

About Roma Networks



logo of the Roma Networks

How it started

In late September of 2014, GCCI hosted “Roma for the Nations,” a five-day conference in Budapest, Hungary. Around 160 representatives, including 100 Roma leaders, attended from 16 different countries. The conference served as a needed and vital connecting point for people to be exposed to what was happening at a regional level. Unanimously, the participants expressed desire for another conference, and a committee of six was elected from six different countries to carry forward the movement.

During the 2014 consultation, a steering committee was chosen to organize the next conference to be held in 2016. At the first official meeting, it was decided mutually to extend this mandate in order to provide an ongoing platform for cooperation, encouragement, and networking among Roma ministries. Together, the team formulated a mission and vision for the newly formed Roma Networks.

Vision and Mission

Roma Network’s **vision** is to network, connect, and research for the sake of sharing the gospel and seeing transformation in Roma communities throughout Europe. In order to work toward this, the mission strategy involves several dimensions:

1. Share the vision (with Roma leaders, non Roma leaders, local churches, organizations, movements, mission organizations, different denominations, EU government...)
2. Educate / Empower / Equip (Roma leaders, non-Roma leaders who are working among Roma, youth, church, movements....)
3. Encourage Transformation (in individuals, communities, and encouraging reconciliation between Roma and non-Roma)
4. Attract missionaries (research mission field,



Thomas Wang, Founder of GCCI and Peter Kuzmic, President of Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia.

6 members from 6 different countries formed a Steering Committee



attract local and global missionaries, train missionaries)

5. Encourage (local churches, ministries, mission initiatives).

Where we are now

After the initial meeting, members of the committee travelled through numerous European countries, sharing the vision with Roma leaders and missionaries to the Roma. This hands-on approach allowed a first-hand experience of the multi-layered and complex realities of Roma communities across various contexts – the differences and similarities, the strengths and weakness of churches, the needs and the gifts that could be offered.

As relationships are formed, Roma Networks connects different ministries and contexts to match needs with tools and resources. This ranges from leadership training, Bible translations, empowering workers, etc. ultimately, the goal is to encourage communities to unite and encourage each other for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Plans for future

As research and knowledge accumulate, plans are in the works to create a database, which would act as a centralized hub of resources, news, and summarize the current situation in different countries. This database would also showcase what different ministries offer, ranging from translation and

literacy, community development, women's resources, children's resources, discipleship training, to theological education.

2nd European Roma Conference

In September 21-24 of 2016, the next international Roma conference will be in Hungary, and participants from 26 countries are expected to attend. As the theme of the conference is Building God's Kingdom Together, we hope that the conference will provide encourage-

ment and vision, promote cooperation, and offer practical tools for ministry. The conference also allows opportunities for country meetings in order to discuss visions, opportunities, and needs of a particular region or country.

(Reprinted from the website of Roma Networks, www.romanetworks.com)



2016 EUROPEAN ROMA CONFERENCE

**Roma Networks Conference brings Christian leaders
together from 29 different countries**

By Melody Wachsmuth



1 90 Roma and non-Roma leaders assembled for the 2nd European Roma conference in Békés, Hungary on September 21-24, 2016, spotlighting the theme “Building God’s kingdom Together.” The conference aim was to encourage leaders through communal times of prayer and worship, build connections across ministries, denominations, countries, and regions, and offer practical tools for specific contexts.



Because of the diversity among the attendants, the highlight for many people was to learn about what was happening beyond their local ministry context.

“It’s the first time I’ve been in a place with so many different cultures and countries,” Iacob Cocos of Romania noted. “It gets me excited to keep going in ministry and to do more!”

Although the workshops and plenary sessions offered different topics, there were recurring themes—in particular, overcoming rejection while living into new identity in Christ and working in unity for the sake of furthering God’s kingdom. If



large-scale transformative movements are to grow across Roma communities in Europe, both of these are critical emphases.

As part of the focus on unity, one of the key components was the daily regional meetings, where leaders discussed how they could better cooperate and serve each other. “I feel more ready to trust and work together this time,” said Siniša Nadaždin of Montenegro in reference to the rela-

tionship building that had transpired since the 2014 conference.

At the final regional meeting, each country chose representatives—44 in all—to broaden the networking platform of Roma Networks.

Roma Networks is a non-denominational grassroots movement founded in 2014 which aims to “network, connect, and research for the sake of sharing the gospel and seeing transformation in Roma communities throughout

Europe.”

