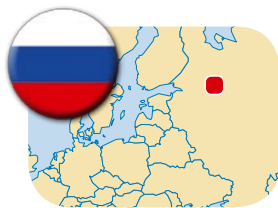


WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES...



The Vacation Bible School was led by Maria (left) and her mother Elvira (right). She was also our oldest student at the Children's Ministry Leadership Course (CMLC) in Moscow.

Because of the new law in Russia, it is impossible at present to organise camps for children from non-Christian families. A planned camp in Petrozavodsk/Karelia had to be cancelled. However, the Lord gave our CEF missionary Maria Afonina the idea to use the camp programme for the weeklong VBSs held in church buildings. She says: "We did this eight times in different places in Karelia and even during a holiday programme for handicapped children. Instead of 60



children at camp, we reached almost 200 children from different places in Karelia and even from St. Petersburg during these weeks. In Petrozavodsk we would never have been given permission to share the gospel in the city, but the children came to the VBS in the villages, because there they spent the summer holidays at their grandmothers. Thus because of the difficulties many more children heard the gospel and some came to know the Lord Jesus. We thank the Lord for this experience!"



A word from
Gerd-Walter Buskies
CEF European Director

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Isaiah 9:2

Dear Friends,

Externally, everything seems bright and well especially at Christmas time. Shopping areas, houses and even trees shine with thousands of little electric lights.

Spiritually, however, our European Region seems to be affected by an almost total power failure. The people in our lands live in spiritual darkness. Nothing is more necessary than light! And that is exactly what Isaiah announces! A great light, namely Christ, the light for the whole world.

The problem is, that people, big and small, are also spiritually blind. *The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ* (2 Cor. 4:4). What then? God's simple and amazing solution is that we shall preach His Word. We—that is you, your church and us at CEF! By spreading the good news of the gospel together, children will begin to see and believe!

I am very happy to see our workers all across Europe spreading the good news. In this issue the stories from the East and West are just a few examples. God is still working today!

I wish you a Merry Christmas and God's blessing for 2018!

Gerd-Walter Buskies



The new initiative of CEF Europe in practise

The main purpose of City Kids is to reach unreached children in the big cities with creative methods and in good cooperation with churches. Chişinău in Moldova and Alès in France are among the many cities in Europe that pioneered CityKids this summer. What is their first reaction?

"CityKids works!"

This was the exclamation of one pastor in Chişinău on the second day of an English language day camp. Children that had never been in his church before lined up for registration, excited and filled with curiosity for what the day would hold. During the summer months similar scenes were repeated in 5 different churches throughout the capital city. Children that had never been to church before came each day, most of them sent by their parents, to attend day camps where they could learn English or build with LEGO® or learn about different professions and what they could be when they grow up! Woven throughout each programme the truth of God's Word was taught in interesting and relevant ways to help the children understand the importance of the Gospel message for their lives.

Praise God with us that 340 children heard the Good News during the first CityKids events in Chişinău. Pray with us as we plan events in the coming months to reach many more children in other parts of Chişinău. Pray that more churches will catch this vision and participate in CityKids events because it really works!

The most exciting evangelism event this year!

CityKids in Alès was one of the most exciting evangelism events this year! We started with a LEGO® day which here in France we call "1001 Briques". The idea of building an entire city on a Saturday and present it to friends and parents on Sunday morning in connection with a church service was a great success!

Fifty-one kids, a high number for France, came from the town and the neighborhood and about 70% of these from non-Christian families. The kids were excited and enjoyed the different construction options that were adapted for their age. Some teenagers also participated and helped the smallest ones. It was a great opportunity to share the gospel. On Saturday, the Children

learned about the importance of building their lives on Christ our Rock. On Sunday morning, some new families attended the dynamic church service hearing about God as Creator, Jesus as Savior and our need to accept and believe in Him in order to be saved.

Other activities, including, a "Surviving in the Jungle" Club and a club with all kinds of wood games followed this weekend. Through the activities many unreached kids along with some of their parents were reached.

We praise the Lord for giving us the opportunity to share the gospel in a creative way. We are already looking forward to doing the same in other cities in order that children may be reached with the good news of salvation!



