

Missions

Hungary:
The Plentiful Harvest

Kenya:
Susanna's Journey

India:
A Growing Ministry
in the "Land of Gods"

**European Christian
Workers' Conference
Report**



Thinking It Through

THOMAS J. SCHETELICH

Fruit or Leaves

"And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves." (Mark 11:13)

Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday. The next day He went to a fig tree to see if it had fruit. Finding only leaves, He cursed it saying, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." (Mark 11:14) The tree withered and died. This is the only time in His ministry that Jesus cursed anything or acted in power to destroy something. What was it about this fig tree that brought out such a strong response?

We read in Mark 11:12 that Jesus was hungry. But Jesus never acted in divine power to relieve Himself of physical suffering. When the multitude was hungry, He took five loaves and two fish and fed 5,000. But when He was hungry after 40 days of fasting, He would not command stones to be made into bread.

This physical hunger was demonstrative of a greater spiritual hunger. Jesus taught His disciples "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"; and "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." (Matthew 5:6; John 4:34) Jesus hungered to see men and women made righteous and to see the glory and honor of God.

Jesus saw this fig tree, a common metaphor in Scripture for Jerusalem (Isaiah 5, Matthew 21, and Luke 13), "from afar." His ministry had been in the north in Galilee. Now, He comes to Jerusalem, and to the temple, to seek fruit there—the fruit for God for which He hungered.

In Mark 11:11 Jesus entered the temple "and looked around at all things." He looked carefully to see if there was any fruit for God there. Like the fig tree, He found none.

What He did find, however, were leaves. It was full of the show of the religion. Pharisees prayed, scribes taught the Law, people went through the familiar routine. From afar, the tree looked healthy. But on close examination, "He found nothing but leaves"—the fig leaves of religion; and fig leaves have been a poor covering for our nakedness and sin since Eden.

The hypocrisy of that fig tree, full of leaves and barren of fruit, brought out the strongest possible reaction from the Son of God. Let no one eat fruit from you ever again—and within one day the tree had withered and died.

The show and the business of religion in the temple brought out the same anger from the Messiah. "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13:2) And within one generation, the temple was gone and Jerusalem destroyed. The fruitless religion had withered from the root, and the ax of the Roman legions cleared away the lifeless trunk.

We are wise to heed this miracle of destruction and parable of disappointment. There are so many churches today that are full of leaves but barren of fruit. They have the trunk of organization, widely extended branches of activity, and the leaves of programs and ceremony. But in them is no fruit unto God.

We should not take away the wrong lesson. Leaves are not bad—they are necessary for the fig tree to be alive and bear fruit. The fruit on a fig tree is found in the midst of the leaves.

Programs, administration, and routine are good, natural and necessary as leaves are a natural growth of the tree. A tree which has leaves can be seen from afar, and it is a good thing for a church to have leaves to show that it is alive. But a tree is not judged by its leaves; it is judged by its fruit. Jesus said "by their fruits you will know them." (Matthew 7:20)

And so, each one of us, and each church where we fellowship, would do well to measure ourselves against this fig tree. Are we bearing fruit or are we just sprouting leaves? Is there holiness of life or just profession at the worship meeting? Is there service for others or just words inside our walls? Do we have leaves that can be seen from afar and does the Son of God find fruit when He comes for a closer look?

I trust that we will all "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10) And so we should strive to do, to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ. ■

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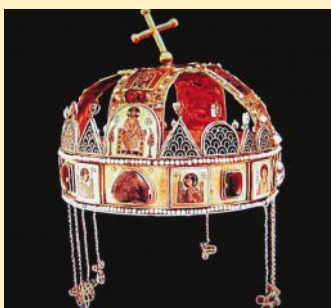
Hungary

The Plentiful Harvest

Early Hungarian history

Hungary was part of the Roman Empire from 35 B.C. until the end of the fourth century. When the Roman Empire fell apart, Attila the Hun made Hungary part of his empire. It is believed that the name "Hungary" originated from the 7th century when Magyar tribes were part of a Bulgar alliance called On-Ogour, "(the) Ten Arrows." Árpád was the Magyar leader who unified the tribes via the Covenant of Blood, forging what was thereafter known as the Hungarian nation. Hungary, a warrior people in the middle ages (895-1526), conquered much of Europe reaching as far as today's Spain.

