



ecm life

Newsletter of European Christian Mission Ireland
Summer, 2018



**Europe:
full of churches
full of people?**

OUR MISSION

ECM Ireland's aim is to glorify God through the planting and development of churches that will evangelise and disciple the peoples of Europe.

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 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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ECM Ireland welcomes John

John Boyd from the Ballymena area, has recently joined the ECM Ireland Council.

John has a background in mission, business and finance and we are delighted to welcome him to the team and look forward to benefiting from his help and expertise.



WEDDING IN KRAKOW



Photo by iainirwin.com

Sasko (Krakow, Poland) is getting married to Anna Pyzia on the 13th July 2018 in St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Krakow.

We are delighted with this wonderful news and wish them both God's richest blessing for their wedding day and for their married life ahead. Congratulations and have a great day!

European Christian Mission Ireland is an interdenominational, evangelical, missionary organization working in Europe.

ECM Ireland is a registered charity no: 102665



The Director's Chair

We want to see Europe full of churches, full of people, full of Jesus

The image of a church full of people, a great congregation gathered for worship, is reminiscent of the Apostle John's vision recorded in Rev 7:9; *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...*

It might seem to be a long leap of imagination to draw a comparison between this 'glorious and magnificent throng' to a small group of believers in Claremorris (Ireland) or Murska Sobota (Slovenia) but such a leap of faith is what Jesus calls for when he asks us to pray, 'your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

Many of the articles in this magazine reflect how God is answering this prayer because the little congregations of believers across Europe are, in effect, the embryo here 'on earth', of all that the great gathering of the redeemed will be 'in heaven.'



Charlie Anderson

Many already reflect the multicultural nature of the church of Jesus Christ as Vimal's article highlights, and all seek to be communities where God is honoured as King, and Jesus is celebrated as Saviour.

It cannot be ridiculous therefore to want to see, and have the faith to pray for, a Europe: full of churches, full of people, full of Jesus.



Go to ecmireland.org to watch the latest videos of God's mission in Europe.

Introducing Lindsay:

Meet our new ECM Ireland Director.



Lindsay, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Hello! I'm married to Mark and we have a little boy, Seth, who is one. I live in Bangor Northern Ireland. My husband is a Children's worker at Hamilton Road Pres. Church, which is the church we attend as a family. One day a week I run a small Home Interiors business called Form Natural Design where I make contemporary tables and accessories for the home.

What were you doing before this job?

For the past 9 years I have had the privilege of being the Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP) Coordinator. MAP is a network of around 45 mission agencies who are all based in N.I.

but work all over the world. I am passionate about partnership and working together to extend the gospel and this is essentially the ethos of MAP. MAP's main aim is to work together with the local church to 'inspire, mobilise and equip for mission'. Prior to MAP I studied at Cornhill Bible College in Belfast and, before that, I spent a year in Malawi doing a short-term internship with SIM.

What prompted you to take on the role of ECM Ireland Director?

God did! Over the last two years my husband and I have felt a deepening desire from God to be involved in ministry in those areas where it is spiritually dry or there is a lack of church – and this is what ECM is all about.



When I came home from Malawi I had a growing passion and desire to develop my skills in Member Care. MAP afforded me some opportunities to develop these skills through various training events and interaction with mission partners and I am so excited that I am now able to put what I have been learning into practice.

When I read out the job description to my husband, we both felt that it was the type of job that would suit my particular skill set and passions. I prayed about it and there were four significant God moments which prompted me forward in the process – one of those moments was getting the job!

What are you most looking forward to about the work?

In many ways it feels like my whole working life has been leading me to this role. When I was working in Malawi, a main part of my role was to support and care for the Short Term Associates. This gave me an insight into the stresses and strains of missionary life, both for those who are serving short term, and those who are serving long term.

