



## SLO growth

by Alen and Lila Kerckmar

**Last week I had a shocking experience at the youth group as we were discussing Jesus' last commandment before he went back to the Father from Matthew 28:19-20. When I asked the group about where they thought missionaries should go in today's world they gave the typical answer: missionaries should go to Africa, India, South America. The whole youth group were shocked to hear that Slovenia is one of the most unevangelised countries in the most unevangelised continent (Europe).**

Did you know that Slovenia is the 14th most needy country in the world according to Operation World with regards to the Gospel? The statistics compared to Northern Ireland are quite shocking!

In 2006 when we moved to Northern Ireland with the family for Alen to study at Belfast Bible College we were also surprised to discover that in Northern Ireland there are so many evangelical believers.

Then we experienced a spiritual culture shock upon returning to Slovenia in 2008 and realising afresh how spiritually barren Slovenia is.

Slovenia is full of churches and is traditionally religious but very few people have any biblical convictions today. The Lutheran Church is now dealing with cultural Christianity where people view Christianity as part of their culture instead of their convictions, resulting in traditionalism. In 2009 there were only a handful of believers and in our eyes the situation looked nearly impossible to change but nothing is impossible with God.

In the last number of years we have seen a number of people following Jesus by deepening their relationship with Christ and contributing to the development and growth of His church in the Pomurje region.

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**Our goal in all that we do within the local church and elsewhere in Slovenia is to see people become faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Our vision is to grow a missional community who will be open to the call of God upon their lives to disciple within Slovenia and beyond.

In writing this and looking back at how the Lord moved we are again reminded of Zechariah 4,10:

**“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin...”**

We have seen God at work in the hearts and lives of people. This is encouraging for us as it often seems that God is dead or irrelevant to most people we encounter. Far from that; God is still on the move, turning individuals from secular belief or “Cultural Christianity” to Christ.

A very good example of this is a man who has been coming to church for many years but somehow did not seem to be touched by the message of the Gospel. God was at work however as he came to the men's Bible study and said that he was convinced that God wanted him to be there to learn about Him. He studied the Word diligently during the week, and is now being discipled and mentored as a leader and elder. He is very keen to serve the Lord and passionate to further God's kingdom by encouraging others to follow Christ. It is our prayer that many more would come to know, follow, love and serve the Lord Jesus in this way.

**Today, by the grace of God, there are about 45 believers in (both men's and women's) Bible study groups and the youth group. In 2007 there were only about 7 believers.**

