

June 2017 prayer and newsletter from Missionsmiths

Roland and Carolien Smith working together with European Christian Mission

Dear family and friends



We believe that in this world of violence and fear, Jesus can bring peace and hope. We know that He, the victim, became the victorious one and rose from the dead, defeating Satan and death. Everything we experience is illuminated in the light of that early morning event in world history. The resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ is our hope. Lord God, we mourn for those who died in Manchester and pray for love to replace fear and despair. Lord, have mercy.

Thank you for helping us in different ways especially in recent weeks. It's lovely to be able to again write how prayer has been answered. R: Thank you for lifting up in prayer my trip to Bulgaria last month. Together with colleagues working in Albania who are responsible for the ECM work in Sofia and Burgas, we travelled to a very poorly equipped **refugee camp** outside the town of Harmanli near the Turkish border. We saw dozens of people trapped in poverty, anaemic children, piles of rotting rubbish, burned walls with holes smashed into them after a riot in the winter, and families in rooms with no doors. Wonderfully, the authorities have permitted a local minister to set up a Christian chapel known as the 'distribution centre'. Here, necessities for daily hygiene and medications are given from a fund set up by churches in Bulgaria and the USA. Prayer and counselling is given, and teaching from God's Word. Two refugees have been taken in by a local church and they told me their stories. They had both fled from Iran after being threatened with hanging for publishing Christian materials. This was after being beaten on four separate occasions. We met a Christian mother whose husband had been killed. She had her three boys with her.



We spent time with a missionary there, Dimitrie, and with his colleagues. He was born and brought up in the area. I am praying now about what support he and his wife Maria and teenage children need to help in their ministry for the long-term. For now, everything seems to be going according to plan as far as joining ECM goes. Dimitrie and Maria (photo: with son George and daughter Victoria) are very self-motivated and good at raising funds in USA. They are extremely committed to helping their people and supporting the refugee ministry. They are communicating well with their donor base and they are people of prayer with joyful, compassionate hearts.

I have visited refugee centres in Germany and Maastricht, which are clean and warm and where people can cook their own food. But the conditions in Bulgaria are shocking and dangerous. I keep on coming back to the reality that the enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for people to devour.

What you are doing, by supporting this kind of ECM ministry through helping us, is enabling me to encourage Dimitrie and Maria and help them as they integrate into ECM. They and their friends are touching the lives of desperate people with God's love and compassion. Please join with us in **praying for Dimitrie's fund-raising trip** to the USA in October: for safe travel, good opportunities to share the needs, and for Maria and the children back home. For further information about the conditions and news of the riot in November, search for BBC Harmanli.

May we request prayer this time for the ECM projects that are running in different countries in Europe? There are currently 31 projects in 9 countries e.g. church planting, refugee work, summer camps, Bible commentary translation,

radio programs, drug rehabilitation and many more. We'd like to highlight the setting up of a much-needed **rescue house** for single parent mothers in Timisoara, Romania. The house will open in a couple of weeks and will require 55 thousand euros per year to run. Please **pray for funding** to be given long term and for the French ECM missionary,



a shelter for mothers & babies at risk



Alexia Coleman, who is managing the project. For details search for Project: Mitspa – ECM International. It's a fantastic privilege to be part of the ECM ministry direction group which processes all the varied project requests and tracks their progress. Thank you for your help so that I can work with colleagues in this group.

Carolien has accepted the invitation from the Baptist in Maastricht to join the team **leading services** and facilitating discussion in groups. She is looking forward to being able to use her training and experience in teaching God's Word. Please join with us in **praying for her to receive wisdom from God** in her preparation. She is continuing to teach children and co-lead the Monday morning prayer and Bible study group for women. Wonderful to have these opportunities and for her to have the health and skills to minister in these ways. Thank you for your support, which enables her to do the things she really wants and likes to do.

Carolien is ECM member care facilitator for this region of the Netherlands and Belgium. She is responsible for making sure that missionaries are receiving the care and training they need. This month we are visiting ECMers **David and Holly Delameillieure** and their young family (photo right) in Kortrijk, Belgium. They are doing good work leading in a local church and are wanting to create more of a sense of community there. Please **pray for God's love to be received by people** and for them to open their hearts to Him.



ECM colleagues Tjerk and Anneke van Dijk in Maastricht (photo left) are exceedingly grateful to God for answered prayer: a woman they have been helping had carefully and openly planned her own suicide at Easter. But somehow she survived the mix of tablets she took. Anneke visited her expecting the worst, but no. Please **pray for the woman to open her heart** to the love of God. Thank you for praying for Stephen and Lisa Schenkel, an OM couple, who moved recently into Maastricht to work with Tjerk and Anneke. They have redecorated their rented house, sorted a jungle into a garden and are settling into the joys and challenges of inner city mission. We thank God for them and their dedication to God's work.

Stephen and his girlfriend Channah are taking a group of teenagers, including Rhiannon, to a **youth weekend** this Friday (May 27th). Léonie is helping there too, in the prayer ministry for young people. How wonderful. Thank you for lifting up in prayer our children as they have grown up and developed. Stephen needs very soon to decide whether to start work or continue studying. He's seeking advice and in prayer about it.

If you are interested in coming to the spring ECM Biennial Conference 11th – 18th April 2018, do please contact us. The international director, Dr. Chris Wigram, is the speaker. We can guarantee excellent and engaging teaching.

The Lord bless you,
*With Christian love from Roland, Carolien, Stephen,
Maarten, Léonie and Rhiannon.*

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