As well as that **I'm really looking forward to sharing with the wider church what God is doing across Europe, to bring stories of hope and encouragement about those churches in Europe that are full of people and full of Jesus, and also to raise awareness of today's reality - that Europe is not full of churches, full of people, full of Jesus - not yet, but our vision and our prayer is that one day, it will.**



SLO growth

by Alen and Lila Kerckmar

Last week I had a shocking experience at the youth group as we were discussing Jesus' last commandment before he went back to the Father from Matthew 28:19-20. When I asked the group about where they thought missionaries should go in today's world they gave the typical answer: missionaries should go to Africa, India, South America. The whole youth group were shocked to hear that Slovenia is one of the most unevangelised countries in the most unevangelised continent (Europe).

Did you know that Slovenia is the 14th most needy country in the world according to Operation World with regards to the Gospel? The statistics compared to Northern Ireland are quite shocking!

In 2006 when we moved to Northern Ireland with the family for Alen to study at Belfast Bible College we were also surprised to discover that in Northern Ireland there are so many evangelical believers.

Then we experienced a spiritual culture shock upon returning to Slovenia in 2008 and realising afresh how spiritually barren Slovenia is.

Slovenia is full of churches and is traditionally religious but very few people have any biblical convictions today. The Lutheran Church is now dealing with cultural Christianity where people view Christianity as part of their culture instead of their convictions, resulting in traditionalism. In 2009 there were only a handful of believers and in our eyes the situation looked nearly impossible to change but nothing is impossible with God.

In the last number of years we have seen a number of people following Jesus by deepening their relationship with Christ and contributing to the development and growth of His church in the Pomurje region.

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Our goal in all that we do within the local church and elsewhere in Slovenia is to see people become faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our vision is to grow a missional community who will be open to the call of God upon their lives to disciple within Slovenia and beyond.

In writing this and looking back at how the Lord moved we are again reminded of Zechariah 4,10:

“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin...”

We have seen God at work in the hearts and lives of people. This is encouraging for us as it often seems that God is dead or irrelevant to most people we encounter. Far from that; God is still on the move, turning individuals from secular belief or “Cultural Christianity” to Christ.

A very good example of this is a man who has been coming to church for many years but somehow did not seem to be touched by the message of the Gospel. God was at work however as he came to the men's Bible study and said that he was convinced that God wanted him to be there to learn about Him. He studied the Word diligently during the week, and is now being discipled and mentored as a leader and elder. He is very keen to serve the Lord and passionate to further God's kingdom by encouraging others to follow Christ. It is our prayer that many more would come to know, follow, love and serve the Lord Jesus in this way.

Today, by the grace of God, there are about 45 believers in (both men's and women's) Bible study groups and the youth group. In 2007 there were only about 7 believers.



20 years on with the McCrackens



The realisation has dawned on us recently, that this July marks twenty years of working with ECM. We well remember moving to Carlow in 1998 to work with Carlow Bible Church, where we spent five, formative, happy years, mostly with Irish people in an Irish led church.

During this time, our own house changed a bit with the arrival of David and then Sarah, now 18 and 16 years old. In 2003, we moved to Tramore, Co. Waterford and an ECM church-plant situation working with English, Australian, Dutch and German missionaries. At this time, Ireland was becoming home to many different nationalities, notably from Africa, and we have fond memories of our ten years in Tramore. In 2013, we made the big move out West to Claremorris where we are now. Whilst Carlow and Tramore had work to join in with, here we faced into the practical job of starting a church from scratch.

We praise God that today, we have a multi-national group in our "Calvary Church Claremorris" which includes people from Ireland, America, Brazil, Paraguay and Africa.

On 3rd June, we celebrated our second anniversary as a church, enjoying time together with some good food and also reflecting on God's grace to us during this time. Ireland is an increasingly liberal state and more than ever before, it occurs to us how important it is to be involved in our Christian church family where we are all part of what He is doing at this time.





Whilst we often pray for the church to be “full of people” both locally and nationally in Ireland, it is easy to forget that there are many more people who attend our church with their prayers and their giving. They don’t walk in through the door of our little Town Hall gathering very often, but we know that the Lord answers their prayers so that we can.