The 2016 conference was an important step in this vision. “It was an awesome experience being there,” related Orhan Jumerov, who currently lives in Belgium but now plans to reconnect with his Roma community in Macedonia. “I have been brought closer to my calling by this conference.”

Roma Networks’ Country Representatives Meeting

The Roma Networks announced in December 2016 that their first country representatives’ meeting will be held in the spring of 2017.

Details are as follows:

1. Date: March 29-31, 2017
2. Location: Serbia Bible School, Belgrade, Serbia
3. Number of participant expected: 50
4. Room and Board fee: 50-60 Euro
5. Contents:
 - a. A bird's-eye view of Roma ministries in Europe
 - b. Discover the needs, strengths and weaknesses of Roma in each country
 - c. Formulate Plans and Strategies for Future Development



For more update information, please go to their website, www.romanetworks.com



God's Timing for His People

By Grover Crosby

Throughout the history of the church, stories of God's Sovereign hand over the nations have been recorded. More recent history has witnessed Divine movements among the European's, America's, Naga's, Mizo's, Koreans, Brazilians and those of other People Groups. Mission movements have followed and been a part of this Global expansion of His Kingdom.

New movements are underway today. Among them is a new one amidst the Roma (Gypsies) scattered across Europe and beyond.

The Great Commission Center International (GCCCI), has been a key initiator in bringing the Roma leaders together and has sponsored three conferences in Eastern Europe to give greater profile to this Unreached People Group known as the Roma. Dr. Thomas Wang, President Emeritus of GCCCI, summed up this vision, "We owe a debt to the Roma, a great debt."

At the recent Roma Conference held September 21-24, 2016, in Bekes, Hungary, the theme of timing for the Roma was echoed by one of the key leaders of the movement, Pastor Albert Durko, director of the Hungarian Gypsy Missions International. He stated his opening address to the 190 delegates present, "I want to declare in the name of Jesus Christ, the time for the Roma is here." Then referencing the almost 180 Roma leaders present, he declared, "You are the dream coming true!"

Pastor Albert contrasted the way the world thinks of Roma to how God sees them. The world



can think of them only in finite terms, but God thinks of them in infinite terms, "...the one who is least among you will be the greatest." (Luke 9:48b)

The Hungarian Gypsy Missions International alone, by the grace of God, has seen the number of churches among the Roma grow from 3 to 120 with 6,000 members in 20 years. Their programs reach 20,000 people per day. His prayer is for 350,000 Roma believers in the next decade. That vision can be multiplied through the current networks coming together in Eastern Europe.

A prominent Roma leader, Miki Kamberovic, sharing at the conference, testified to the changes taking place. From a survey on the Roma by a non-Roma source, he reported, 'people see them as trouble-makers, those who steal babies, are fortune tellers, strugglers and many other pejorative terms.' As a Roma, he was hurt by these perceptions personally, and experienced the inferior feelings they brought to him and his three sons. When

he found his identity in God, he realized that it is God who made the Roma, and has an identity for them, *“From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”* (Acts 17:26) Pastor Miki came to accept who he was and was free to celebrate his identity. He believes that now is the determined time for the Roma.

“We have to educate others as to who the Roma are,” he said, “when you don’t know your history, others will define you and, most of the time, they are wrong. The Roma are spiritual people. They are included in God’s plan.” Now as a pastor and leader among his people, he states with conviction, “one thing is important and happening, Roma people have open hearts for God. When the Roma receive Christ, their lives change.”

A top official from the government of Hungary spoke of an agreement among the European Union nations to work toward social inclusion of the Roma. She admitted that social inclusion is complex and will take some time. She indicated that most of these governments want to link with all sectors of the society, including missions, in bringing this about. Education for the children is a key strategy toward bringing the changes. She agreed, “The Roma must be involved in the process.”

The gathering in Hungary was designed to be a Networking Conference. Existing networks are fragile and scattered. It is time to bring the key leaders together and begin to multiply their influence in the Roma nation. The base for partnership and support also needs to be broadened to help resource the expansion of mission among them.

A wide selection of Roma pastors and leaders were present from a number of countries. Different mission organizations were represented. A few observers were present to determine what help can be contributed from the broader Christian community.

