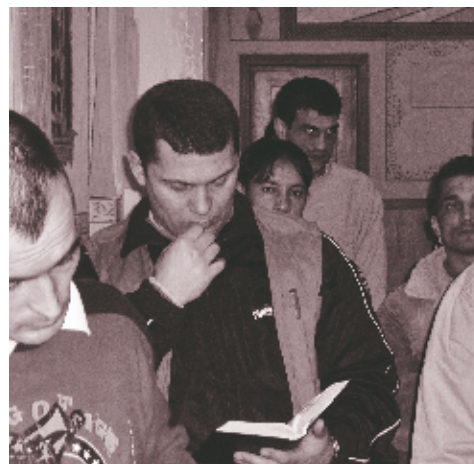


STEFAN'S TESTIMONY

Stefan, Nicoleta and their three children live in a small two room apartment in Oradea. They have gone through many difficulties in recent years. The people from Casa Lumina are helping them through this. Stefan grew up in an orphanage, and had to live on the street. He had to steal to survive. Over the years he has been in prison several times. Olga van Lavieren and her team were always there for him and prayed for him. They regularly visited and encouraged him to change his life. The following is Stefan's testimony.



"My life was a mess, I had many problems and ended up in a lot of trouble. At the same time I saw that the lives of some of my friends changed. Someone invited me to go to a service at Casa Lumina. There I

met Olga, who has been of great support to me over the years. I joined the weekly Bible study group. I learned many wise life lessons. After a while my wife joined the group as well. Through Olga we got to know the Lord Jesus. I learned to trust my life to Him.

As I came clean (came off drugs), I lost many of my friends from the streets, which was very difficult for me. I couldn't let them go, and started stealing again. I lied much and became very confused. In the evening I went out stealing, and the next morning I sang hymns in church. This also put a severe strain on our marriage. One day the police knocked at our door, and I was arrested and sent to prison. There I prayed to the Lord and asked Him for help.

The next day the judge told me that I was a free man again. I couldn't believe it. I went back to church. Together with my wife I wanted to make a new start and decided to get baptized. This was a great joy for our family

Unfortunately I found it very difficult to stay on the right track, and after a while I started stealing again. When my wife found out, she was very upset. My children were on the brink of being sent to an orphanage. This didn't change me, and I ended up in jail again. I was broken. I was sentenced for 4 years. I was angry with everybody

and especially with God. I wanted to end my life. Despite what I had done, my wife kept on visiting me. Also Olga and the Casa Lumina team wrote me and kept on praying for me.

One day somebody gave me a Bible. This changed my life. The history of Job touched my heart. I also enjoyed reading the Psalms. In prison I lacked freedom, but by reading the Bible I received peace in my heart. In prison I visited the church services. I enjoyed singing worship songs to the Lord together with other inmates. God gave me a lot of joy in my heart. I started to share the Gospel with other inmates. When I look back I believe that there was a purpose for me to spend time in prison.

I was released from prison after spending 2 years and 9 months behind bars. My wife was waiting for me. I know that I have caused my wife and children a lot of pain. I want to take my responsibility to be a good father and husband. Not only my wife was waiting for me, also Olga and the Casa Lumina team was there to welcome me back into the free world. Now I regularly visit the meetings and Bible studies, and am growing closer to God. He is my Heavenly 'safety-belt'. In Him I find peace, trust and love. This is what I need. This doesn't mean that all the problems are gone, but now I am happy with my family.

REP. MOLDOVA - A country in distress

In recent months the standard of living in Moldova has dropped significantly, it is now even harder to find a job and the prices for food and fuel have increased even more. Also the morality of society is in decline. People find refuge in lying, stealing and in other horrible things. They try to dull their senses and conscience with drugs and alcohol.

Some families borrow money from 'loan-sharks', paying a very high interest rate to start a business or to immigrate to a western country. This often fails and families end up bankrupt as they are not able to pay back their loans. Many families end up in court, and the sad news is that Christians get into these situations as well.

Please pray for the Republic of Moldova!

Presentations in Your Church: We are currently looking to get more people involved in eastern Europe, and to promote EEO UK. If you are interested in having a presentation about the work of EEO UK in your church, house - or cell group, please contact us at 01737 249 277 or send an email to gerrit.wiersema@eeouk.org



A gift of potatoes from the CSP

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Eastern European Outreach is a 'faith ministry'. All our activities are dependent solely on the financial gifts we receive. We work on an interdenominational basis, and our goal is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every way open to us. Our newsletter is published regularly, and sent free of charge on request or recommendation. However, a freewill gift of £7.00 per year would help to cover production and postage costs. E.E.O. UK works with Eastern European Outreach International, a group of missions and ministries. The main partner is Stg. OostEuropa Zending, The Netherlands, on behalf of Child Sponsor Programme, Christian Care East and West, Children's Relief, Medical Relief, Israel Support and Vision Latina.