We look back on twenty years with a sense of God’s keeping and enabling amidst many times of encouragement and challenge. We are thankful for the ways in which He has used other people in our lives and we look forward to who we will meet in the future.

Please pray on that the church in Ireland may indeed be full of people who are full of faith.



SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Something to think / pray about... the growing work in Claremorris and elsewhere in Ireland needs more people to come and be part of what God is doing. Have you ever considered a personal commitment to this work, either long or short term? If not yourself, could you pray for others to join in with the church-planting vision for Ireland? We would be delighted to hear from you! **You can contact us at: jonathan.mccracken@ecmi.org**

First Time at Biennial Conference

by Lourdes Williamson



Lourdes is our Bookkeeper in the ECM Ireland office and she shares her experience of attending the ECM Biennial Conference in Spain for the first time.

What were you most looking forward to?

I really wanted to be able to put faces to all the names of people I have come across in my work. This included some of our own staff but also folk from other sections. Fellowship, sunshine, and relaxation were all on my list along with a desire to be inspired and challenged by the preaching and worship.

How did the reality match up?

I was apprehensive about travelling to Europe on my own for the first time but everything worked out well from arriving at Dublin Airport with Cosmin's help, where I met other familiar faces, right to arriving at the hotel in Calpe. I was touched by the warmth (not only of the weather!!) but of the other 'attendees.' I was overwhelmed to discover how big the event was but all the way through I was very impressed with the organisation and how much thought and care was put into every detail.

I discovered Letty my roommate, was also originally from S. America and it was a joy to communicate in our mother tongue (Spanish) for the week. We also had delicious food, opportunities to see the Calpe coast and it was interesting to participate in discussion groups after the morning sessions.

What did you enjoy most?

The worship was very uplifting, preparing our hearts for the teaching from God's word; and then to come outside and see the massive Calpe rock standing in the sea was an impressive real-life object lesson which married well with the conference theme, 'Look to the Rock.'

What would you change?

I would love to have my family experience such an amazing event. The time to reflect on so many different areas of ministry and God's word along with time to relax was such a blessing. I would encourage anyone who can to take the opportunity to attend and see if, like me, your expectations are far exceeded.

COME AND MEET US this Summer

at New Horizon

At the start of August ECM Ireland will be heading up north to be part of the mission exhibition at New Horizon 2018 which runs from the 4th-10th August at the Ulster University, Coleraine. This is a very special year for New Horizon as we will be celebrating their 30th anniversary. Throughout the week we will be celebrating all that God has done over the past 30 years, and thanking him for what he is going to do in the next 30 years. With that in mind the theme of New Horizon 2018 is 'To The Praise of His Glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. To gather to the praise of His glory. To learn to the praise of His glory. To worship to the praise of His glory.

The main stage speakers are:

Evening Celebrations:

Saturday 4th -Friday 11th August

Philip Yancey - Saturday and Sunday

Sam Allberry - Monday to Thursday

Ken Clarke - Friday night

Bible Teaching:

Monday 6th – Friday 11th August
with **Rikk Watts**

New Horizon is a fantastic week for us to connect with existing and new supporters. We would appreciate your prayers for the week and we would love to see you there.

For more information go to newhorizon.org.uk

at Bangor Worldwide

At the end of August ECM Ireland will be exhibiting at Bangor Worldwide, 24th August to 1st September and the theme this year is "Pray the Lord of the Harvest".

The morning Bible Studies are led by Pastor Alistair Begg and the evening programme is, as usual, packed full of speakers who are involved in God's work all over the world including Dr. Joshua Bogunjoko who is the International Director of SIM.

ECM Ireland are really excited to be involved in the seminar 'From the Ends of the Earth: Stories from the Global Church' which will take place on the 25th August at Hamilton Road Pres. Church, 10.00-11.30am.