The conference featured good worship, several main speakers, workshops and breakout country forums. Topics focused on a cooperative strategy to reach out to the Roma people across Eastern

Europe and beyond.

The workshops were designed to provide tools and strategies for pastors and leaders to take back and use in their communities. The country break-out sessions were formed to provide a place for sharing ideas and ways to cooperate and support into the future.

The present and expected growth of the Roma will require a bigger pool of stakeholders in order to broaden and sustain the movement. One of the key outcomes of the conference was the forming of a Networking Group representative of 29 countries. The non-Roma representatives were chosen by the country leaders. The Roma country leaders were chosen by their peers. Roma leaders, mission heads, and country representatives would make up this informal networking group.

These representatives will meet on March 29-31 of 2017 in Belgrade, Serbia for further discussion to determine a cooperative strategy forward in reaching the many Roma communities at the grassroots level. Partnership with the non-Roma churches is critical to resourcing and empowering this mission movement. Building trust between the different players is crucial. Shared skills and mutual cooperation will strengthen the impact of God’s mission to the Roma nation.

We need to cover these developments in prayer. Pray for the Roma leaders who will facilitate the next steps by all parties involved in empowering this mission among the Roma. Pray for the contributors who make up this Network. Most of all, pray for revival to take place in the Roma communities scattered all across Eastern Europe and beyond.

(The author is Consulting Pastor and Pastor of Communication of the Richmond Hill Christian Community Church in Toronto, Canada. He represented the Board of Directors of Great Commission Center – Canada to attend the 2016 Roma Conference.)

Roma Ministry Sharing and Prayer Meeting Held in Toronto, Canada

By Phillip Chang

On the evening of 21 November 2016, when we just had our first snowfall that marked the beginning of Winter, 35 brothers and sisters from 6 different Chinese churches in the Greater Toronto Area, who have a heart for Roma ministry gathered at the North Toronto Chinese Baptist Church for a time of sharing and prayer.

Dr. Kok Swang Tan, Chairman of the GCCC Board of Directors, started the evening with prayer after singing “Pass It On” led by sister Loraine Chan. Then, Rev. Sam Chan shared in Cantonese, Mandarin and English on the RHCCC STM team’s experience from the visit to Eastern Europe in late September and early October, and followed by an audio visual presentation. The team attended Roma Missions Strategy Seminar in Thessalonika with local Roma leaders, traveled to 5 different countries (Greece, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia and Romania), and visited some 20 Roma churches and communities. In the seminar and interaction with the Roma leaders, the team had the opportunity to learn about the Roma culture, needs and struggles. Visiting the Roma churches and communities provided eyewitness observation the lives and challenges of Roma people. Such valuable information gathered would



Dr. Kok-Swang Tan chaired the meeting

form the basis for decisions on short, medium and long term ministry goals and development. The STM team members also answered various questions raised by brothers & sisters in the prayer meeting.

After the sharing, we formed groups of 3 - 4 and prayed for the following 3 main areas of Roma Ministry:

2017 Ministries of the Great Commission Center International in print resources, publication, seminars, fundraising, mobilization of global Chinese church participation in Roma Ministry, and sending short term missions teams to Roma



communities in Eastern Europe.

Roma needs: cultural and psychological reform, education, living condition, life skills, and financial needs.

Missionaries serving the Roma people; non-Roma pastors (caring heart, patience, livelihood and ministry needs); raise up more missions equipped servants for Roma Ministry.

Rev. Patrick Lau, Rev. Peter Mah and Rev. Fred Tham led the closing prayer for each of the above areas.

Towards the end, Dr. Kok Swang Tan challenged brothers and sisters to encourage and support one another. He also announced that the next prayer meeting will be on March 26, 2017 (Sunday) at 7 pm. With Rev. Nathan Hui's closing prayer, the meeting concluded.

Praise God for His abundant grace! On a Monday evening, a rest day for pastors, after



Rev. Sam Chan sharing

a long day's work for most, all attended with a united heart, ready to pour out their hearts to share and pray, and determined to go after God's heart together to seek His guidance, providence and empowerment. We also prayed for God's care, protection and healing for Rev. Thomas Wang, Rev. Grover Crosby and Dr. Sharon Chan. Although it was cold outside, the hearts of those attended were on fire. As it was Rev. Sam Chan's birthday, we sang "Happy Birthday" to celebrate this special day for God's servant called to Roma Ministry.

(The author is a member of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church.)



