

ECM NEWS

..... AUTUMN 2025

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GUESTHOUSE UPDATE P10

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Europe needs Jesus, now more than ever. A hundred years ago 70% of the world's Christians lived in Europe but it now has the **smallest number of committed Christ followers in the world.**

European Christian Mission's vision is to see the peoples of **Europe transformed in the name of Jesus Christ.** Our workers partner with local believers to **Equip, Connect and Multiply** followers of Jesus through disciple making and church planting across Europe.

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New Zealand

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For information and feedback,
email info@ecmnewzealand.org

.... GETTING TO KNOW

THE ECM OFFICE STOVEN KENNERLEY



ECM NZ Trustee

You have recently become a trustee for ECM NZ. Could you please tell us what motivated you to do this?

I had been feeling challenged to be more outwardly focused and find new ways to serve beyond the rather insular role of being a good father to my growing family, which is still a vital role! When asked to become a trustee, it presented an opportunity to serve God, and others, in a way that makes use of talents I feel God has given me.

I am also aware that despite its Christian heritage, Europe has a great need for missionaries, and being a trustee is a small way I can contribute to help facilitate that.

How do you feel connected to Europe?

Along with my European heritage, my aunt has lived in France since before I was born, and so I have a French uncle and cousins. Before too many kids put a pause on travelling, I enjoyed extensive time travelling in Europe, as I have long been interested in Europe's diverse history and culture, particularly through study of music.

Interested in playing your part in the mission to Europe?
Head to ecmnewzealand.org/contact-us

EDITORIAL

A TRANSFORMATIVE BELIEF SYSTEM

Welcome to our Autumn issue of New Zealand *ECM News*.

The main article in this autumn issue explores the concept of contextualisation – something that our field workers must constantly be thinking about. In fact, all Christians should think about this as we share the story of the Good News of Jesus in every context that we find ourselves in – at home, at work, and in our leisure time.

I have been thinking about the word 'Gospel' recently. As a Christian, I understand the word 'Gospel', and the depth of meaning tied up in that one word. It explains an amazing story of Jesus' birth and death, and it also has many other deep levels of meaning, such as sin and its consequences, forgiveness and grace, justice and righteousness, and also God's love, care and presence with all people on this earth.

However, if I use the word 'Gospel' with my non-Christian family and friends (and even some people in church), their eyes glaze over. So, I have been thinking about how to contextualise the word 'Gospel' and express it in language and concepts that people in all walks of life, and contexts, will understand.

I need to tailor my language for each individual and use ideas and concepts that they readily relate to, such as "a transformative belief system", and use that to focus on the core meaning of the "good news".

In this issue we highlight Hungary, a country in which ECM has recently begun to work, and we give an update on the Camino Guesthouse project in Spain. We also share some opportunities for service with ECM – in both Europe, and with our small ECM NZ team. In our final article, Caitlin challenges us to think about what it means for God to be 'with us'.



**Féy Cotter
Editor**

Teaching year 5 children the concept that Jesus died for us (substitutionary atonement) presented a challenge. The scripture textbook emphasised the cross as the point of contact, but when one of the students expressed that it looked like a plus sign, I knew the symbol meant little to them outside of that context. So, living in western NSW, the biggest preoccupation is undoubtedly sport. Most of the class played soccer on weekends and understood the concept of a substitute player. I drew on this and made the link; the Lord Jesus subbed in for us, taking the penalty we deserved upon himself. They loved it and it was very rewarding to see their eyes lighting up with understanding. Without realising it, I had just contextualised the gospel.

Without watering it down or changing the core message in any way; contextualisation is what we all do when we seek to communicate the gospel message in language our hearers understand and can relate to. The Lord Jesus did this in various ways, drawing on topics his hearers could relate to in their context, such as wineskins, mustard seeds and fishing. Paul used a similar strategy in his own ministry, referring (in Acts 17) to local architecture, Greek poets, pagan philosophers and even identifying the culture's idols.¹ According to Tim Keller, contextualisation means to "resonate with yet defy the culture around you...to antagonise a society's idols while showing respect for its people, hopes and aspirations."² In a cross-cultural setting, these idols won't be immediately obvious. The hard work of contextualisation entails doing cultural research. Ali M, ECM cross cultural

worker in Germany, says the number one idol in Berlin is expressive individualism, seen primarily in an emphasis on the freedom to choose what you can do with your own body. She says, "I've heard it said that the last thing to be converted is your wallet. I wouldn't mind betting that in Berlin, it's one's sexuality." Within this culture, their strong 20-year marriage is a profound Christian witness and powerful testimony to the gospel, accompanying the preaching and proclaiming of the truth.