We will hear stories from a number of Christians from different countries, cultures and backgrounds whom God has brought here and are working in various types of ministries across N.I. Cosmin Pascu will be one of the people sharing at it. We would love to see you there!

For more information go to worldwidemission.org



If you would like to meet us, why not get in touch with us via our facebook page or via email: ecm.ni@ecmi.org



Join us on [facebook.com/ecmireland](https://www.facebook.com/ecmireland)

Tribute to Marie Watson

On Sunday 8th April our dear friend Marie Watson, wife of Victor, went home to be with Jesus after a lifetime of serving Christ. Sent out from Knockconny Baptist Church in 1971 to work with CEF in Eastern Europe, the Watsons then joined ECM Ireland in 1983 for church-planting and overseeing the work in Austria, through to setting up a refugee ministry and church plant in Germany.

Marie was described as 'more than a missionary in the traditional sense of going to faraway countries.' She allowed Christ's light to shine out through her wherever she was, ministering among family, friends and many visitors who were welcomed around the table enjoying food, a listening ear, and the love of Christ expressed in practical ways.



At the funeral service in Lisburn Baptist, Victor thanked God for His peace and for carrying them through the 3 years since Marie's cancer surgery. He referred to the words Marie had written in the front of her Bible: **"God knows, He loves, He cares. Nothing this truth can dim. He gives the very best to those who put their trust in Him"**

We praise God for a life well lived and our thoughts and prayers are with Victor and the family circle who will miss Marie so much as they learn to walk a new path in these days.

Tribute to Tom Lewis



It was with great regret and sadness that we heard of the passing of Tom Lewis in January. Tom made a significant impact on the life of ECM in the seventies and eighties. Serving as Eastern European Director and living in Munich and Vienna, he led a team which served believers in churches of the communist countries behind the Iron Curtain.

Tom was involved in Bible distribution, humanitarian aid and radio ministry. He also helped start the ministry of Bible Education by Extension (BEE) to which he dedicated the rest of his ministry life after leaving ECM in 1989.

He remained an active servant of God right up to the end of his life and is remembered with fondness by those who had the privilege of working with him within ECM. Our prayerful thoughts are with his wife Doreen, his sons Mark, Andrew and Gareth and the family circle.



“Buen Camino”

by Charlie and Tania Deering

I guess for many of us we equate Spain with sunshine, sea and miles of beaches and in one sense that is true. But we'd like to transport to you a Spain that maybe is not so familiar, one that is cool, often damp, a place with narrow twisty roads and rolling hills. A place that looks and feels very much like Ireland. Welcome to Ligonde.

a hostel run by Agapé missionaries with the help of a different team each week. And that particular week was our turn.

Despite the odd hiccup, our travel and food preparation went smoothly, and we enjoyed meeting people from various countries including the USA, Germany, Spain, Portugal, South Korea, the UK and a surprising number from Ireland. Although the weather was unusually cold (it actually snowed on the Friday!) there was still a steady stream of people passing by between 10am and 3pm each day.

So what on earth brings a team of 16 people from our church in Camarma to the wilds of Ligonde for the week before Easter? Well, the clue is the “Camino de Santiago”, which is a pilgrimage that thousands of people make every year of approx 750km beginning in France and ending in Santiago de Compostela. To reach their final destination, these pilgrims have to walk through Ligonde where we find “La Fuente Del Peregrino”,



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As they called in for a quick coffee and chat, or simply to use the bathroom and get an official stamp, we soon realised that the word "pilgrim" was a very loose translation because the reasons for doing the walk were many and varied. Yes, **some were there for spiritual reasons but many were there simply because they liked to walk**, or the camaraderie, or they liked the challenge, or because of a school trip.

Regardless for their reason, each person was given a small leaflet with thought provoking questions about the "5 symbols of the camino". From 3pm onwards each day, people were able to book into the refuge for the night and enjoy dinner with us and breakfast the next morning.

Each evening the Jesus film was shown and there were many conversations about faith and life.

