



PLANTING  
europa

WORLD MISSIONS BOARD REPORT  
FALL 2018



# Planting

World Missions Board Report - Fall 2018

**Regional Directors:** Paul & Angela Trementozzi

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Area Directors:**

Kirk & Amy Priest - Central Europe  
Jim & Sherry Sabella - Southeast Europe  
Tim & Marketa Southerland - Northwest Europe  
Joe & Noemi Szabo - Southern Europe

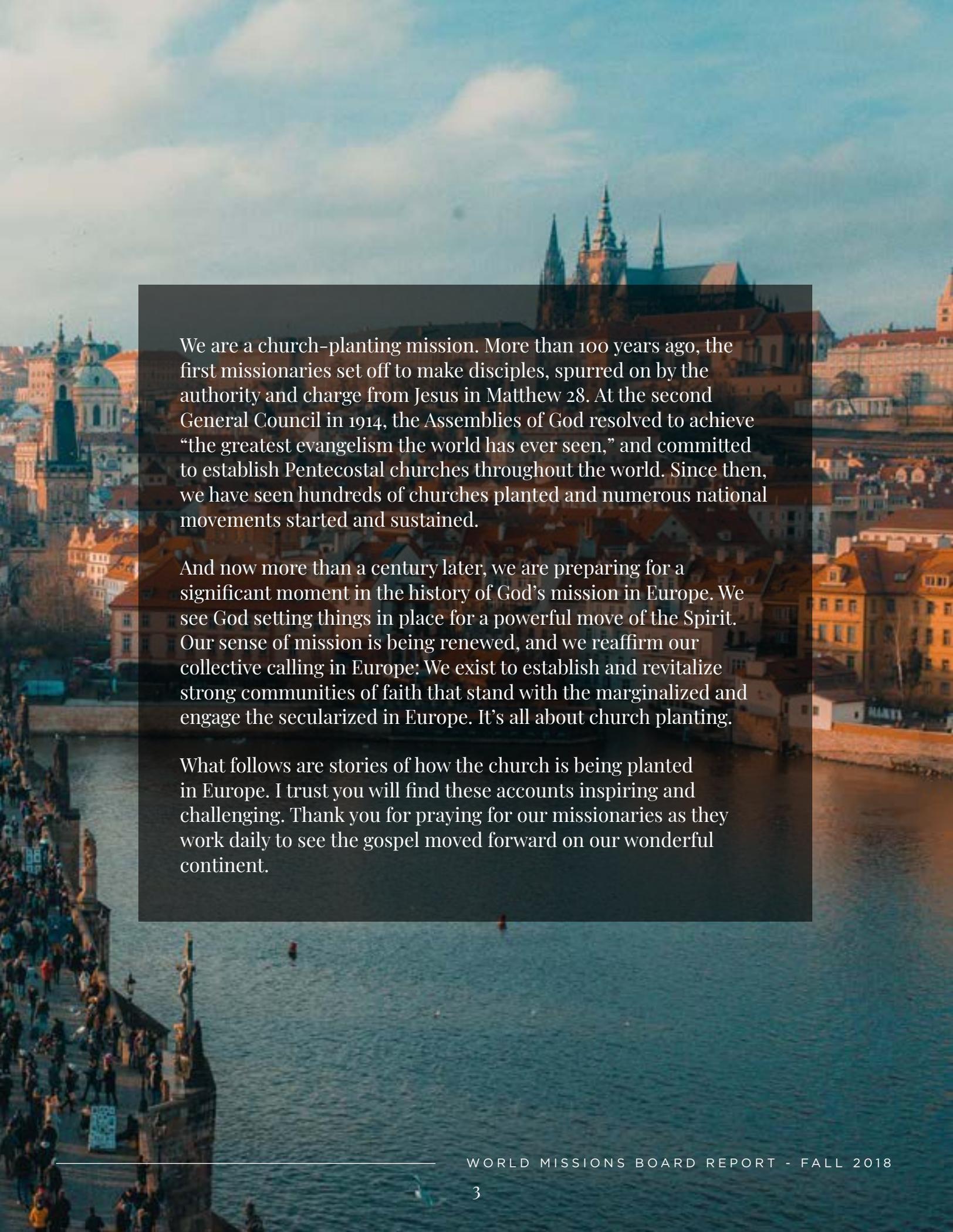
**Strategic Leaders:**

Shawn Galyen  
Deborah Galyen  
Raegan Glugosh  
Mark Good  
Dalene Good  
Larry Henderson  
Melinda Henderson  
Rick Wislocky  
Lori Wislocky

Report written by Dan Desrosiers

Edited by Alicia Desrosiers and Page Malone

Copyright 2018 Europe Region of Assemblies of God World Missions



We are a church-planting mission. More than 100 years ago, the first missionaries set off to make disciples, spurred on by the authority and charge from Jesus in Matthew 28. At the second General Council in 1914, the Assemblies of God resolved to achieve “the greatest evangelism the world has ever seen,” and committed to establish Pentecostal churches throughout the world. Since then, we have seen hundreds of churches planted and numerous national movements started and sustained.