Doing the work of contextualisation in another culture also involves looking for points of contact. Ali goes on to say that, in Berlin, this involves seeking out those common meeting spaces, like concerts, exhibitions and parties. She says art in all its forms often affords common ground for non-believers and believers to meet together, to share life and to quash any misconceptions people may have about Christianity. In Berlin, "To believe the Bible is true is to be narrow-minded and uneducated. A neighbour of mine believes that Christianity is a tool used to control societies. Another friend says the church is where you go when you need help, for lonely people with addictions." Contextualising the Good News of Jesus inevitably involves this work of understanding how that Good News is perceived in any given culture before you preach it. For Carolyn W, ECM cross-cultural worker in Spain, being a Christian means being a Catholic and all that entails... communion, confirmation, mass etc. She says, "People are not interested in that and it is just irrelevant, rigid and makes people think of the nuns that taught them at school. It's familiar

ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

Gospel Contextualisation in Europe



Sam Boog is communications and media trained and has a particular passion for the gospel needs of Europe. She lives in western NSW, Australia with her husband and four daughters.

"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" 1 Cor 9:22

but they've moved past that, rejected it for themselves and their own family. They are left with the idea/value of just being a good person – that is enough.” Carolyn says part of their work of contextualisation is understanding the cultural baggage many Spaniards come with regarding Christianity. Their Christian witness entails modelling what it looks like to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, based on an understanding of grace.

However, cultural baggage is something missionaries carry with them as well and it's very important to continually seek to recognise what that is before you attempt to preach to others. Simon Ball, former cross-culture worker in Ireland, describes cultural baggage as:

“Subconscious expectations about how life should be lived, how things should work,

"cultural baggage is something missionaries carry with them"

how society works, and also what Christianity, discipleship and church should look like – a whole host of things that you subconsciously just accept as being true or right, or best practice.”

Constructive dialogue with people on the field, a willingness to learn and embrace new ways of doing things, and recognising where you may be wrong, are all

essential elements required as you seek to unpack your own cultural baggage and help others unpack theirs. Unchecked, cultural baggage has the potential to unnecessarily offend or confuse and may end up being an obstacle in the path of salvation. Letting go of this baggage may require a degree of self-sacrifice. You may have to change: eating habits and foods, style of dress, personal music tastes, even sleep routines! Former Australian ECM Executive Director and missionary in Portugal Matt George said that often deep, spiritual conversations in Portugal happened late at night and any missionary who went to bed early missed out on these gospel opportunities. In a number of European countries there is little point scheduling early morning prayer meetings, as no one would show up.

"different ways of doing things may not necessarily be 'wrong' "

Much cultural adaptation occurs in the first year on the field. Emily L, ECM Missionary in Portugal, was surprised by the time it took to accomplish basic administration tasks when they first arrived. She says it never occurred to her before that Australia had such an efficient administrative system in contrast to Europe. Simon Ball says he learnt the same lesson when he first moved to Ireland.

“...I remember the bureaucratic hurdles were immense. Just trying to get a drivers licence took more than three weeks. A bank account, six months... It was a real culture-shock trigger for me. I mentioned my frustrations to my teammate Karen and she said, ‘Simon, you need to realise that all of this stuff is not a distraction. This is all part of your witness. The way you handle yourself, the way you handle the frustrations – it’s all part of it. And it’s all part of you learning to understand Irish culture. So, this is not a distraction – this is your ministry right now.’ It was so wise – it really

helped me reframe what was happening at that moment.”

Having an open heart and mind to accept that different ways of doing things may not necessarily be ‘wrong’ is a critical part of the cultural adaptation process. Australian theologian and author Chris Watkins makes the observation that, “The church has much to answer for here...cultural imperialism assumes that one culture (almost always the speaker’s own) is superior to others and its adherents have a ‘civilising mission’, once called ‘the white man’s burden’ to propagate it around the world... images of Victorian preachers addressing African congregations in western garb contrast with Hudson Taylor whose culturally respectful gospel preaching earned him the ridicule of the British in the nineteenth century”³.

Ultimately, the Bible speaks to any culture, full of sinful people who need to hear the Good News of salvation. Ali M makes the point that “the gospel will always be offensive to an

unbeliever, and no amount of ‘cultural appropriateness’ will alter that!”. Contextualisation involves communicating these truths in the ‘heart’ language of the culture, whatever it may be. Every culture is unique and valuable in the eyes of the Lord Jesus, such that on that great day people from every tongue, tribe, and nation will worship together, forever.