The normal greeting for people doing the walk is "Buen Camino", literally "good way or good path" and **we thank God for the opportunities during this week to pray for people and to talk about the only "Camino" to God as John 14:6 clearly teaches.**

Praise God for the spiritual seeds sown during this time and continue to pray for the various groups that host the refuge during the summer months.

For more info see
lafuntedelperegrino.com/en/

There are many opportunities to serve God through European Christian Mission.



For more information go to:
ecmireland.org



Fill Europe with the Good News

by Bernie Reid

Bernie Reid is from Coleraine, and recently travelled to teach English in Kosovo.

I love God, the English language and travel, so with an opportunity to combine all three I gladly went to help with English classes in Kosovo.

"You're going where?" was the first reaction when I made my plans known, and to be honest, I had to do a little research myself! Kosovo is a Balkan country, bordered by Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia. Slightly smaller than Northern Ireland with a comparable population, which is almost entirely Muslim, Kosovo is seeking to move on from its turbulent past.

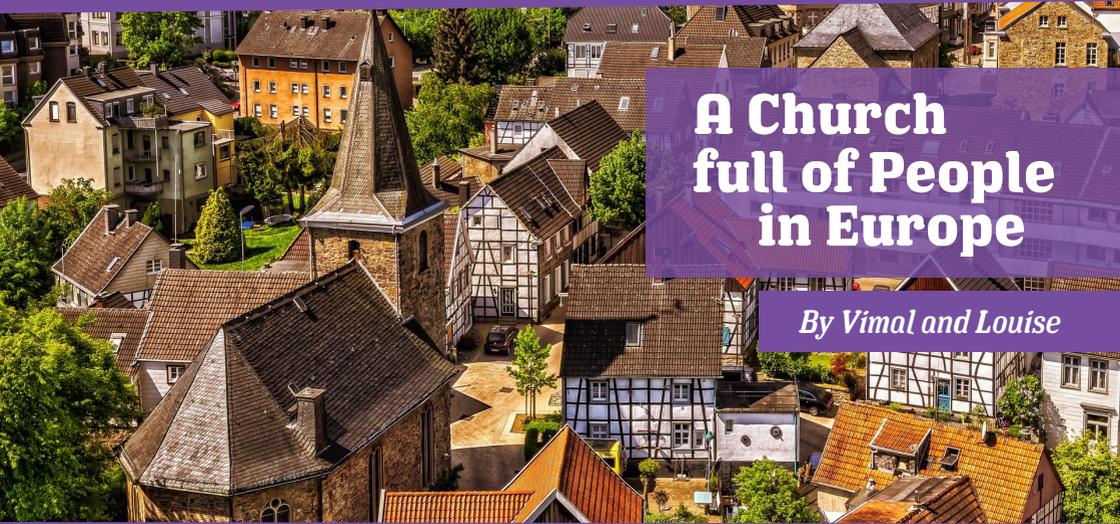
Primrose and Dan Avila have lived there for some years, serving the locals with great dedication. Primrose is a gifted teacher who educates children aged 5 to 17 and her classes are immensely popular and appreciated by pupils

and parents alike. My main task was to help the little ones with their reading and vocabulary.

My time there was hugely enjoyable. Lovely weather didn't go unappreciated... but the people are delightful, and the children endearing and enthusiastic. Away from the classroom, I benefited from Kosovan hospitality, invited to homes with my hosts, being part of real lives and hopefully letting people know that they are important, and loved not just by us, but by God.

At '77 years young,' each trip abroad could potentially be my last, so to those younger I say:

"Go! Fill Europe with people who tell the Good News - news that brings peace, purpose and meaning to life."



A Church full of People in Europe

By Vimal and Louise

It has been said that the churches in Europe are dwindling fast and are not full of people. The recent movement of asylum seekers, migrants and immigrants means the church has in recent years however, seen an influx of different peoples, wanting to know more about Christianity or seeking help from Christian communities.

