

# WORLDWIDE PRAYER EVENING for THE BALKANS



## LEADER GUIDE

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**LEADER NOTE:** The text you see below in **green** is what is also found in the Prayer Booklet. The black text is suggested material for leading the prayer evening.

### PHASE ONE

- Overview/Background
- Video (Balkan Diary – 7 minutes)
- Bible Study (on PowerPoint)
- Prayer Points – Growth Potential (on PowerPoint)

### OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND

**THE BALKAN PROJECT** - A vision for radically accelerated church growth

#### The Challenge

What do Bosnia and Croatia have in common?

- A dire spiritual situation. Churches are sparse, evangelical believers are few and scattered, and apathy to the gospel reigns.
- While the church has been working away for decades, there are less than ten thousand Christians in Croatia and less than five hundred in Bosnia!
- Some church leaders/churches really **want** to make a difference and start more churches; but resources are often low.
- Many feel it would take ages, even fifty years, to see new churches sprout and develop in their areas. That is too long for the eight million people in Bosnia and Croatia to wait.

ECM wants to encourage these visionary local leaders and churches in their aspirations to plant new churches and to evangelise the lost in their areas.

- ECM has identified three key zones where local leaders and Christians are ready to begin now.
- We want to help them **strategically**, encouraging them to do their part.
- Where they need extra resources, to come alongside them to help get the job done.
- As these ministries develop and the Lord brings fruit, we are praying for other “cluster church planting zones” to open up and develop throughout Bosnia and Croatia.

### The Strategy

- Mobilize a National Board of key visionary leaders and pastors who will envision, strategize and manage this vital initiative.
- Agree local strategies with churches in these three zones that will result in a radical acceleration of church planting growth in their areas.
- Recruit Brazilian and Ukrainian short-term missionaries to provide a vibrant Christian presence in these new church planting zones, alongside the national Christians.
- Provide ongoing training for national leaders, short-term missionaries and anyone else involved.

### The Means

- **Prayer:** – We want to raise up 10,000 committed intercessors for this region. We want to co-ordinate prayer conferences, distribute prayer needs and report back with God's answers.
- **Missionaries:** Brazil and Ukraine are areas of revival which could send out short-term teams to assist these local Balkan churches. We hope that missionaries from other countries will also join in both short and long-term.
- **Finances:** We hold to the principle that all churches should be challenged to give sacrificially, but we also recognise that more money will be required to enact this vision than local churches can provide. Therefore we hope to raise the difference where the church has more resources.

### The Next Step

You could be part of helping transform Bosnia and Croatia for Christ.

Will you join with God's people who are already working there? Will you help?

## VIDEO

Balkan Diary Video (7 minutes)

## BIBLE STUDY

**SLIDE 2** - Here we see a stark parallel between the vision we believe God has put before us, and the situation Nehemiah found in 445 BC as he heard about the sad situation that Jerusalem was in. He lived some 2000km (1300 miles) away. As we see how Nehemiah and God's people reacted to their challenge, we can begin to see the way forward for us as we “embrace the challenge.”

### Overview of Nehemiah parallel

Building in a Broken World (ch 1:3)

Captivity in the province see Balkans)

Great distress and reproach – Jerusalem's walls broken and gates burnt.

Millions in the Balkans have lost sight of God. Apathy reigns. Religious confusion abounds. What is our reaction as we study the statistics?

v4 „When I heard these words I...“

...sat down

...and wept

...mourned for many days

...fasting

...praying

**BEFORE THE GOD OF HEAVEN**

Interesting: As we allow God to break our hearts, to see through HIS EYES, God will call us to “join in the task” and to reach up to Heaven for help.

### SLIDE 3 - **1. Preparation time**

Prayer of v5-11

Nehemia sees the problem in its stark reality – However he invites God into the equation!

However big and “impossible” the task is, Our God of Heaven is bigger!

We just need to see God... as he really is. Nehemiah ***lives*** Scripture. He allows scripture to ***dictate*** his prayers. That is one of the reasons for his success.

