

OUTREACH

EASTERN EUROPEAN OUTREACH (Reg. Charity 290643)



WE

HAVE

MOVED!

Our ADDRESS is now:-

**EEO UK, Gospel Centre, Old Burmham Road,
HIGHBRIDGE, Somerset TA9 3NS**



Rev. KELTON BLACK
Chairman of Trustees

A MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES

Chris Truslove has been our UK administrator and co-editor of "Outreach" for many years. He has come through the difficulties of changing our office and computer programs to coincide with the international missions, and has done an excellent job.

A man of many talents, he has been active in his church, a Pastor and preacher, an avid reader (he and his wife have over 1000 books!), article-writer and been active in other charity work, this all despite some serious health challenges. His wife, Carol, is an excellent cook and they love to invite friends and family to stay, as family life is important to them.

The Trustees of EEO UK say a huge "Thank you" to Chris. for his involvement during these 18 years; he will be greatly missed! We wish Chris. and Carol a wonderful retirement and God's abundant blessings for their future!

EDITORIAL

by Chris Truslove

"I wonder if you can tell me", said Alice, "Which way to go?" "That depends" said the Cheshire Cat "On which way you *want* to go". In the surreal world of ALICE IN WONDERLAND, as in other classic children's books set in Never-Never Land, Narnia, Over The Rainbow, or Middle Earth, adults and children alike have to suspend belief and enter into the world presented to us by the author. And of course in all the best Children's books, things happen that would not be permitted in the real world; - 'Swallows and Amazons' (messing about in boats without life jackets!), 'The Railway Children' (trespassing on the railway!) My wife Carol was a Children's Librarian and she says that a good children's book may be read and enjoyed by both adults and children alike.



We, like Alice, have a need to know where we are going. "Doubting" Thomas told Jesus

at the Last Supper "We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" To which Jesus replied "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14 v 6). Thomas discovered that Jesus is the way. Paul, on trial, calls the Church "The Way" (see Acts 24 v 14). Alice, like Thomas had a precious need to know the way. Living in the West in an age of doubt and disbelief we have quite a job to do to proclaim Jesus as The Way; the One who is able to give purpose and direction to human lives. He still leads His

Church, His modern-day disciples and Christian organisations such as EEO in their work and purpose; He not only shows us the Way, He *IS* the Way.

So which way for EEO? Our Trustees, of course as Christians ask the Lord – not the Cheshire Cat! The Israelites had a pillar of fire and a cloud to lead them. Joshua put out a Fleece. Elijah heard a still small voice. But, at EEO we have God within us; we don't need the devices of the Old Covenant, (or the Cheshire Cat!) This leads me into announcing that, after careful and prayerful consideration I am retiring as UK Agent for EEO after eighteen years (but remaining a supporter). This Editorial and edition of *OUTREACH* is my last. I've reached a 'certain age' when it seems "good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15 v 28) that I should step down. But the work of EEO goes on, and will do so either until it seems either "good to the Holy Spirit and to us" to stop, or the Lord comes again in glory! The fact that we continue to be blessed by your generous giving is a sure sign from Him that our work should go on. During my time I have seen new mission fields open up to EEO and new labourers come to work with the Lord. So, in bidding 'farewell' to you all I also say 'Thank You, thank you, thank you' for your faithfulness, your love, and your generous



Chris Truslove

GERRIT IS BACK!



"The Wiersema Family"

"After some years away from EEO, Gerrit and Laura Wiersema have been invited to help the Dutch international mission with field management, Gerrit for logistics and field organization, and Laura with emphasis on finances. We were so happy to see Gerrit at our last UK Trustee meeting; pray for God's guidance, as new steps are taken here. With two beautiful daughters and a new home in Scotland, God has blessed them!"

Coming full-circle – trip report Ukraine,

October 2018

by Gerrit Wiersema

Unexpectedly I received a message from trustee Kelton Black that EEO worker Herman Kesting had suffered a small brain aneurism and they needed someone to lead a trip to the Ukraine. After discussing with EEO's Dutch director, it was decided I should come to Holland to lead a Dutch team. Very soon I was on a plane from Glasgow to Amsterdam and stayed the night with my parents in Friesland. Next day at 6 am I met the team, packed the van and car and set off. A two day 1100 mile journey through Germany, Austria and Hungary followed. When we arrived on the Ukrainian side of the border within about an hour and a half, local mission director Peter was amazed as it often takes 4 hours to cross, as Ukraine is a 'buffer' country between the EU and Russia.

“Holey land”

It was the first time in 13 years I had been back in the country where it all started for me. In 2002 I first got involved with EEO when on a mission trip with my late sister. “Welcome to the Holy Land” (holey land) were the words our local contact person uttered the first time I set foot on Ukrainian soil. “Because there are so many holes in the roads!” he joked. Between 2002 and January 2005 I visited Ukraine several times, expecting to visit often, but for some reason, during my whole EEO career, I had never been back. At one point I was to go with my wife, but she developed pneumonia just before leaving.

Much has changed for the good, the roads are bad, but significantly better than 13 years ago. The town Beregowo has also significantly improved and reminded me of Romania about a decade ago. At face value it looks alright especially along the main roads. But not everything is what it seems, which I was to discover later.

The first day we visited a church service in the morning, but the main event was a visit to the Roma gypsy church in Mukachevo. In the past I have visited the Roma camp over there and the church, which was like a large shack in which we all had to cram in to enjoy the service. The houses on the main street had improved enormously, especially as many Roma men work abroad, sending their family money. The church surprised me most. The shack has been torn down and replaced by what can be described as a small modern sports hall, with proper seating, a good sound-system and good instruments, played mainly by the former Roma band Amaro Del. A great service followed with amazing worship and a powerful testimony by one of our team members.