And now more than a century later, we are preparing for a significant moment in the history of God’s mission in Europe. We see God setting things in place for a powerful move of the Spirit. Our sense of mission is being renewed, and we reaffirm our collective calling in Europe: We exist to establish and revitalize strong communities of faith that stand with the marginalized and engage the secularized in Europe. It’s all about church planting.

What follows are stories of how the church is being planted in Europe. I trust you will find these accounts inspiring and challenging. Thank you for praying for our missionaries as they work daily to see the gospel moved forward on our wonderful continent.

A photograph of a dense forest with a wooden boardwalk leading through tall trees. The boardwalk is made of wooden planks and steps, winding through the forest. The trees are tall and thin, with green foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day.

# The Miracle of the Oasis

---

Reaching a Generation With No Gospel Access

More than 30 years ago, the last evangelical church in the municipality of Bergen, Netherlands, closed its doors, leaving no evangelical witness for two generations. But a small yet passionate group of Christians believed God for a miracle in their community. And now, through the leadership of missionaries Chris and Rebecca Green, this innovative church known as The Oasis (Oase Bergen) has big plans to reach their city before another generation goes by.

The Greens moved to the Netherlands in 2012 with a vision of planting life-giving faith communities in areas that needed them most. During their first term as missionaries in North Holland, the most unchurched region of the country, they consistently heard Christians speak about Bergen as a difficult place for the gospel. Because Bergen is a completely secular community, they knew it would be a big challenge to plant a church there by relying on nontraditional methods completely foreign to people who had never seen an evangelical church or even met a Christian. This challenge became a call, and in 2017 the Greens and that small, faithful group of Christians, who dared to believe for a miracle, saw God begin to answer their prayer through the founding of The Oasis.

God began moving in a powerful way at The Oasis, with miracles continuing to happen. At the start of the church, a young mom began attending who had experienced a miscarriage