GBU Coimbra students on the main walk-way of campus.
Photo by Emily, Portugal (ECM Australia)



PLEASE PRAY

- For all the ECM cross-culture workers as they continually do the work of contextualising the message of what Jesus has done for us, and all that entails.
- For God’s particular grace on those starting out in the field. That the Lord would help them learn language quickly and adapt to their new culture.
- Pray for each one of us as we seek to contextualise the Gospel as we share about Jesus with our family, neighbours, friends and work colleagues.

1. <https://www.jesusfilm.org/blog/contextualizing-the-gospel-for-all-people/>
2. <https://churchleaders.com/voices/417490-in-sights-from-keller-on-contextualizing.html>
3. Watkins, C, Biblical Critical Theory, 2022

Pray for

HUNGARY



Landlocked in central Europe, Hungary is a predominantly flat country surrounded by the Alps. Flowing south, the famous Danube River bisects the capital Budapest. In 2000, Hungary celebrated a thousand years since its conversion to Christianity. However, following years of spiritual oppression under communism, today, many Hungarians have lost contact with the gospel.



PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Hungarians to see beyond cultural Christianity to the realities of following Jesus.
- Please pray for the Lord to raise up more spiritual leaders amongst the Christ followers in Hungary and for God's people to have a heart for the lost.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Join ECM workers on university campuses to share the gospel, where more than 200,000 students have no contact with a Christian group.

POPULATION
9.66M



233 births
per day



352 deaths
per day



44 migrations
per day

With a declining and rapidly aging population of almost 10 million, Hungary has one of the oldest populations in the world.

RELIGION

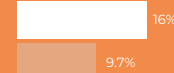
Christian Affiliation in Hungary

■ 2011 ■ 2022

Catholic



Reformed



Lutheran



Other Christian



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

BELIEFS IN HUNGARY

Belief in God (no doubt) 26%

No belief in God 30%

Belief that Bible is Word of God 41%

Belief in existence of soul 63%

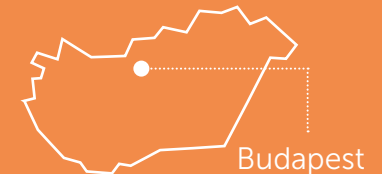
Belief in heaven 47%

Belief in hell 40%

Sources: ecmi.org, joshuaproject.net, pewresearch.org, worldpopulationreview.com, cia.gov, operationworld.org, culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/hungarian-culture/hungarian-culture-religion, state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/hungary/

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Once part of the Soviet bloc, Hungary was the first state to leave communism and to successfully establish a stable democratic government. Foreign investment and admission to the EU has helped Hungary recover economically from its years under communist rule.



Budapest

CHURCHES



After World War II, Christians faced persecution under communist control. With the end of communism in 1990 came freedom of religion, but this has left churches without mature spiritual leadership.

ECM MINISTRY

ECM was active in Hungary until World War II. Now, after a long absence, a new team led by Hungarian couple Tamás & Virág Győri are seeking to reach students and other young professionals. Vincent Whiting (ECM Australia) is also now working as an apprentice in university ministry.

TO FIND OUT MORE HEAD TO ECMNEWZEALAND.ORG/HUNGARY



CAMINO GUESTHOUSE

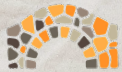


"My wife passed away two years ago. I walk the Camino to be with her and with God." - Duncan

Duncan*, an Australian pilgrim, was the first to stay at the Christian guesthouse in Basque Country on the renowned pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago in Spain. The Casa Camino Antiguo (Ancient Way House), opened in April 2024, after six years of planning and prayer. Duncan had just finished his first day of walking and was continuing another 818 kilometres (30 days of walking) onto the city of Santiago, where the Camino ends.

"At the guesthouse, pilgrims can stay the night and be refreshed before continuing on their way. We aim to offer them a safe space and the warm hospitality of Jesus along their journey"

The total project cost is €280,000, and they are aiming to buy the guesthouse property by the end of 2025. If you'd like to support this project or find out more head to ecmnewzealand.org/camino-guesthouse


CASA CAMINO ANTIGUO
PILGRIM GUESTHOUSE
www.casacaminoantiguo.com



Scan me for more
info or to give to this
project



We would love you to be part of this ministry in Basque Country and to continue to build God's kingdom in the Basque Country and strengthen the local church.