"I have never heard about Jesus!"

In the Swedish village of Ardala all the churches stand empty. Nevertheless, Judith Reumann, the German CEF missionary, was able to hold a 5-Day Club® there in the empty church that was bought by a Swedish Christian. A total of 15

children including 5 children from the neighborhood came to the club. Judith shares, "Together we learned about the *Wordless Book*. One of our theme songs was, 'Hur kan jag komma till himmelen?'—'How do I get to Heaven?'. The song gives childish ideas of how to get to heaven and in the last verse the only way is given: by faith in Jesus. Afterwards a 6 year old girl said: 'I have never

before heard about Jesus'. I was so moved by this. It is so important to tell children about Jesus. I was thankful that this girl could hear about it this week. Since the beginning of October we have had a monthly *Good News Club*® there with 6-7 children attending so far. We are hoping more children will come and hear about Jesus."



◀A typical church from the time of the Awakening in Sweden. We can use this one for Good News Clubs ▶▼CEF worker Rebekka Åberg teaching a Quiz during Club ▶▼Judith Reumann teaching at the 5-Day-Club



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Many thanks to all of you who support SPAN! The blessing of this programme is immeasurable. The following little testimony gives you a glimpse of the difference SPAN makes.

"After we finished a 5-Day Club programme, an old man came up to us and said, 'Thank you for coming to teach our grandchildren about God—and you even do it for free!' Actually, we know we are able to do this because of the support that we receive from the children of God and from SPAN. As a result, we are able to go weekly to 12 different children and teen groups. Praise the Lord!"—

Diaciuc family, Republic Moldova

Beside the Diaciuc family over 250 CEF workers across Europe benefit from SPAN every month! God bless you for your gifts for SPAN!

Serving teachers and children in Donetsk/Eastern Ukraine

Maria Starovoitova is the local CEF director in the Donetsk area. We wanted to know if CEF is still active in that area. She sent us these moving lines.

"This year the Lord made it possible for me to visit teachers in Donetsk twice. I always have to cross the border between Ukraine and DNR (Donetsk National Republic). About 100 teachers came from towns which still have active military operations. When we saw each other, many had tears in their eyes. We had lost hope of seeing each other here on earth again. I shared one of the seminars from

our European Conference, 'When we cannot, God can'. This seminar had encouraged me for the ministry and it also became a blessing for the teachers in Donetsk. They understood that the Lord still today displays His power in weakness as He has done in the life of Gideon. The Lord works in our difficult circumstances. God encouraged the teachers to reach children, to organize meetings and hold Christian camps in battle zones.

I thank the Lord for such opportunities and ask Him to grant more of them so that the teachers

would be helped to serve children on the other side of the border line."

Another CEF worker, Tatyana Danilova, went for a full week of Day Camps into the military operation zone. It was a great encouragement for her to see new children and also some from longer existing Good News Clubs. One of them was Varya (12). Her mother wanted her to attend a Christian camp because the girl was having suicidal thoughts. Thank the Lord that Varya listened to God's Word very attentively. Tanya says: "We believe that the Lord worked in her heart."

Children's Ministry Leadership Courses in Europe

"You learn so much about the Lord and about yourself. You hear personal experiences about God's love to the lost and His wonderful ways to seek and save them. You experience wonderful fellowship of the international family of God's children. You need to study hard, make assignments, prepare presentations and you leave as an

equipped worker for the mission field. There is time to ask God to show you what plans He has for your life and an opportunity to grow in your faith and in passion of bringing Gospel to the children!" (Danka)

"It is a big investment, but a real blessing to follow this course. It has brought me closer to the Lord and has enriched me. Also the testimonies of

teachers and students were a great blessing for me." (Christine)

"I would seriously recommend the course as it provides not only great teaching on how to reach children with the gospel but plenty of practical opportunities to apply what you have learnt and advice on how you can improve." (Sarah)



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Moscow/Russia



Sibiu/Romania



Kilkeel/Northern Ireland



God's unfolding plan

The future of Kilchzimmer

In the previous *Echo* we asked you to pray with us and for us as the members of the General Assembly continued in their careful consideration regarding the future of Kilchzimmer. Thank you for your prayers!