Rev. Sam Chan and team members answered questions

You are encouraged to attend the Roma Prayer Meetings in your area:

Toronto

Date: March 26 (Sunday), 2017

Time: 7:00-8:30pm

Location: North Toronto Chinese Baptist Church
88 Finch Ave.W., North York, ON M2N 2H7

Hong Kong

Date: March 2 (Thursday), 2017

Time: 7:30-9:00pm

Location: Room 301, General Commercial Building,
156-164 Des Voeux Road Central, Hong Kong



Disgusting Atzigans Became Lovely Roma

By Xing Kai



Very few people know much about this East European country Hungary. But more are familiar with its capitol city Budapest situated beside the Danube River. The Hungarian Chinese Christian Church is established here.

The Disgusting Atzigans

Although Budapest is a beautiful city yet, around us, there is a group of people that the locals call the disgusting Atzigans (a word derived from the term Athinganoi which means Untouchables). Among the 10 million people of Hungary, 10% are Atzigans. They are people gifted in singing and dancing. Some have achieved fame in music and art. Although they have migrated from India to Europe 1,000 years ago, they are still being discriminated against by Europeans. Because many Atzigans, men and women, young or old, make theft and stealing a way of life, they have been utterly marginalized, unable to have the most basic human rights.

During the early 1990s, large number of Chinese came to Hungary, opening small business

or shops. Atzigans frequented the stores, not to purchase but to steal. They therefore became enemies of the Chinese. They were treated as thieves and no one wish to associate with them. This is not because of the mean spirit of the Chinese. All European people treat them the same way; no company hires Atzigans, some schools do not accept Atzigan children, even the Hungarian churches do not welcome them.

The Lovely Roma

When Rev. Thomas Wang together with Dr. Sharon Chan, President of Great Commission Centre International in America and their short term mission team visited Budapest in 2013, we began to learn that the Atzigans are also called the Roma. The difference between these two terms is like that between the words “Chinaman” and “Chinese.” The Atzigans prefer to be called Roma, which gives them human dignity.

This new identity however has resulted in us a change of heart and a sense of regret. But when Rev. Thomas Wang emphatically encouraged the Chinese church to befriend and evangelize the Roma, we immediately saw a red light and tried to call a stop to it. I told pastor Wang that reaching out to the Roma is an impossibility to the local Chinese church; because of language barrier and strong negative sentiments. However at the same time, God’s spirit planted in our hearts a burden for the Romas. Especially when I walked into a Roma church and worship with them for the first time, I was overwhelmed by their warmth, joy,

unity and thankfulness, something similar to what Peter experienced when he first came into the home of Cornelius! I deeply realized God's love and grace to the Atzigans! At that very moment, the disgusting Atzigans transformed into lovely Roma!

We must love whom God loves, and reach out to whom God wants to save! From that time on, the Roma ministry of our church was born!

Our Vision and Plan

The Roma people became a burden to the Hungarian society. In spite of government's effort to improve this predicament, due to economic and social reasons, so far nothing has really worked. Up to now, great majority of Roma still live below the poverty line, without medical and educational privileges. They are still being discriminated against by local people, deprived the right of having public utilities. Despite of their numbers, there is no unity among them and sense of belonging and dignity. All of these make mission to the Roma doubly difficult. Creative approach must be found in establishing churches for the Roma.

When we began to tackle Roma ministry, God has given us graciously some clear guidance. First in order to have long lasting results, we realized that we must nurture and train Roma workers to reach Roma. Second, because of their poverty, we need to financially support those who are called by God into the ministry. Third, help the Roma to established churches, so churches not only become the center of faith, also the center of education, of

culture and of children for the Roma.

Such a plan, if working, in the long run will change fundamentally the culture, the way of life and effectively will restore the confidence and self-respect of the Roma people. It certainly will generate great impact among the Hungarians, becoming a strong testimony for the gospel.

In Cooperation with Roma Churches

With our strategy clearly set, we began to look for cooperative Roma churches. God miraculously led us to know Pastor Pali Rafael who happens to be one of the few Roma with higher education. We drove for 200 miles to visit his church. He shared with us God's calling to him, which is to establish Roma churches to train Roma missionaries and to lead more Roma to Christ.

