



Literacy & Evangelism International **THE MESSENGER** EUROPE EDITION

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Issue # 1

“In His word I put my hope.”

PSALM 130:5 NIV

FROM THE PRESIDENT: SID RICE



When I think of what’s happening in Europe, I’m reminded of what the prophet Isaiah said, **“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”** (Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV)

Literacy and Evangelism International’s (LEI) last direct presence in Europe occurred over a decade and a half ago. LEI left

Bible-content primers (beginner readers) there with an assortment of mission partners. The primary emphasis of our past work was developing curriculum in the Eastern block languages such as Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romani, Romanian, and Turkish. Although literacy work has continued, there is a new thing happening.

The past work is now being revitalized under the leadership of our German-born Director of Europe, Georg Ort. New relationships are being formed with Mission Possible and Youth with a Mission. New LEI affiliates are serving Gypsy villages in Bulgaria. A new primer will be constructed this spring in German to serve refugees from other countries. Although preliminary, discussions of a country team of Literacy and Evangelism Germany are in process. All these new things are springing up.

God is doing a new thing in Europe, and we celebrate what He is doing.

Your brother in Christ,

EUROPE DIRECTOR: GEORG ORT

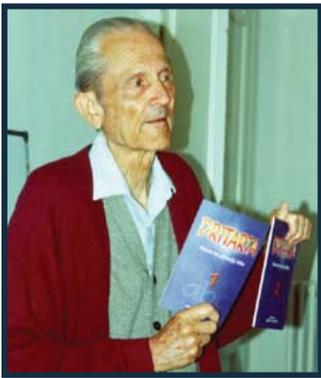
“It must be horrible for a child to have a dad who cannot read,” 57-year old Gerhard remarked as he reflected on his past, now having successfully learned to read at the age of 53. When I began serving LEI in Europe, I wondered if there was a need for literacy on a continent that was well developed, with its people well educated. Little did I know, there were an estimated 7.5 million “Gerhards” in Germany who were functionally illiterate. There are the Romas, a nation of 12-16 million including Roma and Sintis, a people without a country, referred to as “Gypsies,” who live scattered throughout many countries in Europe and Eurasia. Visiting a number of Roma villages, I was saddened by the fact that the vast majority of Roma, both adults and children, are illiterate. As huge demographic changes occur in Europe, refugees, mainly from Africa and Asia, arrive needing to learn the language of the country where they settle. Learning English is another growing area of ministry need with

people wanting to know “the world language.”

All our Bible-based materials are used to teach people to read in their own language or in English, which enables them to read the Bible, so many come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Once the birthplace of the reformation, Europe is now a continent of 3.1% evangelical Christians (Operation World). Let us embrace the challenge to help people in Europe read the written words to know the Living Word.



ALBANIA: MISSION POSSIBLE



The late Rev. Bob Rice, founder of LEI, holds the Albanian primer, circa 2001.

When Albania was a Communist state the literacy rate was said to be 99.9%. There did not appear to be a need for a literacy program, especially a Bible-based one. After the change in leadership in the late 1990's the number of illiterates grew throughout the Republic of Albania.

Thousands of miles away, in the U.S.A., God put a burden on the heart of the late Rev. Bob Rice to construct an Albanian Bible-content primer to help teach people to read and to share the message of Jesus.

In 1998, Besa Shaplo, Director of Mission Possible, Albania, met Rev. Bob Rice at a conference for at-risk children held in England. Rev. Rice approached Ms. Shaplo about the need for a literacy program. Ms. Shaplo returned to her country to share the idea with her team, but there was no financial support for such a program. A

year later Ms. Shaplo spoke with Rev. Rice again but said there was no money to produce or print a primer or train literacy workers. Some time later a representative from Bible League contacted Ms. Shaplo to suggest she submit a proposal to cover costs of a literacy program. The proposal was accepted and financial backing given. Rev. Rice brought a team to Albania, a primer was constructed, and money was donated for printing.

The need for literacy was great in Bathore, population over 30,000, an area with difficult living conditions. Ms. Shaplo and her team of teachers went to teach a class of illiterate teenagers with success. With the generosity of another supporting agency, space was rented and 240 people came for literacy training. The end result of these classes was a church plant for the area in April 2006, and The Hope Center, a permanent training and evangelistic center and library for Mission Possible, in Tirana, Albania. The next step is English instruction, using English as a tool to reach people for Jesus.