- Recognises the Great God of the Heaven (v5) (Greatness and all powerfulness of God)
- Quotes God's promises and principles (scripture)
- Please... God's ear and eyes to hear and see. Answer your people's prayer! (v6)
- Nehemiah repents for the people and FOR SELF (v6-7)  
(we are each responsible for non-action!)
- Quotes again God's promises and conditions of success/blessing - ***IF*** you obey my commands... (v8-9)
- The key historical moment comes; „Let your servant prosper this day“ (TODAY) (v11)

### SLIDE 4 - **Balkan Initiative** - We are asking for God to step into the situation... TODAY

This is the Day – Today

Coming before the King of Kings for approval, equipping (ch2)

Asking God for permission (parallel asking the king 2:1-9)

- Nehemiah tells King of his burden (broken walls of Jerusalem/see Balkans, eg statistics)
- King asks „What do you request?“ (2:4)  
Perhaps God asks us, „What do you request?“

Note: Nehemia kept asking for more until his list was completed! We, too, need to ask for the complete adequate list to finish the job!

### SLIDE 5 - May God open doors for the Balkan project!

We started with our list in September 2010. Now many items have been answered, gloriously!

We still need many missionaries from Ukraine and Brazil (12 Brazilians, 6 Ukrainians – to begin!)

Much money for their personal support is also needed.

See what He has already done...

- ECM Brazil is firmly committed to mobilizing 12 missionaries for 2 years... and then new teams thereafter each 2 years! Pray they start to come

- Initial financing has come to cover the vision's 1<sup>st</sup> year logistical costs.
- Total unity from all involved with the vision – Bosnia and Croatian zones; ECM leadership.

Strategic conference is planned with 130 people, Oct 6-9. Brazilian & Ukrainian leaders will come together with local leaders from the 3 zones, and church members as well.

## SLIDE 6 - PRAYER POINTS ~ GROWTH POTENTIAL

- Pray for the Balkans – for many conversions, and growth in maturity amongst believers.
- Pray the vision grows!
  - We are starting with the three church planting zones; Dubrava (Eastern Zagreb) and Varaždin from Croatia and Novi Travnik in Bosnia. Our initial prayer is for another two such zones in Croatia and a zone in both Slovenia and Serbia.
- New zones to open up
  - Please pray that further zones be identified and added to the vision.

Praise the Lord for what He has already done in the Balkans

- Thank God for the Christians and churches already existing, within various denominations.
- Pray for unity and vision amongst all born-again Christians and movements.
- Pray for many, many conversions. Pray that 10's of 1,000's turn to the Lord.
- Pray for Pastors, Evangelists and Denomination leaders, for encouragement and personal revival.
- Pray that 100's of new churches be planted and grow gloriously. (\*\*In Croatia there are approximately 160 evangelical churches. In Bosnia there are far, far, far less.)

## PHASE TWO

- PowerPoint
  - Overview of each church planting zone
  - Prayer points for each church planting zone
- Bible Study (also on PowerPoint)

## VARAŽDIN, CROATIA

### *Introduction: Varaždin Zone*

**SLIDE 8** - Varaždin (population 49,000; district population 181,000) is one of the oldest cities in north Croatia, and is located 81 km (50 mi) north of Zagreb. It was the *capital* of Croatia between 1756 and 1776. It is mainly known for its baroque buildings, textiles, food and IT industry. This important, historic city has only three Bible believing churches, but holds a large Roman Catholic population and many influential RC churches.

**SLIDE 9 - Varaždin Church:** Emmanuel Baptist church was formed in 1997, developing into the present day vibrant church of 60 or so keen Christians. This church is led and was founded by Pastor Nikola Vukov and his son Jonatan, assistant Pastor.

**SLIDE 10** - Practically all of today's congregation are first-generation Christians.

**SLIDE 11** - As ECM came into contact with them (2009) they already had firm aspirations to plant a church in nearby Novi Marof, some 16km away. This was exactly the type of church ECM was looking for, and we are trying to assist the Varaždin churchplanters in their ministry.

**SLIDE 12** - The official opening ceremony of the new church was in 2001 and its various ministries include: Church planting, Office for Christian counseling, Youth ministry, Sunday school, ministry to the old and sick, Prison ministry, Croatian-Bible translation project. This church is already "mother" to two other church plants.

**SLIDE 13** - The church plant in **Novi Marof** (population 15,000) was started in November 2009 and is located about 22km from the city of Varaždin. There are four believers who are members, and thirteen visitors interested in the Gospel

**SLIDE 14** - Ministries include an Office for Christian Counseling (3 mornings/week), Bible study and prayer meeting each Friday evening, personal evangelism and soul-winning in many ways, and evangelism through music.

