre of Claremorris and at the local GAA (Irish football) centre. Whilst out and about in Claremorris speaking to townspeople on their doorsteps, it was another one of my



heart's desires to be able to have a group of local people to sit down with and discuss the vital message of the Scriptures. There's a small group of between 5 and 8 who come each week to consider what God's word has to say. "Truth to Live By" runs each Thursday evening at 7.30pm and after the essential cup of tea or coffee, we read a passage together. The people are at different stages of the journey, from keen, but lacking knowledge and understanding, to those who have a firmer grasp of Christian truth yet struggle to see that applied in their lives in a decisive way. We can all know something of that and so each fresh encounter together with God's word always creates the opportunity for growth.

I could also mention the house we're living in and how it came up quickly to rent and how it suits our needs amazingly well. The kindly landlord has made sure, from the start, that everything is in order for us. We can marvel at how, 2 days after we actually moved to Claremorris, we accepted the only offer to buy our home in Tramore that we had received over the previous 9 months. The offer went through to a successful sale. It seemed that God had graciously confirmed the move and enlarged our faith in the process.

Getting back to Psalm 37....? Surely, the first part of verse 4 is the most important. Taking delight in God is key to conditioning our hearts to dwell on those things with which He is pleased and "moves" to bless.

# GET REAL!!!

## Taking the myth out of missions

Have you ever heard a missionary report and thought they seemed a really fantastic Christian? If you think missionaries are really like that then you're in for a shock as we explode some myths about missions.



### **Myth 1: Missionaries are special because they're super-spiritual.**

Missionaries have weaknesses and flaws just like us. They're special because they're sharing God's love with the lost in difficult places. But remember - we need to be witnesses here too!

### **Myth 2: Short-termers are all that's needed.**

Short-termers do a lot of good, but they can't do it alone. They need guidance and support from long-term workers who understand the local culture and speak the local language.



### **Myth 3: Local people can do it alone.**

Half the countries in Europe have less than 1% evangelical populations. This means they still need help. Let's find ways we can serve them effectively together in God's service.

### **Myth 4: Europe is already Christian.**

While there are true Christians in every country, the frightening reality is that most Europeans have no meaningful contact with a Bible-believing Christian. Europe needs to rehear the gospel!





**Myth 5: All missionaries must have a call.**

Some people do hear God's clear direction to the mission field. But for others the call is less specific and God reveals his will as they take steps in faith and obedience.

**Myth 6: Mission is only for the gifted.**

Jesus empowers all believers to be his witnesses wherever they live and go....so look for opportunities to be one when you travel. But some people are specially gifted for cross-cultural service.



**Myth 7: Everyone on the mission field gets along.**

Teams made up of people from different countries, doctrinal backgrounds and personalities is a good recipe for tension and relational breakdown. However we still strive for unity in our diversity.

**Myth 8: Once called, missionaries never move on.**

God is a God of change and that means He will lead people on to new opportunities. Some families have moved on from ECM and we'd like to share where they are now.



*Olivers (pictured above right) - Andy and Ela worked in church planting and leadership training in Tirana,Albania. Andy is now an army chaplain based in Germany.*

*Rachel Gilmore - worked in Tours, France with ECM. She says 'for the past 11 months I've been working on the French customer service lines in a call centre and have picked up some piano pupils and French students to supplement my income. I am still trusting that God will guide and that He holds the future in His hands.'*



One Saturday in January we agreed to look after our friends' daughter as they both ventured out on a hike with some of their friends. As we were inside, and the hailstones battered our window, we were glad it was they who were braving the elements not us! Chatting afterwards, in the warmth of their home, it seemed they all had a great time together and although the weather was challenging they had all been prepared. They were going on a hike after all, not just going out for a stroll in the park.

January with us has been stormy and wet. It can be a long, hard month for many, and not just in terms of the weather. For ourselves it was a month in which our kids had their share of sickness and colds and a good few weeks of disrupted sleep, which left us pretty weary. Also in

ministry there seemed to be a few disappointments. One teenager, who was full of questions, has moved away. One week in church we had a number of teens who messed around and disrupted the meeting.

Yet God has graciously given us all that we need to keep going. When going for a hike it's good to be prepared. Before Christmas as we travelled through John's gospel in church we were well prepared, as Jesus reminded his disciples that to follow in his footsteps was a hard road. (John 15.18-25, 16.33).

It's also good to know you're not alone. As Jesus left the disciples He left them in the care of each other (John 13.34-35). God graciously provides us with Christian community. We are glad for the team



# Five Years In...

Chris Wigram  
(International Director)

we serve with (Simon and Dani Ball and Karen Laird), as well as others in church, who encourage us.

And it's good to see the sun come out, as God encourages us with what He is doing. One girl who has been coming to church over the past few months is so keen to be involved in Christianity Explored, and we can see God working. He is also providing, as Ebony Badman joins us for 6 months from Australia. It has been great to see her getting off to a great start and being willing to get stuck right in.

There is also of course the destination. There are moments when we see glimpses of what could be here and of the church we pray God is building, particularly thinking of one local believer who has recently been so enthusiastic about learning to lead bible study.

Nothing beats the feeling of returning after a hike, getting changed and fed and enjoying the comfort of home. Jesus reminded his disciples of a home in heaven he was preparing through his death (John 14.1-4). Really this is the hope that fuels us, as, with the church God is building here, we are travelling home together.

I have completed five years with ECM and it has been a very stimulating and rewarding time of service. I have learned a lot about Europe and also about what God is doing across the continent. There is so much creativity as Europeans wrestle with the realities of a post Christendom continent. So how have we worked to help ECM make a difference?

- There is a new International Leadership Team (ILT) which has helped to bring greater co ordination and integration between the different areas of ECM International's ministry. The ILT reflects a good balance between those whose focus is mobilizing and those in ministry in the different fields.
- There are now mission-wide training initiatives aimed at strengthening teams and help individuals fulfill their potential.
- A new generation of leaders have taken up positions of responsibility.
- Member care for ECM personnel has been improved with dedicated personnel and policies now in place.
- New web-sites reflect the creativity of ECM as it responds to the challenge of mission in Europe.

Of course the journey has not been without its bumpy patches and times when we have wondered about the risks involved but as in every Christian's journey we trust that we are going where God leads, through His grace and strength.

# O P P O R T U N I T I E S



## **LONG-TERM**

*Church planter: Lisbon, Portugal*

People to work in an existing church plant or help to develop new church plants as part of a growing network in Lisbon.

*Teacher of English: Wroclaw, Poland*

Teaching English as a foreign language in a Language School. You should also be willing to reach out to students, build relationships and share your life.

*Church Developers: Waterford, Ireland*

People to join the team Ferrybank to further develop this new church plant. You invest in relationships with locals in which the gospel is central.

**ECM BELIEVES THAT  
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WORDS AND AC-  
TIONS. IN THIS WAY  
EUROPE CAN  
CHANGE**

## **SHORT-TERM**

*Help in church plant; Rostock, Germany*

A young man to help to develop the church plant in Rostock (3 months - 2 years)

*'Green Fingers' for drug rehab centre;  
Maastricht, Netherlands*

Come for a few weeks to assist our team in weeding, tending crops, digging, mixing compost.

*Mizpah Centre; Timisoara, Romania*

Experienced and/or trained social workers (female) and for project teams with skilled builders, tradesmen or landscapers.

For more details and other opportunities see [www.ecmi.org/get-involved/service-opportunities/](http://www.ecmi.org/get-involved/service-opportunities/)

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*ECM Ireland is a registered charity no: XN6 3416*