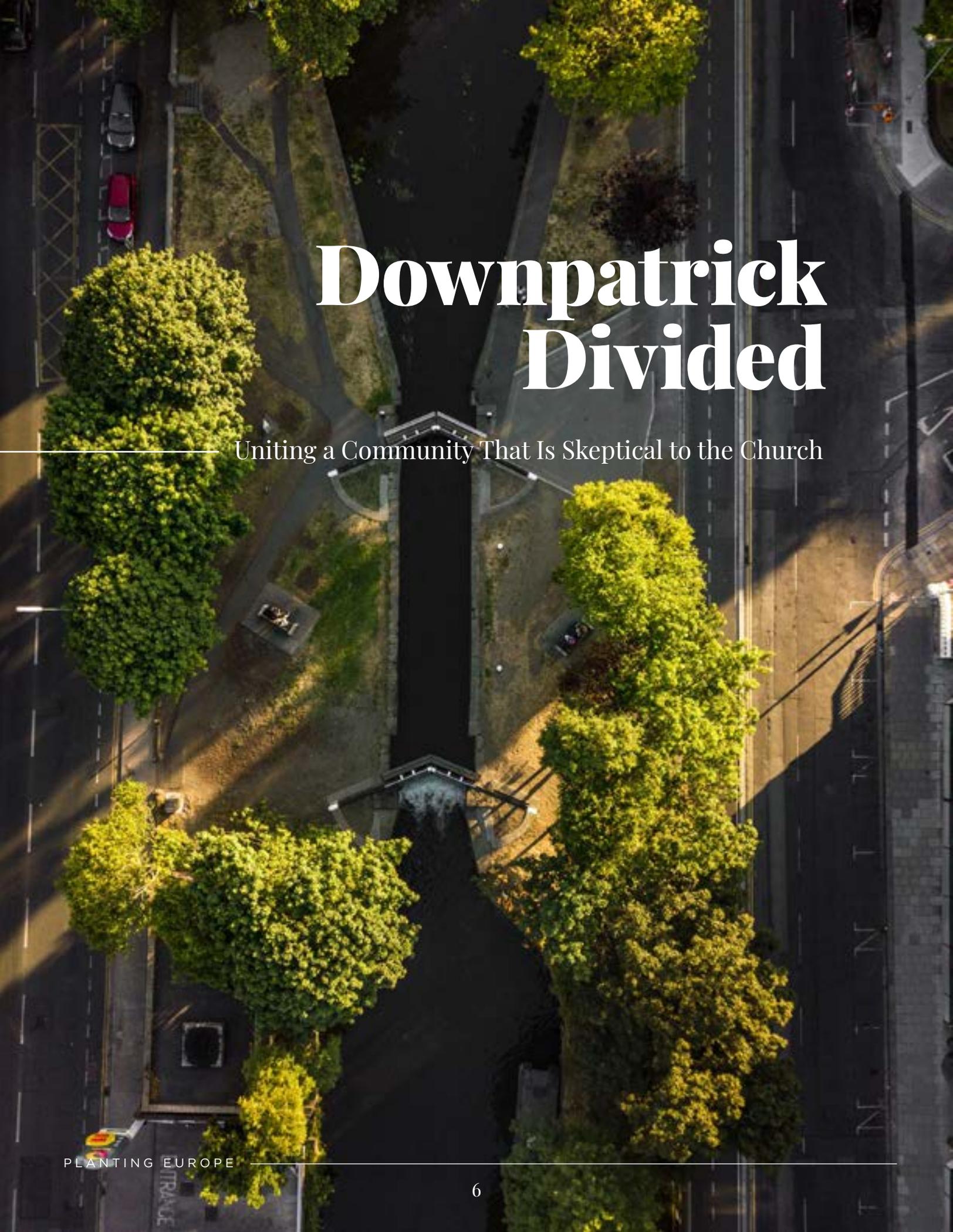
the previous year. She again became pregnant, and it appeared she was going to lose this baby as well. The church gathered around her and prayed in faith, thanking God for the day they would stand in that same place to dedicate this baby to the Lord. In June 2018 that's exactly what they did, praising God for the beautiful, healthy little girl they call "the first miracle of Oasis."

For The Oasis to reach its goal, long-term commitment must meet short-term action.

As a church, The Oasis set a goal they can only accomplish with God's help. By 2027 they plan to be actively serving and in relationship with 5 percent of Bergen's population. For this group of about 60 people to have grown to the point of having meaningful contact with more than 1500 people concurrently in the first decade of the church's existence seems daunting. But as they set this goal, they knew God was challenging them to do something so big that only He himself could do it.

*Pioneering is hard...  
but the fruit is more than  
worth the work it  
takes to get it.*

This church desires to keep its eyes on Christ, to stay grounded in His Word, and to walk by His Spirit. And for Chris and Rebecca, their eyes remain focused on the call and challenge that God has laid before them, even when things get tough. "Pioneering is hard," Chris said, "It requires sharp thinking, quick action, and a lot of faith-fueled patience. But the fruit is more than worth the work it takes to get it."

An aerial photograph of a church building with a prominent steeple, surrounded by lush green trees and a street. The church is the central focus, with its dark roof and white steeple contrasting against the greenery. The street below has a few cars and a red car in the foreground. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, looking down on the church and its surroundings.

# Downpatrick Divided

Uniting a Community That Is Skeptical to the Church

Ireland has a long history with the church, including many revivals over several centuries. Downpatrick, Northern Ireland, however, has remained relatively untouched by these moves of the Spirit, despite being the site of revival services held by John Wesley in the 1750s and the very place where Saint Patrick began his ministry of bringing Christianity to Ireland. While most of the 100,000 residents of Downpatrick would call themselves “Christian,” this cultural Christianity has nothing to do with a relationship with Christ. The churches there are centuries old, politically charged, and divided both socially and spiritually.

Tom and Brooke Harshberger landed in Downpatrick for their first term as AGWM missionaries just one day before the launch of Journey Community Church Downpatrick, and they hit the ground running. Since its launch in April 2018, the church has hosted free barbecues, family days in the park, local housing project cleanups, youth clubs, and kids clubs. These completely free events were simply meant to invest in the local community; Journey Church just wants to be a blessing.

At first, they were met with suspicion and avoidance by the locals, and defensiveness and cynicism from other local churches. The stereotypes have been hard to shake off, because the expectation is that they have some political

stance or sectarian affiliation. “The barrier of denominationalism has been difficult to overcome as we seek to simply share Jesus,” Tom explained, “because people here are culturally Christian but have zero relationship with Christ.” When people ask Journey Church if they’re Protestant or Catholic, their answer is, “We just love Jesus!”