**SLIDE 15 - Ivanec** (population 14,500) is a brand new outreach that had its first Christian meeting in February 2011. Ministries include an Office for Christian Counseling (3 mornings/week), Thursday evening Bible study and prayer meeting, personal evangelism and soul-winning, evangelism through music/gospel songs.

**SLIDE 16 - Vision for growth:** *Vision* for other three towns in Varaždin district:

**Ludbreg** (population: 9000),  
**Lepoglava** (population: 9000),  
**Varazdinske Toplice** (population: 7000).

**Church planters:** Nikola (pastor) and Ana; Jonatan (pastor) and Danijela; Miljenko (deacon), Neda (student), Mario, Ivica, Miroslav (pastor-assistant)

## SLIDE 17 - PRAYER POINTS ~ VARAŽDIN

- Pray for God's wisdom and strength that Emmanuel Baptist church (mother church) would realize a new church plant vision in Varaždin district.
- Pray for Novi Marof - that pastor Jonatan and his fellow workers win many people for Christ, and that the Holy Spirit establish and strengthen this new church – as soon as possible.
- Pray for Ivanec - that God opens the door for pastors Nikola and Jonatan and pastor-assistant Miroslav and their team to tell people the gospel message so that they might win many of them for the Lord – even this year.
- Pray that God's Spirit would move other believers in Emmanuel church and make them the soul-winners and church planters.

## NOVI TRAVNIK, BOSNIA

*Introduction: **Novi Travnik Zone***

**SLIDE 18** - The church in **Novi Travnik** started in 1995 as Radovan and his family became Christians just after the Bosnian war (1991-95).

**SLIDE 19** - While many have come and gone, the church now has some 20 people of various ages attending.

**SLIDE 20** - The church is fully committed to Biblical preaching and teaching of God's word, and also to encouraging fellowship with other churches. Amongst the country population of 4 million, made up of Muslims, Roman Catholic and Orthodox, the gospel is virtually unknown.

**SLIDE 21** - Some church members are very eager to give out Bibles and other Christian literature. They have been able to publish one book, and several booklets so far, and have a desire to publish more books, CDs and DVDs as the need for Christian literature in the Bosnian language is great.

**SLIDE 22** - As a church they are reaching the lost with the Gospel message through the distribution of literature, over the radio, on the internet, and through personal evangelism. They hope to extend this ministry to include television as well.

**SLIDE 23 - Vision for growth:** The church has a vision to plant churches in:

**Travnik** (first)

**Vitez**

**Turbe.**

**Travnik** is a university town and is the economic, political and cultural centre of the region with a population of around 70,000.

**Church planters:** Radovan (elder) and Blaženka, Saša (pastor) and Ketii

## SLIDE 24 - PRAYER POINTS ~ NOVI TRAVNIK

- Pray for unbelievers in Novi Travnik and the surrounding area to hear and believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Leadership and members - for God's wisdom and courage to joyfully and faithfully share the message of the Cross and to continually grow in the true knowledge of God
- Pray for the resources and workers (native and foreign) who will carry out existent ministries such as radio, literature, Internet, etc. as well as start the new ones
- Pray that God would provide our own meeting place for the church

## DUBRAVA (ZAGREB), CROATIA

### *Introduction: Dubrava Zone*

**SLIDE 25** - In the summer of 2004 ECM, in partnership with GEM missionaries, approached Zagreb Radićeva church suggesting further church plants. They were enthusiastic and suggested the Dubrava, eastern Zagreb area.

**SLIDE 26** - The Dubrava church is now all but finished, and has 44 members. Many ministries are up and running and congregations are close to 80 and growing.

**SLIDE 27** - A Croatian leadership is the final piece left to be completed before we can say it has developed to maturity. Leadership: May 2011, 3 deacons were appointed to work alongside the 3 churchplanting elders. Pray that we can appoint and pay our own pastor.

**SLIDE 28** - The church has just bought its own land and building, centrally located opposite the great new mega shopping centre. This building will eventually be able to seat 200 people. Over 160,000 live in the Dubrava area of Zagreb.

**SLIDE 29** - The Dubrava church is keen to start other eventual churchplants and two towns have been identified.

**SLIDE 30** - Ministries of the church: Evangelism of Dubrava, music group, house groups in Dubrava, Sesvete, and two villages Zelina & Ivanja Reka where there have been conversions. Youth work, Sunday School, visiting the sick (especially Štef).