Migrant churches have also been generated by those of various language groups, forming pockets of believers with distinct styles of worship and expression, in their own mother tongues. This is especially prevalent in the largest cities of Europe where people naturally gravitate, in order to work and live.

Many host churches have been inspired by those who have come to Christ, from different religious backgrounds who desire to share their faith, with their own people groups.

They want to know how to evangelise their communities and need help to plan resource projects and events in the church, for such occasions.





An example of a success story regarding such an embracing of new faces that make up a new Europe, is in a German church called Gospel House, who wanted to reach out to refugees. The congregation spearheaded a project which Vimal encouraged them to initiate, by doing outreach to Arabic refugees on a Sunday evening each month. They provided culturally diverse food, worship and translation for the sermons by Arabic speaking believers.

As well as members being encouraged spiritually, the Lord has shown them grace as hosts looking after a migrant church in their midst, and their numbers have grown considerably too. Now Arabic speaking people are almost half of the German church.

“Now Arabic speaking people are almost half of the German church”

We can be optimistic that God is doing a work of renewing believers in this continent and that by His grace, **we will see both migrant and host churches working together to see the outworking of the Great Commission in action, making disciples and see the spreading of the renown of Christ to the Glory of God.**



Invite us to your local church: email us at ecm.ni@ecmi.org

Charlie and Miriam Anderson

Supporting Missionaries across Europe



Charlie and Miriam explain what they will be doing as Charlie moves away from the Directorship of ECM Ireland and into other roles.

Charlie's new role

We want to see a Europe where ECM workers are helped to flourish, in every area of their lives, so that they can be effective in ministry and glorify God. Broadly speaking my new role could be seen as a catalyst within ECM making it an organization which helps workers flourish.

With ECM International I serve on teams which develop strategies and policies to ensure people have every opportunity to do well in ministry.

At Country Team levels this involves meeting with team leaders, providing forums for discussion, encouragement, challenge and guidance, so as to formulate plans as teams, but also measuring progress.

Individual missionaries may welcome help to set and reach goals, so I might suggest new partnerships or training, and then return to look at how things are working out.

I am excited to be involved in this type of leadership and care for people working in Central and South East Europe (including countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Kosova, Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia) some of the least evangelical regions of the world.



Miriam's new role:

I will continue to support the ECM Ireland family with office administration for the next six months as Lindsay settles in to her role as Director. I am looking forward to catching her vision for ECM Ireland.

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Congratulations to Bostjan and Lidija Cifer on the birth of Fiona



We are pleased to announce the arrival of our baby girl Fiona Lily Cifer.

Our little princess arrived May 20th at 20:21. She weighed 3090g and was 47cm long.

Such a little body,
such a big miracle.
The miracle of life.
You are the poem
we dreamed of writing,
the masterpiece
we longed to paint...

"We prayed for this child and the Lord granted us what we asked of Him." (1 Sam 1:27)

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The ECM Member Care Team (of which I am part) takes a personal interest in our workers, getting to know their ministry and life situations, with the aim of being able to support them. This could be by providing a listening ear, ideas for betterment or where to get help or training, but also prayer.

I believe that this type of confidential support is vital to health and wellbeing on the field, perhaps even making the difference between someone staying and someone returning home and so I am excited to be part of the team as its ministry grows and develops.

To be able to continue in this ministry both Charlie and Miriam are seeking to raise support, so please pray that God will bring in what is needed.

If you can help please contact us at:
charlie.anderson@ecmi.org
miriam.anderson@ecmi.org

We need your help

We would love to stay connected with you. One way we do this is through the ECM Life magazine, which is packed full of inspirational stories from our mission partners who are serving in difficult places across Europe. If you would like to continue receiving the magazine you don't need to do anything, but if you no longer want to receive ECM Life please unsubscribe by emailing us at ecm.ni@ecmi.org or complete this slip and post it to:

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We see a different Europe



full of churches



full of people



full of Jesus

If you would like to invite us to speak at your church, please contact us at:

 **028 92 666 044**

 **ecm.ni@ecmi.org**

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