James and Carolynn Webb (ECM Australia)



MISSION OPS



DO YOU SEEK TO SERVE THE GOSPEL NEEDS OF EUROPE?

MINISTRY WORKER IN BERLIN GERMANY | LONG TERM



ECM is looking for an experienced person to join their church-based ministry in Wedding, Berlin. The role focuses on single mothers, children's ministry, and outreach to Muslims. The position is ideally long term but could accommodate shorter term workers for a minimum of 6 months. Long term workers (single or married) will be required to undertake German language study. If you are passionate about serving in this European city, where 65% of people don't go to church, then please contact us.

ecmnewzealand.org/ministry-worker-in-berlin

LEARNING WHILE MINISTERING ITALY | SHORT TERM



ECM is looking for a humble learner to get a taste of overseas mission work. This short term opportunity can be personally crafted around the gifts and skills of the applicant. Possibilities for ministry include: literature distribution, children's work (including camps), university ministry, community outreach, education, and a variety of practical work. Come and see whether cross-cultural ministry is for you. Italian is not essential.

ecmnewzealand.org/short-term-in-lake-garda

ADMIN ASSISTANT - ECM NZ OFFICE REMOTE | PAID POSITION | 5HRS/WEEK



ECM NZ is a small missionary-sending organisation, with a focus on missions in Europe. We are looking for someone living in NZ with experience, or a keen interest, in missions to work alongside the National Director to give administrative assistance in a broad range of areas and to maintain our social media presence.

ecmnewzealand.org/admin

To find out more about any of these opportunities, please email us at serve@ecmnewzealand.org



FÉY COTTER

ECM NZ NATIONAL
DIRECTOR

I will be going to Europe at the end of March. My trip has a fourfold purpose: to explore a potential placement for an enquirer; join Caren in her vision trip to discern her future placement and team in German-speaking Europe; attend the ECM International Leaders Conference and finally to attend the ECM biennial. It will be a busy three weeks, so please pray for me.

At the end of January we ran a booth in the 'Call Space' at Festival One, and it was a great place to make ECM known in NZ. A number of people showed interest in ECM, and requested more information, and I continue to follow them up.

Please pray:

- Stamina, good sleep and no 'dramas' as I travel.
- Clear direction, discernment, and the Lord's guidance in all my conversations in each phase of my travels.
- For good follow up to everyone that responded to ECM's booth at Festival One.



ANNA TOVEY

CANDIDATE FOR ROMANIA

I am working hard to be ready to leave at the end of this month, if all my support comes through. I am really hoping to be at the biennial in April and then head on to Timisoara, Romania after that. My first 6 months in the country will be spent brushing up on my Romanian language.

I am spending as much time with my parents as I can before I depart. There is still plenty to do to pack up my life here in Auckland and be ready to leave but I am thankful to all those who are helping me in this.

Please pray:

- Praise God for the camping holiday I was able to have with my parents.
- Please pray for me to be fully funded in time to get to the ECM biennial.
- Please pray for all the final preparations to come together before I leave NZ.



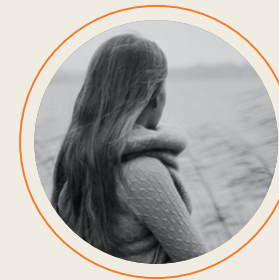
ALEX AND LIZ PREOTESEA-WAGNER

FIELD WORKERS IN ROMANIA

We are just about to reach the 12 month mark of being back in Romania. This past year has been both a challenge and a real blessing; settling back into life in Cernavoda and Romanian culture, reintegrating into our church family, and helping our children adjust and form new connections. We are excited for this next stage, as we push forward with making plans for beginning our ministry project, a workshop focused around creating opportunities for young people, and encouraging the community. We are praying for God's guidance in each step forward.

Please pray:

- Please continue to pray for our support needs, we are still needing to raise a significant amount to be able to remain in ministry here in Romania. We are praying for more partners who want to be part of the work that God is doing here.
- Please also pray for our children (Caleb, 8, and Luca, 3) to really integrate, find connections and learn Romanian. We would love to see them thriving in their lives here.



CAREN

CANDIDATE FOR GERMANY

Féy and I are going on a vision trip to German-speaking Europe in April. We are exploring opportunities for me to serve when I return (in 2026). I plan to work as a bi-vocational worker (as a GP), however I need to be in a healthy and mutually supportive team. Pray for clarity, good discussions with the teams on site and a mutual sense of the right place, and the right team.