And loving Jesus has opened doors with many local families, community leaders, and even politicians. Attendance at Journey Community Church Downpatrick has been around 80 strong since its launch, signifying to the Harshbergers that there is spiritual hunger in their town. They have even seen God moving among the hard-to-reach youth and young adult demographic, as multiple teenagers have experienced salvation and Spirit baptism in just the first few months. A group of more than 20 disruptive, rough-around-the-edges young people keep coming back, breaking down the front door to get in—literally.

Tom and Brooke are convinced that God is getting ready to stir up a spiritual awakening once again. They have already seen miraculous healings and continue to see God move powerfully in the lives of the people of Downpatrick. There is a unique history of God there, and they are ready for His move in the future.



# Starting from Scratch

After 30 Years in Spain: Following  
God's Call to Begin Again in Portugal

Dan and Joy West have had a rich missionary career. They have served in Spain since 1988, planting a church, serving at Evangelical Spanish seminary, and most recently cofounding an evangelism ministry called OntheRedbox. Over 65 Red Box evangelism teams have been formed in Spain, Europe, and the Americas, with many more in process. From a career perspective, the Wests have accomplished a lot. Yet at a time in their career when they might be tempted to stay in their comfort zone, Dan and Joy are starting over.

About three years ago, God began revealing His will to the Wests—to leave the mission field where they had served 30 years. They are known in Spain, have lifelong friends, and had fruitful ministry there, but He began speaking to them about planting a church in Portugal. Through prayer, the plans became clearer.

God was asking them to reach out to the English-speaking community on the east side of Lisbon. There they will be close to several English-speaking embassies, the airport, and public transit systems. They will also be close to the

University of Lisbon, which attracts nearly 47,000 students each year, including more than 5,000 international students. Even though only about 25 percent of those who live in Lisbon speak or understand English, for those under the age of 30, that number becomes 80 percent.

The opportunity to reach young people, especially university students, excites the Wests.

One reason is because Dan and Joy are recent empty nesters—their daughter Charity enrolled this fall at North Central University. And they find themselves at another significant life change: going back to the mission field while leaving their daughter in the States. They acknowledge it will be difficult to break into the secular university world, but they plan to utilize their significant evangelism experience to reach out to students on campus.

*“Only through prayer, soul winning, and discipleship will we see the church planted.”*

The Wests know challenges are ahead and that they can't rely on their own strength to accomplish this work. “Only through prayer, soul winning, and discipleship will we see the church planted,” Joy admits. “Success is measured by obedience to God's call. If we obey in the small things, He will grow the church one soul at a time.”

# A City United

Bringing a Community Together Through Church Planting

“Sometimes it’s hard to believe that we started a church.”

When missionaries Dave and Karmi Buckley look back just a few short years to where their church now stands, all they saw then was need. The Buckleys live in Budapest, a quickly growing city of close to 2 million people that is home to more than 40 colleges and universities. Budapest is a unique city, divided in two parts by the Danube River: Buda, built on the hills on the western side of the river; and Pest, which lies on the much flatter terrain of the eastern shore. But this leading European city in finance, research, and education is divided in a different way inside the Hungarian national church—young, college-aged students are leaving the church in droves.

These students increasingly seek English-speaking experiences, so several years ago the Hungarian national church approached the Buckleys about starting an English-speaking church on Sunday evenings. Young students could attend their Hungarian church in the morning, then an English-speaking church at night. The Hungarian national church even provided a list of potential attendees.

Dave and Karmi thought this was a good idea to pursue, so they moved forward in faith, rented a room in a community center on the west side of the city, and started holding Bible studies. They quickly gathered up to 20 people every other

week at their meetings and, funny enough, even though they invited the list of Hungarians from the national church, those never came.

As the group matured, the Buckleys started to sense that God wanted to do more through their little community. When they started having Sunday morning services, God began to open doors to many facets of ministry. Now known as Riverside Church Budapest (RCB), the church reaches out to a large local group home, ministers to homeless people living on the streets, and even has events for people who don’t normally go to church—such as movie nights and even American football viewing parties.

The church has not been without its challenges. At first, they had a hard time finding musicians who could sing and play, and they had to set up and tear down each week at the community center. Now they have full-time access to an office space and four worship teams full of people eager to worship God through song.