Hungary was recognized as a Catholic Apostolic Kingdom under King Stephen (István) who was crowned with the Holy Crown of Hungary in A.D. 1000 in the capital, Esztergom. The papacy conferred on him the right to have the cross carried before him, with full administrative authority over bishops and churches. Stephen was responsible for the building of the many churches and basilicas in Hungary and switched the country to the Latin alphabet.



From top: View of Budapest; Holy Crown of Hungary.

BY PAUL MEEHAN

Hungary has a population of approximately ten million people, with about two million in Budapest. It is a very old nation with very religious people. Though many from around the world chastened them, the government recently put into their new constitution that life begins at conception and marriage is between a man and a woman. Approximately two percent of the population is truly born again. At this time, the door to share the Gospel is wide open and much prayer is needed for the people of Hungary to hear the Word and to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. The harvest of the Lord in Hungary truly is plentiful!

My call to Hungary

God called me in 2003 to be an evangelist and missionary to Hungary. Commended by Valley Bible Fellowship, Georgetown, Massachusetts, I focus my ministry on the work of the Jó Hír Hungarian Literature Mission. I am also very active in prison ministry, evangelism, teaching,

and in preaching the Word of God. I feel that the Lord has blessed me beyond measure with a desire to serve with everything that is within me. Two verses in Jeremiah have been instrumental to me. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah



From top (left to right): Veronika Kiss; Dohány u. Synagogue interior; Dohány u. Synagogue exterior; Buildings that once were part of the Jewish ghetto; Memorial to Jews shot and killed along the Danube River; "May I Ask You a Question" tract with smiley face cover and question mark cover.



29:13) "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." (Jeremiah 33:3)

Jó Hír Hungarian Literature Mission

Dr. Frank Sréter founded Jó Hír in 1984 with the purpose of sharing the Gospel of the Lord through books, tracts, and other literature. Through its books and tracts, the ministry reaches into Hungary's surrounding countries, many of which were part of the Hungarian empire prior to World War I. (Hungary is about one-fourth of what it used to be.) Many of these peoples, about five million, speak the Hungarian language and still consider themselves to be Hungarian. There continues to be a hunger and thirst for our literature.

Veronika

After becoming a believer in 1989, Veronika left a lucrative banking career to serve the Lord full-time. Frank recruited her in 1999 to become part of the Jó Hír ministry where she manages the office as well as the many books we translate and publish.

Veronika's Jewish ministry

Veronika also has a ministry to Jewish people, especially to Holocaust survivors.

Depending on what statistics you read, Hungary has a Jewish population between 20,000 and 80,000. There were about 700,000 prior to World War II. Most were shipped to Auschwitz where they were exterminated. The Dohány u. Synagogue of Budapest is the second largest in the world. This same synagogue was Gestapo headquarters for the "Jewish Solution" during World War II.

Even up to a few years ago, there was much of the old Jewish ghetto, neglected and in need of repair. It was only recently these places pictured to the left were renovated. The shoes in the picture on the left is a memorial to the many Jewish men, women, and children, who were lined up along the Danube River and shot.