**SLIDE 31 - Vision for growth:** The Dubrava church is committed to start other church plants in  
**Dugo Selo** (population 20,000), which is about 20km away  
**Sesvete** (population 60,000), some 6km distant

**Church planters:** Josip, Stephen and Tabita

Deacons: Davor, Danijel and Ruben

Branko – living in Dugo Selo

## SLIDE 32 - PRAYER POINTS ~ DUBRAVA

- Pray for many conversions, and growth in maturity amongst believers.
- Leadership – pray that the newly formed leadership will be full of faith, vitality and vision.
- New church building: Pray that the outstanding costs of 100,000 euros will be paid off as soon as possible, and that building renovations are carried out rapidly and for God's glory.
- Pray for open doors in Dugo Selo:
  - Meeting room
  - New contacts/conversions
- For determination and courage to follow all God's initiatives
- Church planting missionaries John & Lynn Lehn are on a one year deputation in the USA. Pray for them as they return to Croatia in the summer of 2012 to a new ministry in Dubrovnik.

## BIBLE STUDY

### SLIDE 33 - 2. Building time

This can be a relatively brief biblical input. 41 separate work groups are listed here. Each worked "his zone" next to his locality (house). The phrase "next to" is used repeatedly. "Many hands make light work" emphasises just how God's people can "do it" - when we all pull our weight in a simple way.

„Let us rise and build together.“

„The God of Heaven will prosper us.“ (2:18,20)

In building together, everyone does his share.

There is a synergy when Christians work together: Bosnians, Croatians, Brazilians, Ukrainians, British, American, Belgians, (potentially Serbs and Slovenians), etc!

Since the beginning of this "vision", ALL doors have been open because everyone has been willing to do his bit:

You're praying – the vital work!

Ukrainians and Brazilians are enthusiastic in their co-operation!

Church leaders are committing their church's ministries; God's people are giving sacrificially!

Communication computer wizards are making everything "user-friendly" and possible. ECM and denomination leaderships throughout the world are mobilizing their resources.

God's people are being captivated by the worthy mission – reaching the lost for Christ!

All concentrate their energies according to gifting and possibilities! When we each give a hand, the Lord's hand will also be with us! (2:18)

## PHASE THREE

- Video (Call to Prayer - 4 minutes)
- Video (ECM Brazil Director/Greetings from Brazil - 1 minute)
- PowerPoint
  - Growth and mobilization from revival countries
- Bible study (also on PowerPoint)

## VIDEO

Call to Prayer video (4 minutes)

## BRAZIL and UKRAINE

**SLIDE 35** - Brazil and Ukraine are the main countries mobilizing missionaries for this project. However, pray that God would raise missionaries worldwide according to his pleasure

**SLIDE 36** - ECM Director for Brazil, Leonidas has visited Croatia and Bosnia and cried out to the Lord "So many people and so few believers!"

**SLIDE 37** - He has committed (with the whole ECM Brazil team) to mobilizing 12 Brazilian missionaries.

## VIDEO

ECM Brazil Director/Greetings from Brazil (1 minute)

## SLIDE 38 - PRAYER POINTS ~ BRAZIL

- For God's people to be called out of Brazil to Croatia and Bosnia.
- Pray that God would raise up Revival Prayer from thousands of Brazilian Christians.
- For finances for support of the Brazilian missionaries.
- Mobilization Trip, July 1-14: Stephen and Jonatan travel to Brazil to visit many churches to ask for prayer and missionaries. Pray that God would work majestically to raise up a missionary movement for the Balkan region.

**SLIDE 39** - Open doors were found in **Ukraine** as ECM's Ron Anderson and Stephen Bell made a visit there in May. They met with Baptist Union leaders who are excited to recruit missionaries...

**SLIDE 40** - ...and with trainers from the Biblical Education by Extension (BEE) who are also enthusiastic to help. Key believers Slavic and Natasha are enthusiastic to organise prayer and the mobilisation of missionaries.

## SLIDE 41 - PRAYER POINTS ~ UKRAINE

- Please pray for the right people. Ukrainians can learn Croatian in three months. The languages are so similar.

- Pray also for financial resources so missionaries can be sent.
- Pray for the Ukrainian Baptist Union leaders, especially brother Igor who is overseeing the whole Ukrainian mobilization effort.
- For BEE Directors as they assist us in the project.
- Key believers Slavic and Natasha who are enthusiastic to organise prayer and help in mobilisation of missionaries.