Today, just a few years later, up to 120 people gather at RCB. People from all denominations and walks of life come together to worship and do life together, including a large group of university students. Recently the church grew to include a second Sunday service, which is a big step for the Buckleys—who never thought they would start a church in the first place!

# Building Relational Communities

---

Planting a Church, Against All Odds

As Mike and Cara Tyler, missionaries to Germany, began to explore ministry needs in their region, they heard the same thing over and over again: “We need more churches in Weil am Rhein.” A town of about 30,000 people, Weil am Rhein (also known as simply Weil) is an ethnically diverse suburb of Basel, Switzerland, and is situated on the Rhein River at the juncture of Germany, Switzerland, and France.

When Mike and Cara began to pray about planting a church in Weil, they discovered a few alarming things. Not only was there no church in Weil, but five attempted church plants had failed in 10 years. Also, city government historically was opposed to “free churches,” or churches independent of the government. Regardless, the Tylers began to pursue the possibility of starting a work in Weil.

As they continued to pray and seek God’s direction, Mike and Cara felt the Lord leading them to do two things—pray through every street in the city, and seek favor with someone in city government. They began doing prayer walks and invested a significant amount of time walking every street in the city, covering it in prayer. As they continued to pray, God began to open doors, and Mike found himself with an opportunity to meet with the vice-mayor of Weil. During that meeting, the vice-mayor explained some of the city’s challenges and even suggested ways a church might be able to help. Rather than experiencing opposition to their church plant, Mike said, “I left that meeting knowing I had gained an ally, and I knew there was an open door with the city leadership.”

Mike had already spent nearly three years studying about New Testament church-planting models and praying; he knew it was time to put his research into action. The Tylers once again took to the streets—this time to conduct an informal survey—and they found their biggest challenge yet. Surprisingly, almost 90 percent of the people surveyed were positive toward Jesus, but 98 percent had extremely negative feelings toward the church. Young Germans especially are disillusioned about the church, not trusting public figures on a stage, but craving personal connection and a safe environment in which they can ask questions. Mike and Cara knew their church-planting strategy was going to have to deal with these issues in some creative ways.

As the Tylers get closer to launching Church on the Rhein, they are working on a bold new model to bring together the many linguistic and cultural groups represented in Weil, many of whom are ignored by other churches. They plan to develop small, relational, Christ-centered communities that will engage secular people who largely are opposed to the form of church they believe they know. “Jesus calls us to make disciples,” concluded Mike, “and we want our communities to be very focused on making disciples who can then make more disciples in their own relational network.”

This, they believe, will begin to change the face of the church in Weil am Rhein and make a significant impact for the Kingdom.

# Trusting God for the Increase

From Fear of the Unknown to a Growing Church

---



“When we first landed in Germany, the only way I can describe how I felt is that my legs were shaking,” related Elina Charvat, who together with her husband Tyler became missionaries to Germany in 2012. They had never been lead pastors and had never planted a church, yet God had placed a calling on their lives—not only to plant a church, but to plant a church-planting church. As they moved to Leipzig, Germany, in 2016 to plant a church, reality began to set in, and the Charvats began wondering if they had made a mistake.

In their first few months in Leipzig, Tyler and Elina had a hard time making friends. They had moved there without a single connection, and it was difficult to even find people to talk to. But God provided what they needed right when they needed it. Tyler enrolled in a free, local German-language class, where he met an American woman who was married to a German. Tyler invited the couple, Andrea and Ole, to their house, and within the next week, they had started Generations Church in their living room with not just four, but five people—Andrea and Ole had invited a friend.

Ole, a professional video editor, volunteered to make a promotional video for Generations

Church. That video turned out to be just the catalyst they needed, and God continued to send people to the Charvats who were eager to join a new church plant. Just as the first couple invited a friend, personal invitations continue to drive church growth. One girl who started attending invited her Hindu friend to the church, who invited his Buddhist friend, who invited his Christian friend. The Buddhist friend gave his heart to Christ and was recently baptized.

Soon they outgrew their living room and began to rent a space to accommodate the growth. “Two years ago we thought we’d have to pay people to be our friends,” recalled Elina. “We were so scared of failing, and we often felt like we were making no progress at all. But God had perfect timing and brought us the people we needed, right when we needed them.”

The dream of being a church that plants churches is still alive in the Charvats. Even as Elina recalled her initial anxiety upon arriving in Germany, she boldly stated, “Fear shouldn’t determine if you should or shouldn’t plant a church. God has not given us a spirit of fear, so we can move forward confidently, trusting in Him, even when our feelings are trying to make us give up.”



europé