



January 23, 2012

We are excited about the ministry opportunities we had in 2011 and cannot wait to see all that God is going to do in 2012! Ephesians 4:11-12 says, "Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ." Since our first days on staff with GEM, these verses have served as the basis for what we do in our pastoral/shepherding role in GEM's Member Care department. The picture I have in my mind is that of a stone being tossed into water and watching all the ripples that radiate out from its point of entry. Here's a testimony that illustrates that point well, from one of the young missionary moms with whom we worked this past summer:

"My husband and I just recently attended a GEM HMR , a time when you are meant to get some debrief time in and do some "at home office" kind of admin stuff. To be honest, I was dreading the week. In my mind, it was just one less week in California, with my family, friends and supporting churches and to top it all off my kids would be missing their favorite VBS that was running on the very same week we had to leave. I'll admit I was pretty annoyed. But boy did I get humbled.

Everything from location to schedule, to food was just perfect. And I tell you, as spoiled as we get from some friends and family, I can't recall when there was such a time of LAVISHING. They asked us, these Ringdahls and other leaders, if we could sum up our week in one word- I'm a woman of many words, so as I raised my hands there was laughter, but it ended when I stated that one word, "Lavish".

From the moment we entered the retreat center either Neva or Jim served us, loved us, and did everything in their power to make our requests realities. I had a kind of "spoiled girl" request for our free day. I wanted to either do a train ride or a horseback ride- Jim found me a horseback ride along a historic train track. No joke. And then he even paid for it! Truly truly LAVISHED upon!

And my kids!!! My kids LOVED their week with Neva and her team. And to see the helpers sitting, happily, with the kids on their "time off" (which I don't think existed for them that week I always saw them with the kids). It really warmed me and my husband's hearts. They still love to look through the photo albums that they received with pictures of them and their friends throughout the week.

Jim and Neva... I don't know how GEM got 'em to move from CA to come and serve us all so lavishly, but I'm grateful. I'm grateful for what you, as supporters, give to them. It's all part of the chain. If you don't give, they can't give and then we can't give... and the dark parts of Europe have need for their expectations to also be blown out of the water and to come away crediting the Lord for His Lavish Love poured out upon them by some Americans who said yes to going and who were sustained by people like the Ringdahls."

This is why we feel that what we do is so important and has such an incalculable affect on the lost people of Europe. "Economic migration from other European Countries, plus an influx of immigrants from the 10/40 window countries, creates unprecedented opportunities to disciple the nations." We feel that as we care for the missionaries, we have a part in this opportunity to disciple the nations.

Our ministry focus is three pronged: preventative/proactive, supportive with problematic life issues, and counseling during crises. I have included the Member Care brochure, which outlines each of these ministries very well. In sum, we interact with and care for the missionaries BEFORE they ever head overseas, WHILE they are on the mission field, and when they RETURN for furlough, or HMA, as GEM calls it.

This past year we had the great privilege to minister to over 100 adult missionaries, and almost 100 missionary children. These families serve in the following countries: Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Iceland, Latvia, Finland, Albania, Croatia, Austria, Netherlands, Hungary, Kosovo, Belgium, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Morocco, Czech Republic, and Serbia. I have included some of the brochures that highlight some of the ministries that they are involved in throughout Europe. "Greater Europe Mission is committed to seeing God's Kingdom spread through all the peoples of Europe to the world as we follow Jesus and lead others to do the same. We believe the best way to do this is by reproducing networks of simple churches in Europe that will spread relationally through Europe and advance God's Kingdom through the world." Because of your faithfulness to pray and support our ministry financially, many missionaries are able to impact the very dark and unreached parts of Europe with the Gospel! Thank you for ALL you do!

In His Love & Service, Jim & Neva Ringdahl

Check out GEM's interactive website at www.gemission.org
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