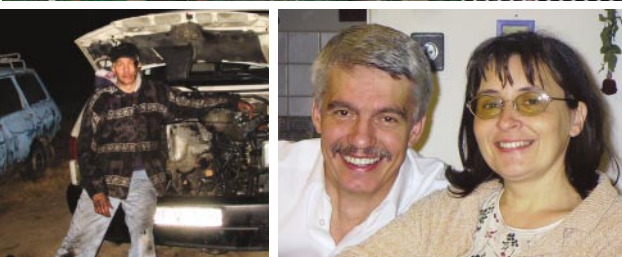
I am sad to say there is still much anti-Semitism in Hungary, and it appears to be on the rise. Make no mistake, the devil "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8) And he desires to devour the Jewish people to prevent the promises of God from happening.

Prison ministry

Through the help of Szabó József, an elder at the Dunakeszi assembly, I have been able to share the Gospel in most of Hungary's 37 prisons which house more than 20,000 prisoners from many nations of the world. I am able to conduct Bible programs and share the Gospel from the Word of God. We have distributed thousands of gospel tracts and hundreds of books that the prisoners can take with them and read in the privacy of their cells. Our most popular tract is the EvanTell *May I Ask You a Question*. We have many different covers for this tract, of which the smiley face and the question



From top (left to right): Prisoners participating in a Bible study activity; School evangelism; The Dunakeszi assembly; Jóska working on one of the assembly's vans; Jóska and Vicus who started the Living Hope Ministry; Dunakeszi assembly meeting.



mark covers are the most desired. We print these tracts on high-quality paper that cannot easily be used for rolling cigarettes. I also have Bible studies in prison every Wednesday. These studies have been attended by people from all over the world including: Latvia, Albania, Ukraine, U.S.A., Russia, Slovakia, Serbia, Spain, Italy, England, Nigeria, Sudan, Germany, Venezuela, Czech Republic, Romania, Vietnam, and China, to name just a few. The prisons are indeed a very fruitful ministry! Many have come to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

Evangelism

The need is great and the time is short. The Lord has opened many doors to reach the lost with His Gospel. I receive many invitations from schools (public and private), churches, and many other places. It is amazing that I am able to share the Gospel of the Lord—not a watered-down gospel, but the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37–38)

The Dunakeszi assembly

Dunakeszi, my home assembly in Hungary, is very active in evangelism, prison ministry, bread ministry, sports ministry, youth ministry, and reaching out to the needs of those who have nothing. The assembly averages about 60 to 80 people. Many have come to know the Savior as a result of the ongoing work. The elders and the assembly are struggling to put an extension on the assembly home in order to make the meetings more comfortable. One of the assembly's many ministries, Living Hope Ministry, was started about 20 years ago by Jóska and Vicus to help those being released from prison.

Please pray for our transportation needs as we pick up many people for the meetings. Pictured to the left is Jóska working on one of the two assembly vans. Both vehicles have many miles on them and often need to be repaired.

Please pray

We covet your prayers for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in Hungary. Please pray for the ministry of Jó Hír and that the Lord will give us wisdom and strength to carry out His purpose in this thirsty land. Brethren, pray for us: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Timothy 1:9) The night is fast approaching. The light that is in the world will soon leave. Pray for us, my brothers and sisters, that the work of the Lord will reach out to the many who still need to know the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior. ■



Paul Meehan was commended in 2003 by Valley Bible Fellowship in Georgetown, Massachusetts.

SUSANNA'S Journey

God's Love Reaches Beyond Language and Culture

BY MINDY SEEMAN

Her big blue eyes looked up at me, tears threatening to spill down her pale cheeks. She wouldn't be able to understand even if I tried to talk to her. I don't speak a word of Norwegian, but at that moment I wished I was somehow suddenly fluent. This poor little second grader glanced up at her parents with a look of betrayal. How could they leave her at this school where nobody speaks her language? As she clung to her dad, I cried out to the One who speaks all languages, asking for wisdom.

You never know what life will be like when you teach at an international Christian school. For the past three years I've spent countless hours with second graders at Rosslyn Academy in Nairobi, Kenya. There's definitely never a dull moment when you throw 20 boys and girls, ages seven and eight, from different cultures, into the same classroom. But I wasn't prepared for Susanna. I wasn't prepared for a girl who spoke no English, who was afraid to come to school. But most of all, I wasn't prepared for how much she would change me.