Please pray:

- Pray that we will be led to the right team, and the right place for me to apply for a job as a GP.
- I am gearing into exam mode to finish GP training in Australia, so please pray for this process of studying.
- Pray for safe travels in Europe over this time and the biennial which will follow our vision trip.



Isaiah 7:14 NIV

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

These words were likely on repeat in your church in the lead up to Christmas. Please forgive me, then, for bringing them up again now that the new year is well underway. It is so easy for us to become over familiar with the Christmas story and I want to take a moment to look at those final few words, "and will call him Immanuel".

Over the last few months I have been struck afresh by the power of this title given to our saviour. The name Immanuel means "God with us". Pause for a moment and think about that. God. With. Us. What other faith, what other god can we look to that would put themselves into such a humble position as to place themselves with us? We're messy, we get grumpy, we have such basic needs like food and sleep. Our world can't be the most inviting place to one who is divine.

However, as Christians we believe that we do have a

"I get to live daily with the reality that God is with me"

God who is "with us". In the Christmas story we see him in the flesh, in Jesus, God made man. "Royalty robed in the flesh he created". Now, as believers, by the Spirit, God is not only with us, he dwells in us. As one who puts my trust in Jesus, I get to live daily with the reality that God is with me.

How does that change me day-by-day and moment-by-moment? In my morning coffee, my interactions with family, friends, colleagues? How does it change how I go into a daunting situation? How does it bring even greater depth to a season of joy, or greater comfort to a season of sorrow?

My prayer in 2025 is that I wouldn't become blasé about

the idea that God is with me. I don't want it to be something I just consider for two weeks in December. By His Spirit, God meets me in any moment that I invite Him into.

Whether you are serving God overseas or simply out of your native habitat, or if you're serving in your local home community, this truth remains the same. Our faithful God is with us, forever. As the year picks up momentum, in what ways are you seeing the presence of God in your life, in your home, on your mission field?

*Lyrics from 'Arrival by Michael Guy Chislett, Matt Crocker, Benjamin Hastings, Dylan George Thomas



CAITLIN ORMISTON
TRUSTEE

QUICK SNIPPETS



■ FESTIVAL ONE

Towards the end of January, a team of five ran a booth for ECM NZ at Festival One for the first time. Overall it was a positive experience, and the team agreed that we will do it again next year.

Festival One is a Christian music festival held near Hamilton each year, and it is known for its good music and (sometimes) notoriously bad weather! True to its reputation it rained on Sunday, but this did not dampen anyone's enthusiasm. Thankfully the sun came out on Monday to dry everything out before packing up after the festival finished.

ECM ran a quiz on European flags and capital cities, with the winner taking away a \$100 food hamper full of yummy goodies. Please pray for all the follow up that we need to do following the festival. Pray for more enquirers and applicants to join us as we seek to make Christ known in Europe. Pray also for a sponsor to fund our booth in 2026.



The team at Festival One

YES, I want to be part of changing EUROPE

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Street: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Postcode: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

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Receive **news and updates** from ECM:

☐ Email ☐ Post

☐ Become a **Partner in Prayer** and receive monthly prayer fuel by email

☐ Receive information about **including ECM in my will**

☐ Talk to a **mobiliser** about serving in Europe

Support by **financially** giving \$ _____

☐ Fortnightly ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Yearly ☐ One-off

Designate my gift to:

☐ Specific worker/project: _____

☐ General Funds ☐ Where Most Needed

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I have given by Direct Deposit:

☐ **Direct Deposit**

European Christian Mission

New Zealand: 01-0288-0005475-00

Please include your initial, surname and the name of the missionary/project you are donating to.

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☐ **Credit card** Visa/Mastercard

Name on card: _____

Card number:

Expiry: / CVV:

I authorise ECM to debit my nominated credit card for the above amount and frequency.

Signature: _____

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT

ecm

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can partner with us in
Christ's mission
in Europe!

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PARTNER IN PRAYER



PRAY



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powering the gospel work
in Europe through prayer

→ For more info head to:
ecmnewzealand.org/pray

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for production
& postal costs
(≈\$10 per magazine).



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ecmnewzealand.org/give ←

Pray for
EUROPE



PRAY

Returning in May, 2025

→ Join our Partners in Prayer each
month as we hear from and pray for
the gospel work in Europe.

**GIVE A GIFT
THAT LASTS**



GIVE



LEAVE A GIFT TO ECM
IN YOUR WILL

For more information about leaving a
gift to ECM in your will, head to
ecmnewzealand.org/bequests ←

For more information please head to ecmnewzealand.org
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