

A Mission Journey Around Europe

By Cheung Kai Yum
adapted and translated by Alice Tam



Session for evangelistic out-reaching training.

Thanksgiving

Last August we held an itinerant mission around Europe and during that time we saw many wonderful things.

Our mission team was made up of 10 people who came from four different countries (five from Hong Kong, three from France, one from South America and one from the USA.) Five were ministers, one served in a para-church organization and the other four were lay people. Seven of them were men. Six of them were married, and had to leave their children at home to join the tour. Three were businessmen who handed their businesses over to their wives while they were away, some even closed their shops for a month, so that they could join the team. We had to overcome many difficulties to join this group. My co-worker and I were invited to join but the others travelled at their own expense. Just one male can truly say that the Holy Spirit did great work at that time.

God used the Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM) and the Hong Kong Christian Short Term Mission Training Centre in cooperation to arrange the mission. We spent one month travelling in Britain (Milton, Keynes and Liverpool), Sweden (Malmo), Switzerland (Basel and Zurich) and France (Paris) and in each place we did evan-

gelism and training. Chinese people living in other European regions, like Scotland and Norway also came and joined us. We enjoyed in the spirit with them. We also visited some Chinese churches in the Netherlands. All these greatly enriched us and broadened our vision.

Our team members had many different gifts. Among the ten of us could speak seven different languages and dialects, such as English, Dutch, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Swatow dialect and Hakka). In addition, team members had gifts in administration, spiritual leadership and organizing service. Even though I was the leader of the team, I found the journey most relaxing.

Grief

Europe has a long history and civilization. Christianity has long exerted its influence over the continent but the situation has now been changed.

1. Decline in Christianity: the churches are empty and there are very few Christians.

2. Deterioration in moral values, with an upsurge of individualism, atheism and antagonism towards religion.

3. Sexual immorality, legalized homosexuality, drug addiction and trafficking are rife. We had always thought that China Town in Amsterdam was a hot bed of drug trafficking but we were surprised



Crumbling the idols.

to find that even in picturesque Switzerland a large group of young people take and inject drugs. We are sorry to learn that even the government handles this problem by providing them with syringes and drugs in order to prevent the spread of AIDS and an increase in crime.

4. A country which believes in God will be showered with blessings but those which leave God go into decline. Europe's economy continues to weaken law and order are confused, the charisma of great empires fade.

Needs

1. Population dispersion

There are about 500,000 Chinese in Europe. Besides those settling in big cities, like Paris, London and Amsterdam many others live in smaller cities and towns. In Paris alone, there are at least 200,000 Chinese.

2. Language confusion

The Chinese population come from many different places, like China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Taiwan and South East Asia and bring many different Chinese dialects with them like Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien, Swatow, Mandarin etc. Inter-racial marriage and the need to communicate with the second generation with different kinds of languages make the situation more complicated and confessing.

3. Church planting

Financial difficulties and a strict religious policy in some countries limit the ability of Christian groups to buy property or to build their own churches, greatly hindering the development of the ministry.

4. Pastors

The population is widely dispersed so few people attend services. A Church often does not have

sufficient financial resources to support a pastor instead, Bible classes and fellowship groups are formed in order to survive. The Chinese subculture is very complicated, so they need mature, experienced pastors, yet difficulty in obtaining working visas also makes it harder to recruit pastors.

5. Disciples

As the Christians in Europe and countries lack nurture and discipling for a long period of time their spiritual life is often weak and they have no interest in preaching the Gospel. Problems of interpersonal relationships, ignorance of the truth of salvation and nominal Christianity abound. Some fail to distinguish cults and sects. For instance, a person who had believed in Christ for ten years, still accepted the Jehovah's Witnesses to hold a Bible class in his home.

Appeal

The Churches can respond in taking the following action:

1. Intercession

Pray that the Lord will send more laborers to reap the harvest and to feed the sheep.

2. Support

Churches can organize and support short mission teams to make regular visits to support the work.

3. Training

In each place we visited, we provided training by seminars as well as outreach practice. Through demonstration and supervision, believers could get a deeper understanding of home and shop visit and also street evangelism. It also helped them to make better use of evangelistic tools and media, so that they will be able to lead more people to Christ in future.

Equipping the disciples, strengthening their life, participation in evangelism and planting churches are ministries urgently needed in Europe. May God raise up more Chinese churches to support financially, pray and dedicate themselves to the extension of God's kingdom in Europe.

(The author is the General Secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Short Term Mission Training Centre.)

(This article is reprinted with permission from the bi-monthly bulletin of the above organization.)