The first few weeks were rough—very, very rough. She wouldn't play with the other children. She had no idea what the girls were doing when they played “princess.” It got to the point where Susanna couldn't handle it anymore. If something didn't change, this wasn't going to work. I met with her mom and our elementary counselor and we figured out a plan. Susanna would continue to attend school but would go home early two days per week. Also, she would stay back with me when the other students went to special classes that were particularly hard for her to understand. This would mean giving up my precious planning time, but I knew that the benefits would be worth it.

If you need to know one thing about Susanna, it's that she *loves* soccer (or football for those of us not living in North America). We would walk around campus asking any adult we

saw what their favorite football team was. You could see it in her face when the person had the same favorite team. She'd get very excited and try to communicate why she loved that team as well. But don't mention the team she despises—you won't get quite the same reaction! This was our first breakthrough. She loved talking about soccer and it would pull her out of her sadness, if only for a moment.

Our biggest breakthrough came one day totally out of the blue. While the rest of the students were at PE, I took Susanna outside to the tennis courts. We started kicking a soccer ball, but of course I wasn't dressed for sports. I kicked the ball and my shoe flew off. Susanna, who had yet to put a sentence together, said, “Your shoe fly like a bird!” Oh, how excited I was for that simple, grammatically incorrect sentence! And how incredibly thankful I was that the Lord nudged me to take her outside rather than have her read while I caught up on my work. There have been very few things that have brought me as much joy as telling her mom that afternoon that Susanna said a complete sentence. It may seem trivial, but we were so thankful that she was starting to get it. And she was smiling! Before this, her smile was virtually nonexistent. It was then that I got a glimpse of the girl inside.

I love working at a Christian school where I can share the love of Jesus freely. I can't imagine doing what I do without that privilege. Seeing kids who've never heard of Jesus fall deeply in love with Him as they learn and grow makes all the struggles worth it. And Susanna was no exception. Coming in speaking no English, she couldn't understand what I shared about Jesus. In fact, I think Bible was the hardest thing for her to understand. Hearing mostly stories and not having any background knowledge of what we were discussing, she was totally lost. I wished I could communicate more clearly the love of Jesus with my words.



After a few months I learned that words are helpful but not the only way to express God's love. By God's grace, Susanna saw the love of Jesus in me. More than that, her mom saw Jesus in me. She kept saying how well I was doing with her, and I was able to point back to Jesus. It wasn't me, it was Jesus's love that allowed me to have such great connections with Susanna.

Slowly she started to understand more English. She started playing with friends. English and math became doable subjects. She was able to come to school full days and go to most of the special classes that I didn't teach. Her progress happened so steadily that I don't remember when she began to understand the Bible lessons, devotions, and singing time. But boy did she start to understand! At first she would ask simple questions, such as "Who is that?" I was excited to see her begin to grasp this great book. And the whole class would get excited when she started to speak full sentences and ask questions.

By April, this girl who came in knowing nothing about God or the Bible, and no English, was asking deep theological questions in front of the whole class and seeking to understand this God we were talking about. Even more amazing, she understood. It was then that I realized even more clearly that God does not work within language barriers. He does not work



within cultural barriers. He can take a teacher, fumbling to explain big theological concepts in a seven-year-old's language, and use her in the life of a little girl who doesn't understand much. But somehow, Susanna got enough to understand this love of God, this desire to serve Him, and this understanding of His love for her.

I learned so much about having childlike faith from Susanna. She became a believer in Christ and has since been a huge witness to her family. Her parents know something is different about her, something that was not there before. They recognize that God has changed her life. The little girl who was afraid to come to school now loves it. She has become a bright testimony of God's power to change and transform us. I learned about letting God use me, about letting Him change me. I want to be like Susanna, embracing a God who loves her and letting Him change her life. May my life shine bright like that little girl, who no longer has tears in her eyes; rather, the love of Jesus shines so brightly through them. ■

Mindy Seeman was commended in 2011 by Des Moines Gospel Chapel, Des Moines, Washington.