Baby department

Next day, Peter took us to the Baby Department in the hospital. In the past, several girls from the UK worked in the Infection Dept. as there used to be many babies. However, much has changed. Now there are two Dutch volunteers working, as there are only 3 abandoned babies in the hospital. Each has a whole history. One was born with a heart condition and even though he is already 8 or 9 months old, he looks like a 3 month old. This little boy is also lactose intolerant, and probably has many more allergies as his siblings struggle with gluten. Buying lactose free baby milk is very expensive, £20 per week, and to buy it from a monthly salary of £200, then that is a fortune! The boy is still in the hospital but being underpaid and understaffed, they want to get rid of the babies sooner rather than later. The siblings of this boy are all in the same foster family, but for him there is no room. This means this baby boy will probably end up in an orphanage where he would really struggle, as they would not be able to give him the food he needs.

Another baby had suffered from meningitis, but as it is still very young, the doctors and nurses are not sure whether she is deaf, blind or both. In previous years the volunteers had a similar case where a baby suffered from meningitis and ended up in a vegetative state. The child was released from hospital and sent back to the parents in a gypsy camp.

This was a death sentence as they would have no idea what to do with a child like that, and would not be able to feed it properly either.

Because of shortages, there is only one nurse for two departments and an enormous lack of proper materials. Fortunately sponsors donate nappies, towels and toiletries so the children are not neglected.

In the past I have written several articles raising funds for washing machines. It was strange to see the laundry room again. All the machines which were discarded back then, still stood there, including washing machines paid for by EEO UK supporters about a decade ago. Of the 10 - 15 washing machines, only 3 or 4 were still working. I asked why they do not discard broken and rusted machines. The answer I got is that everything in Ukraine is accounted for and that the directors or the inspectors just don't allow the hospital to get rid of them.

Then we went outside the city to see the mission's main storage place. All the relief goods from the Netherlands arrive here. Peter said the last couple of years the number of trucks have declined significantly as procedures have become more complicated. One of the truck loads had not been released by Customs, meaning that a whole room is filled with relief goods which cannot be handed out to people.

CSP Family visits

Later the team prepared food and gift parcels for CSP families, and in three teams we visited 9 families that evening. While Ukraine optically has made progress, behind closed doors the poverty and sorrow is just mind-boggling. Broken homes, serious neglect and abject poverty. In the first family we visited, two young sisters lived in a 2 room house, with their children. The husbands worked abroad but were barely able to send any money. The second family were two boys, their father and the grandmother. The mother had abandoned the family, leaving the boys on their own, as the father works very long days. Especially the oldest boys really struggled with the fact that their mother left and did not care about them. The last family was a young widow and her 3 children, barely managing. It was a short visit as the grandfather had just died and everything needed to be prepared for the funeral (normally within 2 days in countries like Ukraine). It was a real privilege to be there and encourage these families, especially to pray with them.





Roma camps

Next morning Peter and I went to Kisbegany, a small village 15 miles outside Beregowo. I was part of a group who had helped build a school / church in the gypsy camp 15 years ago. To my joy I could see a lot has improved and the houses are much better. The down side is that virtually all young men work abroad to send money home. I only met 2 people I remembered from back then. One disappointment was that the church is not being used, due to church quarrels, but there are plans to start using the building again in the near future. I hope and pray this will happen as the building is really decent for Ukrainian standards.

Afterwards I met the rest of the team which had visited the street children's project 'Eagles Nest'.

Next stop was a visit to Janosi, a Roma gypsy camp just outside of Beregowo. Over there EEO supports the local primary school and soup kitchen. It is a great blessing these children can receive a basic education. The Roma mentality is unfortunately not focused on education. If a child does not want to go to school, the parents let them stay home and make excuses. The children in

the pre- and primary school are encouraged to come to be prepared for the main school in the village. We walked through the village and while some houses are of reasonable quality, other houses are mere hovels. Rubbish lays everywhere and the outside toilets are just stomach-turning. My friend Ruszlan, the worship leader from the Mukachevo Roma church once said to me, "The dogs in Holland have a better life than these people." That was more than ten years ago and unfortunately it is still the hard reality.

Final CSP visits

Our final visit was to more CSP families. Our team split up in three groups again. I went with one of the groups to a small village a few miles outside of Beregowo. This was the most encouraging visit I made. This

family had moved out of the city as houses are cheaper and they can have animals. The father has a job and you could see the progress they have made over the years. They have a small house which is being improved little by little, some pigs, goats and a few chickens. The cellar is filled with jars of pickled vegetables in preparation for the winter. It really excites me to see that this family actually has hope for a better future.

Coming Full Circle

For me it was very special that I was asked to go to Ukraine again. I did not think to be visiting soon, definitely not since I left the mission 5 years ago. Last year I lost my sister and as I now live in Scotland I did not expect to be with my family on the anniversary of her passing, but to 'put the icing on the cake', I arrived back in Friesland on the 6th of October. A very special God-given gift, which brought me full circle again!

Gerrit Wiersema



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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 application. However, a freewill gift of £10 a year would help to cover postage and production costs. EEO UK works with Eastern European Outreach International, a group of missions and ministries. The main partner is Stg. Oosteropa Zending, Netherlands, on behalf of Child Sponsor Programme, Christian Care East and West, Children's Relief, Medical Relief, Israel Support and Vision Latina.