Outreach

Did you get the message?!

Mission efforts should increase now!

Albania under the curse of vendetta

Stefan's testimony

Rep. Moldova a country in distress



Mission trip participant Ann Geurts together with a mother who is living with her family under the curse of a blood feud.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. PSALM 23:4

From the Editor

Psalm 23 is very special to me and my wife, as it is our wedding-text. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. It is very easy to confirm this, growing up in a Christian family in the Netherlands, and now living in the UK never lacking anything. Also verse 4 is easy to accept if you have never walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of visiting a conference in Norwich. I always enjoy visiting these conferences as it gives the perfect opportunity to hear what is going on in different areas of the world. It is so inspiring to hear testimonies about how the Lord is working everywhere, especially in areas where all hope is gone.

It really builds me up when I hear testimonies how the Lord is working in the lives of people who are in great need, and have walked for a long time in 'the valley of the shadow of death', to hear how the Lord has been with them even in their darkest hour and how He provided.

In this issue of *Outreach*, we want to encourage you with testimonies of brothers and sisters in the Lord who witnessed the Lord being faithful to them. We will also inform you about particular situations of great need, especially in Albania and the Republic of Moldova.

Gerrit

Editorial

by Helen Jesze



DID YOU GET THE MESSAGE!?

In Brazil, a herd of cows was trying to cross a river to fresh pastures, but the water was full of piranha fish. These terrible and most-feared of all Amazon fish have immensely strong jaws and razor-sharp teeth, and attack their prey in packs of one hundred or more. A shoal can reduce a 45 kilos (100 lbs.) animal to a skeleton in less than 60 seconds!

The herdsman killed a bull and pushed it into the water. The blood attracted the piranhas and they bore down on the carcass. Two hundred metres up the river, the rest of the herd crossed over to safety. One gave its life that many might be saved! There was another who gave his life for many, and Joseph Guarnerius wrote the following words in Latin, inside every one of the violins he made: "The answer to your life is written in your violin - Jesus, Saviour of all mankind".

In a church in Stavanger, Norway in 1970, we saw a large picture depicting the three crosses on the hill of Calvary. Under the central cross lay a dead serpent with its head squashed, and a river of crystal-clear water flowed out and down the hill. Truly, Jesus has bruised the serpent, satan, and now the water of Life flows from His sacrifice to all who will accept it.

Five year old Sophie was sitting with her Grandma on the couch, watching an Easter film. Always full of life, now she was unusually quiet, her little face grave, as she saw them whip the Saviour. Her eyes also turned to the crucifix on the wall, as if that suddenly brought to life what she was seeing on the TV screen. When the film had ended, Sophie softly, reverently touched the plaster feet on the crucifix, the only bit she could reach.

A few days later, Grandma saw Sophie lift the crucifix off the wall and lay it down on the floor. Kneeling in front of it, she stroked and kissed the face, hands and feet of the Christ. "Oh, Grandma, they hurt Him so! Look at the nails they banged through His feet and hands!" "Oh, Sophie, you don't need to worry about that! He's dead now!" "No, Grandma," Sophie shouted, jumping up, "He's not dead! Don't you know He came to life again?!"

When I heard this true story I thought, well, Sophie had understood! She had got the message! He who was dead, suffered and died for our sins, is now alive and holds the keys of Death and Hell for evermore. The cows were of value to their owner, but how much more valuable are the lives of men and women, made in their Creator's likeness. Let us embrace this great truth, that Jesus gave His life for us, and that he is no longer dead, but he is alive and wants to reveal Himself to every person on the planet - you, too!

Easter's come and gone already, but its message can live in our hearts all through the year!

Mission Monitor

by Matthias J. Van der Weide



MISSION EFFORTS SHOULD INCREASE NOW!

As an EEO UK trustee, being Dutch, I live in the Netherlands, and would like to tell you about Milly, a 12 year old girl who disappeared 10 days ago. It then came out she was brutally killed by her neighbour, who is a policeman. Other breaking news is that two men who kidnapped a 7 year old girl 2 years ago and were already found next day, have now been tried for sexual abuse and attempted rape. The Roman Catholic church here, is facing hundreds of claims because of sexual abuse by her clergy during several decades. Jesus said, whoever causes harm to little children, it would have been better if he had not been born, but thrown in the ocean with a millstone around his neck. He expresses the feelings of so many of these victims and their parents. The pope has apologised and asked forgiveness, but is this enough!? We should share the conclusion of Jesus. Not only in Holland, but in the UK we are confronted with similar heartbreaking stories, like the disappearance of Madeleine McCain or Baby "P". Religion cannot change the hearts of men and women, only the power of Christ; only more MISSION and GOSPEL OUTREACH can turn the dramatic events of this time. Help us in EEO UK to do this! It's worth it!