MAY WE INTRODUCE

Erin O'Reilly • Missionary to Bolivia



My mother's neighbors took Jesus's command to love your neighbor as yourself to heart. They befriended her, invested in her, and invited her to church; it was there that God's claim on her life began and she put her faith in Christ. This was the start of a glorious journey not only for her, but for me as well. I was nine years old.

As the younger of two children being raised in a single-parent home, I had, at times, a confusing and lonely early life. I am thankful I was never given a reason to doubt my mother's love, but with her working full-time hours, most of our time was spent in survival mode. Once God revealed Himself, we were no longer tasked with the worry that our future flourishing was all up to us. Sorrow and difficulty didn't go away, but from then on it was different; my mother was different.

I became a Christian, a teenager and an adult at Northland Bible Camp. Northland is a place where you'll surely feel the presence of God if your travels ever lead you to that corner of northern Ontario. Google it! One great pleasure in my life was the opportunity to work there for many summers. I learned of Jesus's Gospel during chapel times and then saw it demonstrated by my leaders and peers the rest of the day. I had good examples all around me and it was at camp that the Lord formed my work ethic through people committed to Him.

The next big chapter was Bible college. I was blessed to spend two years at Kawartha Lakes Bible College in Peterborough, Ontario. It was there I prayed to understand the hope to which He has called us, the riches of His inheritance and the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us (Ephesians 1:18–19). This is a prayer that revolutionized the way my heart operates, a prayer I am not nearly done praying. The privilege of having met God became a reality at Bible college. We were taught the Bible well and were shown by example the importance of servant leadership. Our pro-

fessors modeled for us the hard but joyful life led in laboring for the Gospel.

I came to Bolivia as part of a short-term missions trip in May 2013. After all my dreaming of what a career in missions would be like, and all my studying about the church's responsibility to serve the poor, I had still never been to a developing country. We went to support the work of a church in a poverty-stricken community called Guajojo (pronounced Wahoho) outside the city of Santa Cruz. Two men and their families run the church called Sion Church. They do a great job, seeking for people to not be poor both physically and spiritually. My search for a forgotten part of the world was over—by God's grace I made the decision to work in Bolivia and to concern myself with the flourishing of the church here.

When it gets hard (and it does) I try to remember it's the dream job. Our message won't quit on us, and the fact that we have a message in the first place is a miracle.

The knowledge that, despite my dark heart, I am called, loved and delighted in by God enables me to be brave. And the knowledge that those things are true, regardless of how true they feel, provides the supernatural confidence needed.

Please join me in prayer for Sion Church—that they would become a healthy body of believers and that the congregation would grow up to plant a church of its own one day. Please join me in prayer for the people of Bolivia and for other underserved and poorly resourced countries. Pray that through prayer and the proclamation of the Good News, Jesus's grace will be known and deeply rejoiced in, and that more and more people will desire God as their soul's delight.

"I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together." (Psalm 34:2–3) ■

MAY WE INTRODUCE

Insun & Youmi Park Missionaries to Cambodia



Insun's Testimony

I grew up in a non-Christian home. However, God graciously brought my family to Himself through life's trials. When I was a student, God revealed my hopeless, fallen condition in contrast to His perfect righteousness. Knowing my sin, I trembled in misery for fear of God's judgment. Through His mercy and grace God revealed to me that Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

I was saved at Gimje Assembly in Korea. As I moved to Seoul to work as a semiconductor engineer, I fellowshiped at Mokdong Assembly where the Lord taught me much about ministry. There, God allowed me to serve in Sunday school, youth group, and Bible teaching.

