

Mission to the Roma People Prayer Meeting



The Roma People, popularly known as Gypsies, has been a mystery to much of the outside world. They have been dispersed all over the world for almost a thousand years. It is estimated there are 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 Roma people in Europe alone.

They are a unique people, by and large preserving their own culture. As a minority people, they have been neglected or even discriminated by their host countries. It is generally accepted that they originated from northern India and gradually migrated to West Asia, Turkey, Egypt, the Balkans and the entire Europe, then the Americas. As most of them live in the so-called Christian countries, they have been regarded as Christians and, to a large extent, their gospel needs have been neglected by the Church.

Three articles published by Melody J. Wachsmuth earlier this year caught the attention of some mission organizations. The articles are: 'God Among the Roma People' in the May issue of *Christianity Today*; 'Loving our "Unwanted" Neighbors' in the May-June issue of *Mission Frontiers*; and 'Separated peoples: The Roma as Prophetic Pilgrims in Eastern Europe' in the July issue of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*.

GCCI staff was quite affected by these articles, would like to learn more about the needs

of the Roma People, and to seek God's will in initiating ministries among the Roma People in Eastern Europe. Thus, a prayer meeting was organized by GCCI Hong Kong office on September 17, 2013. About 30 people attended the prayer meeting. Most of them were pastors and mission committee members.

Dr. Sharon Chan, President of GCCI shared briefly with the group who the Roma peoples are, and their general situation in Europe with special focus on the population, education, employment and housing issues of the Roma peoples in Hungary, Serbia, and Macedonia. Rev. Sek-Wai Lo explained the gospel needs of these Roma peoples. Then, Rev. Samuel Cheng led the 45-minute prayer time. He encouraged everyone to pray privately for a few minutes, then in small groups, and, finally, corporate prayers led by denomination representatives. Some of the participants were moved into shedding tears by the needs of the Roma people. All attendees have promised to bring these concerns back to their churches, and encourage their congregations to pray for and support financially missions to the Roma people.

A group of four has decided to make a visit to the Roma people in Hungary, Serbia and Macedonia on November 5-15, 2013. Your prayer for this trip is much appreciated.