ALBANIA country under a curse of vendetta



Albania, a beautiful country situated next to Greece, you would expect it to be a very popular holiday destination. Unfortunately nothing is further from the truth. Albania has suffered severely under the communist regime, during that time the Albanian government declared it to be the first atheistic country in the world. Since the fall of communism people have gone back to their cultural faiths, mainly Islam and Catholicism.

Over the years the bigger places and especially the capital of Tirana have changed to relatively modern cities. In the villages, on the other hand, it seems that time has stood still. Living conditions are very basic, little or no electricity, no running water, no sewerage system, etc.

Another issue here is also crippling the society in the villages, so-called "honour killing", blood revenge or Vendetta. It is the principle that when a member of a family is injured or killed, a brother, uncle or other close family member is expected to take revenge, and take the life of the killer or one of his or her close relatives. They will, in return, take revenge, and so a vicious circle of killings start, which can take decades, if not centuries, before it gets resolved. Humanly speaking it is nearly impossible to break out of this circle. If someone does, they are despised by their own family, and that person may even put their life on the line.

At this very moment, over 5,500 Albanian families are engaged in blood feuds. More

than 20,000 men and boys are living under an ever-present death sentence because of these blood feuds. Since 1992, at least 10,000 Albanians have been killed to blood feuds. (source Wikipedia)

Eastern European Outreach Intl. has been working in Albania for many years, helping poor families through the Child Sponsor Programme, building up local Christian youngsters through Barnabas conferences and outreaches, helping families affected by the floods (see article on the floods), handing out aid to the needy and bringing the Gospel to the desperate.

On our mission trips we visit families and encourage them.

The following is a report from a participant on one of the trips to Albania.

After a journey of several hours on roads filled with potholes and mud we arrived at the first family. There are six children in this family. The father is currently out of work, and the mother earns about £6 per week. Eight people are living on less than £1 per day. Fortunately one of the children in this family is sponsored through the Child Sponsor Programme. Every month £17 reaches this family. In the west a £20 sponsorship may not be that much, but it is a multiplication of income in a country like Albania.

The next family visited is under the curse of a blood feud or vendetta. The father of the

family was at work. The mother was sitting next to her 18 year old son on the couch. Even inside it was very cold.

This vendetta is working through all aspects of life in this family. The youngest son left the room as soon as he heard what the topic of the discussion was. The mother started to speak about her loneliness; she always has to stay inside with her children. The house is surrounded by a tall wall, the children can never go to school. If they leave the house there is a serious risk they might be murdered.

The 18 year old son is still a child, and the youngest boy will always have to pay the price of replacing the brother who was murdered because of the vendetta. The mother continues to speak; for her this meeting is therapeutic and cannot be long enough. She tells us that she and her husband decided not to take revenge for their son, but to forgive the murderer. They have peace in their heart because of this decision, but friends and neighbours do not understand their decision, and tell them that they are cowards not to take revenge for their son. This family, through the power of the Lord, broke the vicious circle of violence.

The family knows the killer, and suddenly I realise that I will meet this person this week. God works in mysterious ways and I had peace about this, because I would be bringing a message of hope, healing and forgiveness.

Later that week EEO Intl.'s Albanian co-ordinator, Renato, asked me if I could speak in the prison in Tirana. This came as a complete surprise to me, but the Lord had put the message on my heart already, which was a very humbling experience. The deep emotions stirred before, during and after are still there.

During the talk I told the story of the family living under the vendetta, as an example of forgiveness and healing. In the forgiveness of sins is the healing of memories.

After the meeting one of the women came forward for prayer, to be touched by the Lord. One woman told me that this lady was the murderer of the boy...

All of these 5,500 families are suffering under this curse. Jesus Christ is the only solution to this tragedy. Please remember Albania and these families in your prayers.

ALBANIA - Floods

In our previous edition of *Outreach* we wrote about the disaster that has struck hundreds of families in the north of Albania. Following is an update on the situation.

At the end of last year heavy rains and melting snow caused flooding in the Shkoder and Lezha regions of northern Albania. The snow melted and water poured into two large reservoirs above the city of Shkoder. The authorities were put in a dif-

ficult position, they could have let the dams holding the reservoirs burst, which would cause immense flooding to the city but instead they choose to release some of the water more steadily and only flood the outskirts. The worst hit are poor people who lived in older properties that have either collapsed or become uninhabitable.

In recent weeks a second flood has hit the same area, at least 100 families are sur-

rounded by water, among them at least 4 families supported by the Child Sponsor Programme, which means these families are among the poorest of the poor. Even in normal circumstances these families really struggle to survive.

Please remember these families in prayer, and if possible help financially as well.