But after 6 years of hard work, both his and his wife's faith grew weaker, vision dimmer and remote. Their small one-room meeting place is a rental. The congregation does not grow and donation a pittance. Sunday offerings lingers around \$20. Roma families usually have several children. But because of space limitation, the children run around outside and receive no Christian teaching.

Because of lack of means, their chance of education is sharply curtailed. Mrs. Rafael home-school her 2 children as well as her co-workers' children. Although many neighbor children wish to be taught, she can only take 3 to 4 in their small rented residence.

The 4 brothers in his church now receiving theological training to be pastors will face the same difficulties after graduation. This and the financial pressures cause despondency to the Rafael family to the point of almost giving up.

A new spark ignited in them on their calling after they got to know the Chinese church. Pastor Rafael said gratefully: "Now I know that the Chinese church is God's answer to my prayer. Through you, God will



Pastor and Mrs. Pali Rafael are in the middle of the front row.

train Roma missionaries and build Roma churches!”

May God Fulfill Our Dream

Praise the Lord, in the city where Pastor Rafael’s church is located, a building site with a reasonable price was found. It has almost 3,000 square meter of land, includes a few buildings which could be used for worship, Sunday school, parsonage etc. plus a spacious space for children’s playground. The owner is willing to sell it for a little over 35,000 Euro.

By the grace of God if a Roma church could be established, there will be a church and a civic center for the Roma in that city. Many Roma will come to the church and know Christ. Countless Roma children will have a chance to receive Christian education and up-bringing certainly leading them into a new way of faith and life. The general population of Roma Christians will also be proud to have their own center and commit themselves into service for the Lord. This spiritual renewal will bring new life to the Roma, freed of evil influences and malediction!

Furthermore, the gospel of Christ will thus spread out like a shock wave. Roma churches will be built up far and wide, leading Roma in the surrounding towns and villages to Christ!

Let Us Seek God’s Will

God is doing a great work here! May this be the beginning of a great movement of spiritual conversion for the millions of Roma in Eastern Europe. This is not only God’s grace, it is also a calling and commission! It is our prayer that many

Christians will be involved in this great task through their prayer and financial support.

In the history of global missions, there is not much record of Chinese missionary legacies. It was the fearless exploits of Morrison, Taylor and others who brought the good news to China. Today, as mentioned by Hudson Taylor IV, the Chinese church should no longer be an absentee in world missions!

Most missionary movements born under economic booms. Today, China is miraculously on the rise; God is scattering the Chinese in numerous overseas areas of the world. In almost every Chinese population center there are Chinese churches. God has also entrusted financial means to the Chinese. Every Chinese Christian and every Chinese Church should consider and pray. O God! What is your will! What do you want me/us to do!

(The author is the Senior Pastor of Hungarian Chinese Christian Church)

(The article was translated from Chinese by Rev. Thomas Wang.)





True Privilege in the Kingdom of God

Dorcas Cheng-Tozun

When our family moved to Nairobi, Kenya, a few months ago, I braced myself for what would be the most awkward part of our transition — having a house helper in our home every day. As foreigners and people with means, we are expected to hire full-time help, providing employment for the locals.

Six days a week, a woman named Rachel, married and with two young daughters, arrives at our house at 7:30 a.m. She cleans, does the laundry, cooks our meals, and occasionally babysits our son.

Since I work from home, Rachel and I run into each other fairly often. I was eager to get to know her in the first few weeks after our arrival and asked her many questions about her life and family.

In one of these conversations, the subject of traveling came up. “I don’t want to go to another

country,” Rachel told me definitively.

Without thinking, I gave her the same response I have given to every friend or relative who has expressed a similar sentiment. “Just try it,” I said with an encouraging smile. “I think you’ll find that most people in other countries are friendly. You’ll have a good experience.”

She lowered her eyes before replying. “If I was in another country, I wouldn’t know where to go for help. I wouldn’t know what to do if my boss beat me. Here in Kenya, I can still run away.”

I had known for a while that Rachel and her family were poor and struggling. I knew I was remarkably privileged in comparison. Yet, in that moment, I realized that the chasm between us was even wider than I had imagined.

I have had the immense privilege of traveling for work and for play, of exploring more than twenty countries to seek out adventure and



meaningful opportunities. For Rachel, the only circumstance under which she could go to another country would be as a domestic worker, completely vulnerable to the whims of her employer and unforgiving government regulations. She had a good friend who was actually beaten to death by her employers in Qatar, simply because their young son had taken a dislike to her.