## BIBLE STUDY

### SLIDE 42 - 3. Overcoming Obstacles

God's people faced many obstacles as they followed God's vision. There were attacks against God's people collectively (ch 4), against God's leader (ch 6), and even a moral attack (finances/power, egoism). „When God's people arise to build, the devil and his forces rise to destroy!“

Here you don't need to go into detail - suffice it to say that in God's work there will always be obstacles and criticism, together with Spiritual attacks from the enemy. The attacks are:

Ch4 v1-3 Ridicule – „It's a waste of time! You'll never do it! Ha Ha!“

Answer: v4-5 Prayer therapy  
v6 keep on working

v7-9 Plotting

v10-14 Discouragement, moaners from within Fifth columnists

v16-23 Continual fear

Ch 5: Here again, don't go into too much detail: Basically previous governors had exploited their position and the people. Nehemia, however, was God's man and had to stay pure. Ch 5v15b and 16a gives his answer: „But out of reverence<sup>1</sup> for God I did not act like that<sup>2</sup>. Instead I devoted<sup>3</sup> myself to the work on this wall.“ „...we did not acquire any land!“

Pray that everyone in the vision remains pure for God and experiences personal revival.

### SLIDE 43 - Our answer: In chapter 4:16-23

- „With Sword and Spade“ (v16)  
Sword is prayer support/protection, spade is active mission work
- The Trumpet Call of Prayer, uniting us and protecting us against danger (v18-20)  
„Our God will fight for us!“ (v20)
- Our attitude 100% commitment „Ever Ready“! (4:23)

Result: In chapter 6:15

The wall was built in 52 days

Operation „50 years in 5“

(Balkan Project)

**SLIDE 44 - Faith:** Here we must be committed to *believe* that God can do *great things* even *in our midst*. We must not be shackled by circumstances. The *Gospel* is *alive* and *active* (Heb 4:12), it is *powerful to save all peoples* (Rom 1:16) and it is the Lord himself who said *“I will build my church”* (Mat 16:18). Like a healthy plant, the Gospel should multiply believers and churches.

**SLIDE 45 - Hope:** *Faith* engenders *hope*, and *hope*, when fed, watered and blessed, engenders *expectation*. We should dare to *“believe great things from God and to attempt great things for*

God. “Based on faithful, even sacrificial *prayer* and *Godly wisdom*, we should look to serve other churches with *similar vision*, helping them develop their “cluster churchplanting zones” to God’s Glory.

**SLIDE 46 - Love:** We desire to *encourage* and *serve*. We seek to come alongside those in the churchplanting task, wherever possible sympathizing and engendering hope. Where churches are utilizing their present resources for the Lord (parable of talents Mat 25v14ff), we will seek the Lord together for practical help for them to see blessing in their ministries.

#### **SLIDE 47 - PRAYER POINTS ~ BALKAN PROJECT**

- Intercessory prayer on a massive scale
- God called missionaries from Brazil and Ukraine - initially 12 from Brazil and Ukraine. We are praying the first missionaries arrive in 2012.
- “Revival in the Balkans” Conference October 6-9 and Vision trip Oct 10-17:
  - Pray for great inspiration from the Lord, preaching, vision sharing, “the Glory of the Lord” amongst us.
  - That 130 people would come. Apart from Brazilian and Ukrainian church leaders & mobilizers and key representation from the initial 3 church zones, pray that enthusiastic visionary church planters from Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia and Serbia attend. Pray the vision expands!
  - As the 13 Brazilians and 5 Ukrainians are exposed to the various church planting zones, pray the “eyes will see so the hearts can feel”. Pray they receive the burden enables them to mobilize many, many missionaries from their revival countries to the needy Balkan countries.
- Ongoing needs in the project – Growth, Finances, Recruitment, OUTPOURING OF GOD’S SPIRIT, many, many new church planting zones and the raising up of “leaders for growth”
- Identify enemies/attacks
  - Apathy - Pray that we will not become apathetic
  - Lack of vision - Pray we will not suffer from lack of vision - pray for visionaries
  - Division - Pray for unity amongst evangelical Christians - that we not be divided
  - Lack of Faith - Pray for men, women and churches of great faith. Revival faith! Pray that we not suffer from lack of faith.

## THE BALKAN PROJECT CROATIA ~ BOSNIA

CONTACT INFORMATION: [revivalinthebalkans@ecmi.org](mailto:revivalinthebalkans@ecmi.org)