God kept me waiting for many years before revealing the helpmate He had planned for me. I prayed for a wife who was willing to serve God with me even if that was on the mission field. Miraculously, the Lord brought Youmi to me while she was serving in Cambodia and led me to join the work He started in this country. The Mokdong Assembly leadership joyfully commended me to the Lord's work in 2010. I focused on language study for the first few years before God led me to the Emmaus ministry. I also serve at Sangkhim Canaan School as a supervisor, and I'm involved in church planting in Kampong Chhnang. It is my earnest desire to live for His glory as a recipient of His amazing grace!

Youmi's Testimony

God blessed me with godly parents who gave themselves to full-time Christian ministry in Korea since I was very young. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior when I was seven years old. Through John 3:16 I came to a clear realization of my sins and desperate need for a Savior.

In 1994 God called my parents to serve in Cambodia. My brother and I were enrolled in a local school due to financial constraints. Looking back it was all part of God's plan! I picked up the Khmer language quickly and was able to help in ministry. As I served, I became burdened for these dear people and

desired to live for Him.

In high school I felt very discouraged because of the corruption and poor education system. Then, unexpectedly, I was given an opportunity to interpret for a former Korean president whom God used to open the door for me to study in the United States. Therefore I was able to study at Bob Jones Academy and University in Greenville, South Carolina, for the next seven years. I majored in education with the purpose of serving Him in Cambodia. During that time I was in happy fellowship at Overbrook Gospel Chapel. I taught at Sunrise Christian Academy in Kansas for a year before returning to Cambodia in 2008. In Kansas, I fellowshiped at Community Bible Chapel. I am very grateful to both assemblies for commending me to the Lord's work. Since returning, I have been involved in starting up Sangkhim Canaan School and served as a teacher and principal (now as an advisor) and became involved in the church and children's ministry in Kampong Chhnang.

Together

Philippians 1:20 says, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." This verse brought us together.

Because of Insun's keen interest in missions and desire to live for Him, many of our mutual friends suggested that he meet Youmi. However, Insun did not show any interest until he stumbled upon Youmi's recorded testimony. As Youmi concluded her testimony she read Philippians 1:20—Insun's life verse! Insun emailed Youmi immediately and they started to correspond. Over the next nine months the Lord made it clear that we were meant for each other, and He orchestrated everything that was not humanly possible. With the blessing of parents and elders, we were married in 2010 and started to serve God together in Cambodia. Now God has blessed us with two beautiful girls, Grace and Joanna. Soli Deo Gloria—Glory to God alone! ■

Renewal and Encouragement

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WORKERS' CONFERENCE

BY PHIL AND MARY PARSONS

There is value and meaning in the Lord's words "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (Mark 6:31) Recently, 100 missionaries, their children, and volunteer helpers met in Lyon, France, not only to rest, but to refresh, listen, and learn from the Lord and even from one another.

HISTORY

Missionaries often speak of ministry demands and other field responsibilities that creep in and invade family time. It could be a knock on the door from a neighbor seeking help or Bible studies that linger late into the evening. One of the greatest challenges facing missionaries is balancing priorities. Without warning, everything becomes a priority. In 1978 insightful missionaries Richard and Marina Haverkamp (Belgium—Refocused) and Joseph and Lois Black (France—Refocused; Joe passed away January 2014) founded the European Christian Workers' Conference because they saw the value in prioritizing a period of time for missionaries to set aside ministry duties and give attention to family and themselves.

THE RETREAT

Held August 16 to 20, the retreat took place at a quaint retreat center in Sainte-Foy-lès-Lyon, a little town on the western hill of Lyon, "the city between two rivers" (Rhône and Saône). The daily schedule began with a prayer time where the men and the women gathered and met separately. After breakfast, the morning was given to hearing reports by the missionaries in attendance and to the ministry provided by Dr. David MacLeod, Emmaus Bible College's dean for Biblical studies. He provided excellent,



thought-provoking ministry. Stu Modrzejewski (U.S. volunteer) opened each morning session by leading the group in song, accompanied by Pascal Glock (Matt and Sylvie Glock's son; France) on strings and Mirek Marzszak (Poland) with percussion.