Rachel would travel only as an act of desperation, compelled by the need to provide for her family, and nothing else.

Since then I have had other encounters with Rachel — frequent reminders of just how incredibly privileged I am compared with her. Her husband is unemployed and tries to make extra money by selling clothing on the side of the road. She gladly accepts the food we won't eat or the torn clothing I think is too worn for my son to wear again.

A few weeks ago, her older daughter accidentally broke a window at school and had to pay \$40 to repair it; Rachel only had

\$10 in savings and asked to borrow \$30 from us to make up the difference. My stomach clenched with guilt as I thought about how often I spend \$30 without a second thought: on an item of clothing, a single meal, or an outing to the movies.

I am sometimes tempted to close my eyes, to shut out the obvious chasms in class and status between us. I don't want to acknowledge the insatiable need Rachel and her family seem to have. No matter what I do — short of taking her into my family, which is not an outcome she would want anyway — it is not enough.

Yet Rachel is here, every day, in my home. She cannot be ignored. She cannot be distilled down to a statistic or a photograph on a donation appeal, easy to forget or toss aside.

I consider myself a fairly empathic and compassionate person. I have sat with many friends in times of grief and sorrow. I have given of my expertise, time, and finances in service of others, to the point of compromising my own well-being and personal desires.



But Rachel's presence in my life has pushed me to the limits of my compassion. After a couple months, I began — slowly and so subtly that I could deny it, if asked — distancing myself from her. I stopped asking her questions about her life because I didn't want to know more.

In my most selfish moments, I wish Rachel could act just a little happier around me. I wish she could pretend her life is better than it is.

And then I feel ashamed. I am ashamed by my unwillingness to experience, even peripherally and minimally, a modicum of Rachel's daily suffering. I am embarrassed by my desire to prioritize my own emotional comfort above someone else's well-being.

And yet, it is in recognizing the limits of my heart that I realize how much I truly need Jesus. All the good intentions, human compassion, and material resources in the world can only get me so far. But if I can press into the overflowing love, grace, and compassion of an infinite God, then perhaps he can sustain me through the simple act of being a consistent friend to someone in need.

The truth is that, in the beautiful, upside-down kingdom of God, my privileges of affluence,



status, education, and power are not real treasures. The true privilege is the opportunity to love and serve those whom God puts in our path. I have known this for years, and yet it is only now that I feel like I am actually learning it.

As uncomfortable as it makes me, my spiritual discipline — and my gift — in this season is to continue to get to know Rachel, to learn about her life and who she is, and to explore what I can do to validate her identity as a daughter of God.

In the process, I know her testimony will continue to challenge and teach me. Her very presence will continue pointing me to the kingdom on this side of heaven.



(Dorcas Cheng-Tozun is a writer and editor who has found healing and hope through words. She is a columnist for Inc.com, a regular contributor to Christianity Today and Asian American Women on Leadership, and has written for more than a dozen other publications. Previously she worked as a nonprofit and social enterprise professional in the US and Asia. Dorcas has an MA in Sociology and a BA in Communication from Stanford University. Find her online at chengtozun.com or on Twitter@[dorcas_ct](https://twitter.com/dorcas_ct).)

[The article was originally published at The Well (thewell.intervarist.org).]



World Mission News

Compiled by Samuel C.Y. Ling

India: Omar, a boy from a poor area of an illiterate family in a home without electricity or running water, was sick of school as classmates made fun of him about his not so good grades. When a Bible club became available, he joined in a whim hoping to meet some new friends. There, he got help with homework, and became more interested in learning resulting in better grades. He also accepted Christ and had his heart transformed. His parents were so impressed of what happened, they sent his four siblings to join the club. Today, the whole family have known Christ.

<Mission India, www.missionindia.org, 12/16/16>

Egypt: Last December 11, a suicide bomber killed 25 Christians injuring 49 others at the largest Coptic church in Cairo. Most of the victims were women. The president and the Muslim Brotherhood condemned the attack. But many survivors and family members felt that the police failed to protect them. A few days later, radical ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. The last notable attack on a Christian Church is on January 1, 2011 in Alexandria. Some think it has become a pattern: at a time of celebration, this is a sort of spoiler. Christians composed about 10% of total population and increasingly become targets of radical Islamic terrorists.