The Mission Possible Ministry Team with Besa Shaplo (2nd from left), Albania

Literacy Class, Mission Possible, Albania



BULGARIA: MISSION POSSIBLE



Roman Ivanov, Director of Mission Possible, Bulgaria, and his wife Marianne facilitate ministry to many Roma communities where literacy is taught using LEI's Bible-based reading primers. (left)



Tania, Coordinator of Literacy Evangelism Programs for Mission Possible, serves among the Gypsy villages in Bulgaria. Tania came to the U.S. in 2012 to participate in LEI's International Literacy Training Institute. She leads Tutor Training Workshops in Bulgaria and teaches others to read. (above)

Virginia Newton is an LEI ministry affiliate in Bulgaria. She serves in English language ministry. (right)



ELM WORKSHOP

ENGLISH LANGUAGE MINISTRY (ELM)

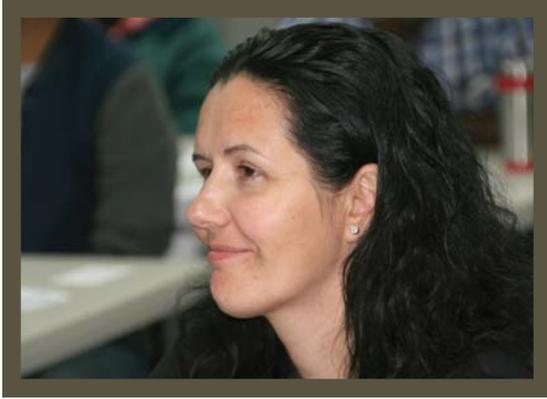
- PROVIDES A WAY TO BUILD TRUST
- BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS
- DEMONSTRATES THE LOVE OF CHRIST
- SERVES OTHERS AND SERVES GOD
- PROVIDES A WAY TO WITNESS AND SHARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

LEI Missionary Martha Ort instructs at an English Language Ministry Tutor Training Workshop in Bulgaria. This program teaches people who are not native English speakers to speak and read English, so they can read the Bible.



ROMANIA: ILTI IMPACT

According to UNESCO, there are 1,083,935 illiterate people in Romania. It is estimated that 30% of Roma adults, a socially-disadvantaged minority group, cannot read and have never attended school. Illiteracy continues to be a growing challenge.



Nina took LEI's International Literacy Training Institute last summer (2014). She and her husband, a pastor of a Romanian church, plan to use LEI's literacy and English-language materials, to help those in need, and as a means of planting churches in rural Romania.



Anna-Maria also graduated from LEI's International Literacy Training Institute last summer. She plans to begin a Bible-based literacy ministry in Urziceni. The first step is to collect data to define the literacy need. Then, Christian volunteers need to be trained.

Please pray for Nina and Anna-Maria as they use the skills they learned at ILTI to share the message of Jesus through the gift of reading. Both of these faithful women are wives and mothers who also care for their busy families.

GERMANY: ELM WORKSHOP

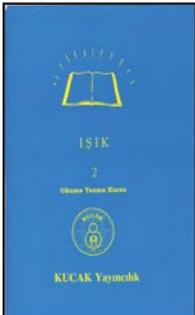
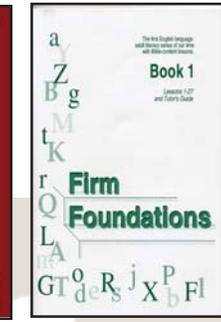
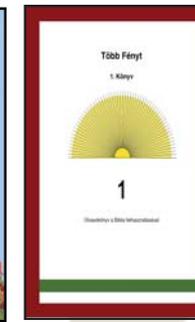


UNITED KINGDOM: ELM WORKSHOP



Georg Ort (Europe Director), his wife Martha, Don Edic (English Language Ministry Director), and his wife Leona, met in Europe to present English Language Ministry Workshops. With many immigrants entering the U.K. every year, a great opportunity arises to reach out and share the love of Jesus Christ while teaching English. Several churches and the London City Mission sent a total of 16 participants to be trained in LEI's teaching methods at Stonebridge Evangelical Church, London.