Missionaries in attendance gave five-minute reports on their work. To stir interest, Maureen Crow (France) creatively introduced each report by giving a clue or fact about the country being presented. It not only heightened the level of awareness but enriched everyone's learning about that country. Following each report was a time to pray for their shared requests.

Nine ministry sessions were prepared and given by Dr. MacLeod highlighting the "Servant Song" of Isaiah from the most well-known and quoted song found in Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12. This Scripture portion has been termed "the Gospel in the Old Testament." Dr. MacLeod revealed that it was his intent to give an overview of all the Servant Songs of Isaiah, but in his preparation the Lord spoke to him and he was consumed by the study of the Suffering Servant.

SPECIAL OUTINGS

Free time characterized the afternoon. Kathy Moriarty (Ireland) organized daily outings with assistance provided by Barbara Congo (France). Many availed of the opportunity to explore Old Lyon with its massive stone cathedrals nes-





tled near quaint shops and cafes. During a visit to Fouvière Hill, In-Sook Robinson (Special Areas) sang a selection from an opera showcasing the superior acoustics for which Roman architecture is so well known. Other outings included a visit to the zoo and a hike led by Matt Glock (France) culminating at the ruins of an ancient Roman aqueduct. Elijah Rust (Italy) organized team sport activities for the rambunctious young people, and one afternoon was given to swimming at a nearby pool.

SEMINARS

Before the evening dinner, optional seminars were given by missionaries and guests. Dr. MacLeod presented a lecture titled "Ten Things the Spiritual Life is Not!" Tom Marinello (Netherlands) and Jerry Mattix (Special Areas) teamed up and gave helpful background information about the crisis of Christianity in the Middle East and the resulting impact of what we see in today's news. Paul King, a guest participant from the assembly in Swansea, Massachusetts, used the August 2014 *Missions* article "Short-term Missions Trips: Are They Worth It?" to guide the discussion "Short Term Missions: Blessing or Bane," and Matt Glock gave a seminar titled "Trends in Discipleship." Anna Gifford, daughter of Peter and Joanna Gifford (Belgium), was asked to give a primer on the presentation software Prezi.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

An important component to the retreat's success is the children's program. Emily Vargas, daughter of Gil and Carolyn Vargas (Spain) said, "I enjoy serving the children and befriending the young people because I was once them and remember how much this conference meant to me. This conference provided a time to meet other third-culture kids who understood some of what I was going through but could also widen my horizons to the cultures of other countries. I hope that my being an MK from Europe also lends itself to empathy and assistance to others who are going through what I did at their age."

Sara Rettig, former missionary to Ireland said, "I love kids and



helping give parents a little bit of a break! Those three hours in the morning are just my small way of showing love." Rocky Osborne of Seattle, Washington, and Nadiya Tykhovod, a former student of Tom Marinello at Tyndale Theological Seminary, also contributed to the children's program.

A special highlight for all was a concert given by Anastasia, Pascal, and Juliet Glock with fellow MK Joe Baughman (parents with SIL International). The concert concluded with everyone standing to sing "Amazing Grace."

WHAT THIS RETREAT MEANS TO OUR WORKERS

Carolyn Vargas (Spain) expressed what we heard over and over: "This retreat is always a refreshing time to catch up with fellow workers in Europe. Exchanging ideas of what works and what doesn't work in the ministry is most helpful. To be able to share our burdens and sorrows with those who understand and pray for one another is most encouraging." Carole Woehler (Ireland) said, "Hearing reports were very encouraging and yet humbling. It is so easy to focus on our own area of service and lose sight of God's servants working elsewhere for the same purpose."

