

KONYA PRAYER LETTER

MARCH, 2001

"AND THERE ARE MANY ADVERSARIES"

Paul wrote those words as he shared with the Corinthians the great opportunities God gave him to proclaim the Gospel. This last quarter has again reminded us of these truths. God has given to us such an open door here! For example, on one weekend alone in January we saw over a hundred young people saved through evangelism in a high school and meetings held with our Gospel team in Hungarian local churches. Our annual missions conference at the Bible School resulted in over fifty public decisions for dedication of life and commitment to missions. A faith promise of nearly \$10,000 was made to help proclaim the Gospel in Greece. As you regularly read about things like this in our prayer letters, you may think we live on some sort of spiritual "Mt. Zion"—protected and immune from any misfortune and attack from our adversary. But in fact nothing could be further from the truth! The following are some "adversaries" we have faced this last couple of months.

THE ADVERSARY OF SIN

Unfortunately two of our students—one in our School of Pastoral Ministries—had to be dismissed from school during Winter Break. These students became involved in open, serious sin, and showed no indication of a repentant heart or desire to change their behavior. The former Pastoral Ministries student was even put under church discipline by his local church. Through his sin and

stubborn heart he has destroyed his testimony and potential ministry.

THE ADVERSARY OF DEATH

A tragic "first" in February involved the first death of a Bible School graduate. Csontos István was a graduate of our first Bible School and Pastoral Ministries classes. He was ministering among the gypsies in the neighboring village of Tápiószecső. I preached at his tent crusade there last September and wrote to you about my experiences. István was hit by a speeding car as he rode his bicycle home from ministry one evening last month. He was terribly injured, and the Lord took him home after István painfully lingered in intensive care for about a week. István was just 31 years old. I preached his funeral, and about 200 attendees, many unsaved, heard the Gospel. István leaves behind a widowed wife and three children, aged 4 years to 4 months.

THE ADVERSARY OF FUNDING

This year new government regulations took affect increasing the Hungarian minimum wage by over 60%. This resulted in a whopping increase in employer taxes as well. Since Word of Life Hungary employs over a score of Hungarian workers, these new regulations hit hard. A few workers had to be released or have their hours reduced in order to meet payrolls. In addition, each Hungarian student must be subsidized by \$1000 per year in order for us to educate and house him. This subsidy comes from the generosity of our supporters. We were already behind in scholarship subsidies before the mandated pay increase took effect. In addition, the dollar has

dropped by 10% in value since November. Add to this having to repair the transmission on our ministry van (with only 36,000 miles on it!) and the result is a deeply felt financial crunch at a time when the ministry door is wide open.

THE ADVERSARY OF SLANDER

As you know, we personally have very cordial relationships with our neighbors and many residents of Tóalmás, the village where we live. They accept us and we have led several neighbors to Christ. But there is a small minority who vehemently resent our presence and oppose our work. Unfortunately some of them occupy positions in our local government. These people have tried to purchase the castle for city ownership and have used the media to slander this work. Two years ago a national TV news show did an unfavorable and untrue report on us. The result? The best enrollment at summer camp we had ever had up to that time! Just recently some of these same people were interviewed for a half-page article on Word of Life for a national newspaper. The article, complete with pictures, was full of untruths and misrepresentations.

What can we say to these things? Vance Havner once said it well: *If someone is kicking you from behind, you know you must be in front!* We know who the real adversary is, and he hates this work! This is why your prayers and support are crucial. We really are a team—so please pray for these things. This is the "real stuff" of missions. But we must never forget that, whatever happens, we are ever on the Victor's side!

Pam's Perspective . . .

A Hungarian funeral is a stark reminder of the reality of death. There is little effort made to make things comfortable or easy. There are no funeral homes in Hungary. Instead, every cemetery has a small building on the property, usually open in the front, and sometimes only big enough to provide shelter for the casket and five or six family members to sit nearby. People come to the cemetery at the time of burial to pay their condolences. They can go into the small room to offer condolences to family members, or just stand outside and quietly wait. A Protestant funeral service usually begins with the singing of hymns, followed by prayer and a message by the pastor. This service usually lasts about 30-60 minutes. Following the pastor's closing prayer the grave diggers carry the casket to an open van (which is often in less than perfect condition). Flowers are also put into the van, and then the van proceeds to the gravesite, with the minister, family and friends walking behind in a sort of processional.

Everyone then gathers around the open grave, the casket is placed above the grave, and the pastor says a few more words of comfort or reads some Scripture. The casket is then lowered into the grave. Often, family members will throw a flower into the grave immediately after the casket is lowered. Following this everyone stands and watches as the grave diggers fill in the grave, shoveling in the dirt and making the mound nice and straight. This can take some time. At István's funeral we sang hymns during this time. There is no dinner officially provided afterwards for the family, but often family members will invite close friends and have a meal together. In the winter it can be very cold and snowy, or raining and muddy. Proper funeral attire is black, and always includes boots. It is a time when the only comfort is found in God's Word—made all the more apparent when other comforts are missing. The day of István's funeral was dry and sunny. It was a large funeral, and we rejoiced that it was also a real testimony to his many unsaved family members. Please remember to pray for Erzsi his wife, and their three preschool children, who will now grow up without a daddy.

PRAISE THE LORD FOR:

- A great missions conference in January. Many decisions, nearly \$10,000 faith promise for missions in Greece
- Well over a hundred Hungarians saved recently through various missions endeavors

PRAY WITH US FOR:

- Finances for various aspects of the ministry during a time of special need
- The widowed wife and children of István, killed in a tragic accident
- A repentant heart for students recently dismissed from school
- For God to work in heart of those attacking this ministry
- Real revival and spiritual awakening in Hungary.

FURLOUGH ITINERARY , MAY-JULY 2001

May 21	Word of Life, Schroon Lake, NY
May 23	First Baptist Church, Russiaville, IN
May 27	AM Hillcrest Baptist Church, Mishawaka, IN PM First Baptist Church, Elkhart, IN
May 28-June 1	Word of Life Bible Institute, Schroon Lake, NY
June 17	AM Westridge Baptist Church, Ft. Wayne, IN PM Goodnews Baptist Church, Churubusco, IN
June 20	Sevier Home Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN
June 24	AM Maranatha Baptist Church, Columbus, OH
July 1	AM Mogadore Baptist Church, Mogadore, OH PM First Baptist Church, Tallmadge, OH
July 8	AM First Baptist Church, Francesville, IN PM Wawasee Hts Baptist Church, Syracuse IN
July 11	Suburban Hts Baptist Ch, Garfield Hts, OH
July 15	AM Nottingham Baptist Ch, Cleveland, OH PM Highview Baptist Church, Akron, OH
July 22	Huntsburg Baptist Church, Huntsburg, OH
July 25	Donation Hill Comm. Ch, Cochranton, PA
July 29	Christ E. Free Church, Saegertown, PA

ALEX AND PAM KONYA . . . SERVING WITH WORD OF LIFE HUNGARY

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