

KONYA PRAYER LETTER

MARCH, 2002

A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW

That was the theme of our missions conference in January. We focused on the so-called *10/40 Window*, the area on the earth between the 10th and 40th north parallel, where nearly two thirds of the world's population lives. Our faith promise goal was to support two Syrian men, who would move to Jordan from Syria with their families, attend an evangelical seminary there, and then return to Syria with the Gospel. Harry Bollback was the main conference speaker, and God worked in our hearts! More than 40 students made open public decisions to be available to God to do whatever he asks, and our faith promise goal was broken. The final total was more than \$11,000! Please pray that these students will follow through on their decisions, and that we will meet this faith promise commitment, which ends on June 1.

THE LOCAL CHURCH IS STILL THE KEY

The longer we minister with Word of Life in Hungary, the more we are reminded of this fact. Three recent events brought this home to us in the last couple of months. The first was a visit I had with a second-year student. He was depressed and needed to talk. He is from a village on the eastern Great Plain in Hungary. Both his parents are unbelievers, and have been hospitalized at one time or other for mental illness. His father is a drunkard. This humble student must handle his family's finances because neither parent is competent. If his father gets any money in his pocket, he heads directly for the bar and squanders it on drink and gambling. This young man has a great

burden for his parents, family and the people of his village, but there is no Bible-believing local church anywhere near his town. So he is now seriously considering our pastoral ministries school so he can go back home and plant one! This often happens with our students. Far from pulling them away from the local church, two years at Bible school gives them more of a burden and appreciation for their local church. Or it stirs desires to see a church planted in their village. Pray for them—that God would honor their dreams of seeing revival in their local churches, and churches planted where there are none!

The second local church reminder happened right in our home church in Tóalmás. You may remember that just a year ago we had to dismiss two students who decided to defy the Lord and our church and live together in open immorality. They were placed under church discipline, removed from our school and church, and banned from our gypsy house group. One January day they came into my office. God had dealt with them severely, and with brokenness and tears they repented of their sin. They are now legally married and have publicly sought the forgiveness of our church, its leadership and our house group. They were restored to fellowship and now want to live for the Lord. I often tell our students "What happens, teaches." What a lesson God taught our young church and community through obedience to His Word! We are also thankful that our church now has a pastoral intern. He is a graduate of our Bible school whose Hungarian parents immigrated to Canada before he was born. Pray for Somogyi Péter and our church—that God's name may be glorified through us.

The third local church reminder happened a couple of weeks ago. A graduate who is planting a local church

in a neighboring town came to minister in our Sunday morning service. What a report! This little group will officially constitute itself in May as a local church. They have also acquired a plot of ground on which to build a church building. Their funds are limited, so they decided to build the foundation *and baptistry* and finish the rest as funds come in. Why? They want their baptisms to be a testimony *in their own village* to God's grace. I love it! Pray for them, that this would go well. And praise God for the local church!

A BUNCH OF MISFITS?

That's the tag placed by the world on some of our students. Some of them come from terrible circumstances. Here are some examples of students that I have counseled in the last couple of months. Two students were nearly in tears, afraid they might fail a course. Both grew up in State orphanages under appalling circumstances. A young man is burdened about his parents. His father is a drunkard who beats his mother when he is drunk. His brother lives on the streets in Budapest. A young man weeps over his mother, who has a live-in boyfriend who is now drinking and refuses to leave. A student doesn't know what to do because his pastor is a drunkard, but the majority of members in the little church are his relatives, so they refuse to do anything about it. A young lady asks prayer for her father—45 years old, unsaved and dying in a hospital of cirrhosis of the liver. Her mother has thrown her out of the house and she has nowhere to live. But the exciting thing is—the grace of God has broken the cycle of sin in these families through the conversion of these students. Pray for them—that they will make an eternal difference in their families and in this needy land!

Pam's Perspective . . .

I love the Christmas season in Hungary because it is "back to the basics." Fewer parties, programs, advertisements and decorations. Our church had a short nativity program put on by our children during the service, and we usually follow the Hungarian custom of lighting candles on the Advent wreath.

Because of the school break, Al often accepts outside ministry invitations during this time. The Saturday before Christmas we traveled to the town of Pákozd to minister in music and speaking. It was the annual candlelight Christmas program at the church, and usually the entire village is invited. This church, like others with very old unheated church buildings, usually meets in a separate, heated side building during the cold winter months. But because of the number of people expected, this church decided to hold the service in its unheated, stone "temple," built in 1713! We arrived at the pastor's home, had the customary cup of tea or coffee, then bundled up and headed for the church. (I long ago learned that the cardinal rule when ministering in village churches here in the winter is: "Bundle up warm!!").

The church was full, and the program began. First the children did their part—singing, memorized Scripture, the Christmas story and poems—all done while warmly dressed. It was so cold they could see their breath! Meanwhile, Al was praying that his sax and fingers would work. (The month of December set record lows here in Hungary.) We found it easier to imagine the manger scene when there is only candlelight and you have to wiggle your toes to keep them from freezing. Although his fingers were stiff and the air was icy cold, Al managed to play all but one song and give a short Gospel presentation. At the end of the two-hour service the children lit sparklers outside and each was given a bag full of candy, fruit and a tract. After this it was back to the Pastor's house for a cup of hot tea, then home—with our car heater turned up full blast! As cold as the weather was, the people were warm and gracious. It is always a blessing to minister in villages like that—whether in cold or heat!

PRAISE THE LORD FOR:

- Two former students who had been living in sin, who repented and returned to the Lord
- A great missions conference in January, with many decisions made and a great faith promise
- A pastoral intern at our church in Tóalmás
- People being saved on a regular basis through the ministry of students and staff

PRAY WITH US FOR:

- *Finances to meet current expenses and complete renovation projects*
- Clearing through customs of a large container full of supplies for this ministry
- That God would send faithful men to this school who could be future spiritual leaders
- That we will meet our school faith promise of \$11,000 for missions this year
- Real revival and spiritual awakening in Hungary.

DID YOU KNOW???

**That during the severe cold spell of November-January, more than 70 people died of exposure, most in Budapest . . .

**That the former Nazi and Communist secret police headquarters in Budapest was recently opened to the public for the first time? When it was dedicated as a national memorial, more than 120,000 Hungarians jammed the streets in a moving ceremony. Daily there are very long lines as people stand for hours, even in bad weather, waiting to enter the "Terror House," dedicated to those imprisoned, tortured or killed under Nazi and Communist tyranny . . .

**That Hungary is bidding to have the 2012 Summer Olympic games held in Budapest . . .

**That it currently costs at least \$40-\$50 per square foot to build a home in Hungary . . .

THE KONYAS . . . SERVING WITH WORD OF LIFE HUNGARY

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