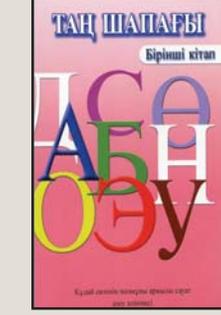
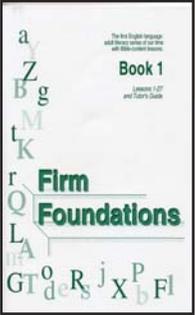
The first English Language Ministry training workshop in Germany was attended by several U.S. missionary couples who are planning to share the Gospel through teaching English. The simple LEI method and materials were well received.



3.10 % of the population in Europe are Evangelical Christians

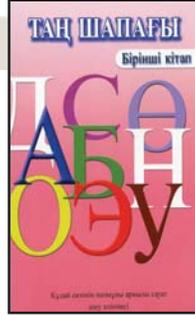
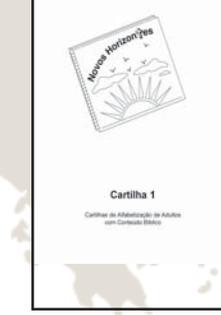
- 6.3% Romania
- 2.0% Bulgaria
- 0.3% Albania
- 2.7% Hungary
- 0.0% Turkey
- 0.7% Russia
- 0.4% Spain
- 3.1% Portugal
- 0.8% France
- 2.9% Germany
- 8.5% United Kingdom

- Operation World



Primers Constructed in European languages:

- Albanian 2001
- Bulgarian 1998
- English 1989
- French 1998
- Hungarian 1999
- Kazakh 2005
- Portuguese 1995
- Romani 1998
- Romanian 1998
- Russian 2012
- Spanish 1988
- Turkish 1996



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PRAYER REQUESTS

MONDAY: Please thank the Lord for all literacy workers in Europe. Pray for tutors, students and trainers as they share the love of Jesus and the gift of reading with those in need. Pray all find hope in His Word.

TUESDAY: Please pray for literacy workers in Albania, especially Besa and Mission Possible’s ministry team that reaches out to the needy in slum areas through Bible studies, literacy and vocational training.

WEDNESDAY: Please thank our Lord and pray for those who serve in Bulgaria, especially ILTI graduates Tania (promoting literacy programs in Gypsy villages) and Virginia (doing English Language Ministry).

THURSDAY: Please thank our Lord for ILTI graduates developing English and literacy evangelism ministries in Romania, especially our recent graduates, Nina and Anna-Maria.

FRIDAY: Please pray for those trained in literacy and evangelism methods in Germany and the United Kingdom as they reach out in the name and love of Jesus to illiterate immigrants in their countries.

WEEKENDS: Please pray for the local Primer Construction team in Germany with efforts to complete a Bible-based German primer by mid-year.

TESTIMONY

Lushe, 49-years old with four children, was asked if she ever went to school as a child before she started the literacy class in Albania. Her reply, “No, never. This is the first time in my life I’ve touched school books and sat at a desk as a student.” Asked why, she said, “My father was very ill. I was the oldest child in the family, and I was a girl, so I was to take care of my father and the others. The opportunities for me were almost nonexistent.” When asked what she learned, she said, “I have learned how to write the letters, the first sentences, as well as, my children’s names. I have also learned many Bible verses.”

We thank the Lord and celebrate with Lushe and the teachers of her literacy class at Mission Possible’s Hope Center in Tirana, Albania.



International Literacy Training Institute 2015
TULSA, OKLAHOMA, USA

Modules 1, 2 & 3 June 6 - July 18, 2015

For more detailed information about **Literacy Trainings and Digital Resources**, please see our website.
www.literacyevangelism.org/resources/training



Enhancing Trust

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Would your church like someone to make a mission presentation?
Please contact our President: SidRice@LiteracyInternational.net



Literacy & Evangelism International (LEI) equips the Church to share the message of Jesus Christ through the gift of reading. We develop Bible-content materials to teach basic reading in local languages and conversational English. We train church leaders and missionaries to use LEI materials for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.