<Window International Network, www.win1040.com, 12/14/16>

<Sat-7, www.sat7usa.org, 12/16/16>

Middle East: A gospel TV ministry reported 76% increase of regular viewers in last 5 years to 20 million primarily in the Arab world. These viewers and those in North Africa are hungry for spiritual message of love and reconciliation that they do not get from other channels and these programs are presented mostly by Middle Easterners. The satellite TV ministry is effective as it is nearly impossible for any one to stop or censor and in an area where 50% of the people are illiterate.

<Sat-7, www.sat7usa.org, 12/13/16>

Cuba: The death of dictator Fidel Castro who banned free speech, free press, and freedom of assembly, post question of what next? One possibility is things not changing for many years. An offshore Radio ministry is increasing their transmitter power from 100,000 watt to 450,000 watt so they can send a much cleaner signal providing training to meet the need of trained leaders of growing churches. Meanwhile, church leaders are subjected to arbitrary detainment, harassment and confiscation or destruction of personal and church property. An agency is sending in many Bibles and support pastors who like most people earn \$25 a month.

<Trans World Radio, www.twr.org, 12/1/16>

<Vision Beyond Borders, www.VBBonline.org, 11/30/16>

China: An agency that works with government approved Amity Press in printing 4 million Bibles is cooperating with another agency to secure more funds for the printing. There is a severe need for Bible for the fast growing churches.

<Bibles For China, www.biblesforchina.org, 12/2/16>

Myanmar: A small, impoverished, Muslim group Rohingya has long been biased by the officials, giving them no identification, not allowing freedom to move around, and no health care. Last October, nine police were killed along the Bangladesh border. The government blamed the Rohingya and lock down the township where many Rohingya live. News reports 10,000 of them fled to neighboring Bangladesh, joining 120,000 of them already in the camps there since 2012. They receive very little aid. Their situation is said to be destitute but the exact detail is obscured as officials rarely allow foreigners to visit.

<Vision Beyond Borders, www.VBBonline.org, 12/14/16>

Latvia: The society struggles with drugs, alcohol and sex-trafficking issues, and the country has one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Many homes are unstable, and children in these homes even with one parent, live like orphans. Orphanages are being phased out, and the country is relying more on foster home program. An agency's ministry is growing, turning a one-week summer camp into four. They take the orphans and the vulnerable children to the day camp with games, crafts and sports along with times of sharing the gospel. The children also receive a healthy meal each day and is connected with an evangelical church.

<Orphan' Heart, www.orphanheart.org, 12/19/16>

Syria: As the minority Kurds (some 7-10% of population) fights the ISIS militants in the north, they have to keep a low profile at night. They need small flashlights at night as they cook meals. Through a humanitarian ngo, a number of flashlights built into audio Bibles in Arab and Kurdish languages were sent to the fighters. The agency is expanding this ministry, sending in more of these Bibles to the orphanages etc.

<Audio Scripture Ministries of Holland, www.asmtoday.org, 12/9/16>

Africa: Many deaf people do not have access to anything in their sign language. An agency has developed a series of micro_SD cards. When they are plugged into a cell phone, they start to play the Bible in some sign language. These are very popular. People getting them will watch them for a long time. Many have been distributed in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa, etc.

<Deaf Bible Society, deafbiblesociety.com, 12/14/16>



Great Commission Center International

848 Stewart Drive, Suite 200
Sunnyvale, CA 94085, U.S.A.

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

SUNNYVALE, CA
PERMIT NO. 175

2017 Roma Short-Term Mission Trips

(For inquiry, please contact GCC-Canada, admin@gccica.org)



(1) Elbasan, Albania

Date: June 15 to 27

Activities: Vacation Bible School (VBS) for children and youth: English
Camp for Youth; primary healthcare; and outreach meetings.

Team Members: 18 years old & above mature Christians, Pastors,
Medical professionals

Team Size: About 10

Cost Estimate: Canada \$1,100 per person

Application Deadline: March 31, 2017



(2) Skopje, Macedonia & Zrenjanin, Serbia

Date: September 14 to 22 (Macedonia) & September 23 to October 2 (Serbia)

Activities: Training of church leaders; medical clinic; outreach
meetings; primary healthcare; children and youth ministry,
and visitation.

Team Members: 18 years old & above mature Christians, Pastors,
Medical Professionals

Team Size: About 10

Cost Estimate: Canada \$1,100 per person

Application Deadline: June 30, 2017