We thank the Lord for the great privilege of meeting and hearing from many of our missionaries serving in Europe. Pray for them and for the spread of the Gospel in Europe. The world is drawn to Europe and now is the time to draw the world to the Lord Jesus Christ. ■



Phil and Mary Parsons, CMML Assembly Relations and Missionary Care.

Page 12 (from top): Countryside flowers; Group photo; View of Lyon from retreat center; Group after hike. **Page 13, top (L-R):** Jeannie Tabailoux, Liz Baslé, and Mirek Marczak reading *Missions*; Café in Lyon, France; Young children's group; Some of the teens. **Page 13: (left)** Children's group; **(right, top)** Elisei and Adriana Rusu; **(right, bottom)** Brian and In-Sook Robinson.

MAY WE INTRODUCE

David & Rachel V. • Missionaries to France



David's Testimony

I was brought up in a loving, well-grounded Christ-centered family where I learned about God's love and came to the knowledge of His truth at a young age. Realizing that I could never do anything to save myself from an eternity separated from God because of my sin, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior at age five and was later baptized at age 13. Since then, God has continued to lead and guide me as a "work in progress," and has given me the desire and ability to follow Him. It's all by His amazing grace and all for His glory.

Rachel's Testimony

I experienced the love of God at an early age with parents who dedicated their lives to following after God and instilling that love for Him in their children. I realized my sin and need for the Savior and asked Jesus Christ to be the Lord of my life at age 11 and was baptized at age 12. Over the years my relationship with God has grown through prayer and study of His Word and putting my faith into action by living out Jesus Christ's love to neighbors and coworkers. I have enjoyed using my God-given gifts (such as cooking and artistic talents) to further His kingdom.

Together

We want to serve God with our lives in whatever capacity He desires and wherever He knows we will fit best. Since our marriage in 2007 we have been involved in hospitality, rela-

tionship evangelism and discipleship in various places and capacities. Following God's initial leading toward full-time service, we spent two months serving practically in the ministry of Pierre Vivantes in Entrepierre, France, during the summer of 2012. This "vision trip" was perfectly bookended by CMML and MSC Canada's Missionary Orientation Program just before we left and the European Christian Workers' Conference (in conjunction with CMML, MSC Canada and Echoes of Service) in France just before we came back. God used that summer and both conferences to prepare us for, and to show us, His next steps.

When we returned we followed the Holy Spirit's prompting and our elders' advice to take several steps to prepare for overseas ministry. This included biblical studies at Lancaster Bible College, becoming more involved in our local church, beginning French studies and continuing to open our home for hospitality, relationship evangelism and discipleship studies.

God has revealed that His next step for us is to serve among international university students through the FEU (Foyer Evangélique Universitaire) ministry in Grenoble, France. We serve on the leadership team by encouraging students in their walk with Jesus Christ, promoting their involvement in a local church, supporting them in ministries they feel God leading them into and fostering student discipleship relationships. We are excited to see how God will use us to further His kingdom here in France. Please pray for us! Read our blog at www.LearnServeLove.com. ■

2014 CHRISTMAS MAILING DATES FOR INTERNATIONAL MAIL SENT FROM THE U.S.A. AND CANADA

To ensure delivery of Christmas cards and packages to international addresses, the Postal Service suggests that your mail be at the post office by the mailing dates listed below.

MAIL ADDRESSED TO:

Africa
Asia/Pacific Rim
Australia/New Zealand
Caribbean
Central & South America
Europe
Mexico
Middle East

FIRST-CLASS MAIL INTERNATIONAL:

December 2
December 9
December 9
December 9
December 2
December 9
December 9
December 9

Missionaries Enjoy Hearing From You!

As you write to a missionary, please be sure to use their overseas or furlough address. Under no circumstances should mail for a missionary be sent to CMML or MSC Canada. We are unable to forward those letters or packages and will have to mark them "Return to Sender."