There is no doubt in the mind of a child of God that He has a plan for their life. There are numerous Bible verses we can quote that reassure us of this fact. He does have a plan—a plan that is perfect and a plan that He unfolds with each obedient and courageous step of faith. Together we have seen God's plan for the ministry of *CEF* in Europe unfold down through the years. Unwavering men and women of faith from USA and Europe were used by God to establish the work and set up structures that would help to sustain it. It grew throughout the region as students were trained and called into fulltime ministry. Literature items were written, translated, printed and distributed. We can say along with the Psalmist, "The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad." (Psalm 126:3) Kilchzimmer has had a key role in the great things God has done for us—particularly in its function as the European headquarters and training centre. It has been a special gift that God allowed us to have and use during a unique time in our history.

However, during the last 10 months as we prayed and considered God's unfolding plan in past years and as we looked forward, in faith, to what He has for us as a mission in the coming years—God's will regarding Kilchzimmer became clearer. It would be impossible to convey the details of all the discussions that led us to make the final decision but we want to share a few key points with you as you have been praying us through this process.

- Dramatic historical changes took place in Europe at the latter part of the 1980s. These changes had a direct impact on our ministry and the way we organized it. Children's Ministry Leadership Courses (CMLC) were planned in Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and other places. This of course had a direct impact on the CMLCs planned at Kilchzimmer. The result however was not fewer students being trained—but more! This was all part of His unfolding plan which led to vibrant national *CEF* ministries growing and developing.
- As a result of the historical changes in Europe the organizational and leadership structure also changed. This was necessary in order to allow the ministry to be nurtured and continue to grow. As a result the region was divided into 4 areas. Those in leadership were based on the field, in their area—no longer at a central location. This natural development in the ministry has diversified leadership—not only geographically but also nationally. Cheaper air travel and technology have transformed communication between leaders, both in frequency and cost. As we look back we can see how God has been preparing us as a mission for the next part of His unfolding plan. As we look forward we are excited to be part of what God is doing in Europe.
- A growing concern as Kilchzimmer became less of a hub for the European ministry was the costs involved in running and maintaining the buildings. Fewer students were attending the courses that were organized. Replacing staff members became increasingly difficult because of the high cost of living. The question of using resources to sustain a headquarters, in an expensive country



like Switzerland, began to weigh heavy on our hearts. It was felt these resources could be used more effectively for direct ministry needs in the region.

King Solomon wisely wrote, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under the sun." (Eccles. 3:1) Although it was not an easy decision to make, there was no doubt in anyone's mind on the evening of 8 November 2017 that the Kilchzimmer season and time was coming to an end. Therefore a unanimous decision to look for a suitable buyer for Kilchzimmer was made by the General Assembly. We will accept bookings until the end of September 2018 and then begin the preparation process to hand over the buildings from 1 January 2019.

Please continue to pray with us in the coming weeks and months:

- For wisdom for David Cook (chairman of the General Assembly) and members of the appointed sub-committee as many practical details have to be discussed and resolved.
- For the staff currently serving and based at Kilchzimmer. They are Felix and Diane Dürrenberger who plan to retire in January 2019. The other members of staff (Sonja Ballou, Tim and Sue Shirey, Viv Stringer and Gerd-Walter Buskies) value your prayers as they seek God's will concerning their future location to continue their ministry.
- For the regional leadership group which will meet God willing 22-23 January 2018. Our discussions will include the developing leadership structure for CEF Europe and potential scenarios for an alternative headquarters.

A special service is planned to give thanks for all the blessings we have received from the Lord. This will be held on **22 September 2018** at Kilchzimmer. Put the date in your diary and plan to be with us—more details will be given in the next edition of the *Echo*.

The members of the Kilchzimmer association:

David Cook (Chairman), Henry Berry, Gerd-Walter Buskies, Linda Corry, Felix Dürrenberger, Sebastian Edelmann, Stephan Haefelfinger, Heinz Heutschi, Geoffrey Holder, Stefan Jossen, Jakob Wiebe