

Dear all

The last Update I provided for you was for May-June 2018 and although I have a monthly reminder to produce a letter, I have fallen into the trap of an 'occasional' letter to you all. I thought that this month I should let you know of various external ministry I am involved with - and why.

Hungary

I have just returned from Hungary where I was attending a Consultation event amongst churches across Central and Eastern Europe. This was the first event of its kind and we saw around 70 leaders from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Czechia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia and Ukraine. The main theme was Networking for Church Growth and the main sessions were organised around: Communicating the Gospel in the 21st Century; Growing Churches; Working Together in Partnership; Developing Leaders in the 21st Century. You will see that the topics are relevant to us too in the UK! My main role was to represent Echoes International but my previous involvement with running Bible Schools in Hungary and Czechia and my 28 years of supporting work in Romania was my main motivation. Interestingly, one of the Albanian Pastors who had enrolled in a Year Round Mentoring Programme under the Leadership Development Initiative was there and this was a nice cross-over. These churches and their leaders have extraordinarily different regimes for ministry - from the mega growth in Ukraine (and to some extent, Romania) to the economic migration and the religious minority situations of Serbia and Albania. God is building His church and Kingdom despite the variation in circumstances. There is incredible synergy between the churches because the Bible is the main guide in each country and leaders are to be those with spiritual character and sensitivity and we all have very similar needs! The Gospel is also the same in every situation. Pray for the steering group that has emerged from this event that as they prepare to maintain closer contact and arrange a bi-annual consultation event that this will lead to strengthening churches across the neediest - and poorest parts of our Continent.

Spain

I am preparing to lead the European Leadership Forum's 'Leadership Development Initiative' again in October in Spain. It sounds like a 'nice gig' and it is a privilege to work in this environment. However, as I look at my schedule for 20-27 October, I will be delivering 5 devotional sessions (2.5 hours) and 10 teaching sessions (12.5 hours) and mentoring sessions (9 hours). However, I also get to attend 4.5 hours of sessions by Pablo Martinez on Servant Leadership, Leadership Burnout and the Leader's Spiritual Health. I am taking annual leave to deliver this and of course my weekly 'day off' will be used too. Alongside the work here I will be preparing for two sermons in TCF on my return so it will be quite a demanding week!

Year Round Mentoring of Pastors

This letter is being written on the day after the second Webinar of the 2018-19 session for Pastors from around Europe. This is the second year of such support and we have covered Mentoring and Pastoral Care in the two Webinars thus far. The next Webinar is scheduled for November and a face to face retreat is scheduled for December. This support is so useful for me too as I am exposed to an incredible breadth of pastoral situations that others face and which help in my own learning. This year is the first time that we have had female pastors in the group but their insights have been so helpful. Both are involved in women's and families work in Lithuania.

The Glory of God

In all these activities I am reminded of the interconnectedness of the global church and Kingdom. It provides me with a broader perspective that God is working out His purposes in the lives of countless individuals. In the pressures of the day to day ministry, we can be overwhelmed with the need in our own church family - and our total inadequacy to meet that need - but, in speaking with others who are engaged in ministry, we are constantly reminded that the work is the Lord's and He is engaged in an incredible enterprise across the world for the Glory of His Name and for the Glory of our Lord Jesus. We just have to maintain that focus too and leave it with Him.

Local

As we continue to serve God in TCF it would be helpful to have your prayers for a few specific initiatives: establishing a CAP Centre in Perth in partnership with 2 or 3 other churches; establishing of the 'Passing the Baton' work in partnership with Bethany Trust; establishing the identity and ministry of the 'Filip' Group for Romanian ex-pats and furthering the work of Perth Alive as monthly prayer meetings are begun.

Family

Andrew has changed job and is now working with a very talented chef called Leif Sørensen. Susanna is currently taking a short work break as the project funding for her post has ended but she will soon be seeking other employment. They will be in Scotland from 15-22 October and will be packing up their flat in Aberdeen in order to sell it. Busy time ahead!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Gads', is written over the end of the 'Family' section.

Thank you for praying...

and for

St Augustine