

Anniversary Booklet

*An overview of four decades of missionary work
in the countries of Eastern Europe*



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE
INTERNATIONAL

40 years

in ministry

1984 – 2024



God's faithfulness through 40 years

How do you summarize 40 years of ministry? In this anniversary booklet, we will attempt to highlight and describe some of the branches of the ministry's calling that have been significant pillars during these years. We also want to give a voice to some of those who have received our help.

Our activities and commitments have varied across time; People to People International has been a blessing to the people of Eastern Europe and the Evangelical Church in a number of ways. The vision that God gave to Oliver Lindberg back in 1978 has been the guiding force behind everything we've done throughout the years and remains so to this day.

At its founding in the fall of 1984 - People to People International had nothing more than an empty office measuring 900 square feet, two offset printing presses and a black leather armchair. The armchair, still found at our office today, serves as a daily reminder of God's faithfulness. Essentially, from "nothing" God created a powerful tool that, by His grace, has been active for four decades.

As a ministry, we want to be forward-looking, not living on old memories. We don't want to build pedestals on which to display our own achievements, but rather, remember what God has done and to point to His faithfulness.

Through the years of the Iron Curtain, Bible distribution was one of the most important missions God called us to. For years we provided churches and organizations with the Gospel. For a long time, we sent portions of the Bible into Eastern Europe via the "army", or what we called "letter missionaries". These were recruited throughout Scandinavia. We also brokered a number of printing shops that, over many years, printed books and other evangelical literature. These were then supplied to churches. One of these still exists and operates in Oradea, Romania. During a period of three months in 1993, 500,000 different publications were printed in that very printing house. During the latter half of the 1980s, we helped ensure that one million Bibles were brought into the former Soviet Union. People to People International's direct contri-



bution, was around 100,000 Bibles. Several thousand Bibles and New Testaments were also printed in the West and then smuggled into countries behind the Iron Curtain. Likewise, pastors' conferences were an important tool. For many years these had to be kept secret of course. Distribution of the Bible and the training of pastors have been a fundamental element of the calling God gave to Oliver Lindberg back in 1978. On the following page, read more about that calling and how it led him to this work.

Over the years, we have contributed to the building of ten churches in Eastern Europe, mainly in Romania, but also in Bashkortostan, in south-eastern Russia.

In addition, People to People International has always sought to help vulnerable people living in tough conditions. Hand in hand with the evangelical ministry we do, the past 40 years have included extensive humanitarian work. Approximately 350 16-wheelers, loaded with emergency aid, have left our office destined for Poland and Romania.

During these 40 years, we have also had the privilege of working together with orthopedists to help with the fitting of prostheses in Poland, and in later years - Romania. Following the Romanian revolution of 1989, we had the privilege of working together with Caminul Felix, where we contributed in various ways to the development of that ministry, working with orphaned, abused and neglected children.

The plight of the Roma has also gripped our hearts. This is why we have collaborated with Children of Promise in Oradea, Romania. They work exclusively with Roma people as well as being an advocate for Roma rights.

Since 2010, we have been active in Glodeni, a city in the Republic of Moldova. Together with the Pentecostal Church there, we provide financial and practical support to various social and humanitarian projects. With confidence we look forward to what God has in store for the future.

*Jörgen & Maria Lindberg
People to People International*

The Vision

In his book - My journey from rascal to Missionary, Oliver Lindberg writes about how God called him to ministry. In 1984, People to People International was founded and this calling became the basis for everything we did. Here's an excerpt from the book.

The subject of vision, motivation and setting goals strongly impacted me. I remember one brother in particular who spoke on this subject. His name was Paul Petré from Canada. His teaching about the need to ask God for a clear and pronounced vision in your ministry, spoke very strongly to me. The result of the teaching, and the different ways the Lord had spoken to me, helped me understand the importance of taking time in prayer and to ask for a clear and pronounced vision from the Lord.



On the night of January 10, 1978, I went into action. I told my wife Ulla that I had to find out why God had called us into the ministry. "I will not go to bed until God, in a clear and understandable way, has shown me why He has called us and what direction we are to take. I am going down to the basement and I will not go to bed until I have received clear instructions from the Lord." My decision was rock solid. Nothing could stop me that evening.

It was a very long night. Hour after hour went by and I felt as if I came closer to the Lord as time went on. Suddenly something happened. I don't know the exact time and I don't know if I was awake or if I had dozed off when it happened, but suddenly I found myself hovering over a house somewhere in the former Soviet Union. I knew I was there, because I heard someone speaking Russian.

I heard someone speak in a loud voice. There was a light on in one of the windows of the house below me. I slowly floated down towards the window. As I peered through, I saw a man on his knees with his hands folded in prayer, talking to the Lord. He

cried intensely while praying. The strange thing was, I understood everything he said, even though I don't understand the Russian language. This is how I recall his heartfelt and intense prayer:

"I come to you, God, in the name of Your son Jesus, because no one can come to You, but through that name. As I come to You, I know You are listening to me. I am coming to You because I need Your help in my situation. I know You have called me to be a tool for the Church in this place. For a long time, I have seen Your hand on me within the ministry You have entrusted to me. Thank You God, for everything You have done for me. But now I need Your help. Have You seen the content of my bookshelf? Have You seen that it's almost empty?

I don't even have a Bible to read. No books from which I might gain a deeper knowledge, insight and understanding of Your Word. I pray, God, help me. I also pray that You will send Your servants from the West to me and my fellow brothers who serve You. Please, send us apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers according to Ephesians 4:11. Please, send people, anointed by the Holy Spirit, who can teach us and give us a greater knowledge in Your Word. We also need Bibles and New Testaments."

I wanted to get to him and wrap my arms around him, but I was not able to do that. I cried together with him! I cried out: "God, You must help him."

Suddenly I was transported to a different place and the picture I saw in my heart changed. I understood I was now in Poland.

There I heard the same cry for help from the servants of the Lord. The same thing happened again and I found myself in East Germany, then Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and finally - China. Everywhere I experienced the same thing, a servant of the Lord, with a loud voice crying out to God for help.

The Spirit of the Lord had, in a peculiar way, taken me on a trip around the entire Communist world. As suddenly as it started, I was back in our basement. I cried like a child. I was, as I'm sure you can understand, much shaken by the experience.

How can this be done? I thought to myself. I don't know any people with the qualifications it will take. At the same time, I felt the tangible presence of the Holy Spirit and I could hear Him very clearly say to me: "Open the book of Zechariah and read the seventh verse of chapter three."

Eagerly I reached for my Bible. I found the scripture, wiped my tears away and started to read: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."

This became too much for me. I cried and cried. Tears streamed down my cheeks. Through deep sobbing, I prayed in my heart and wondered how this was going to come true. Once again, I heard the Lord say: "Read the sixth verse in the next chapter."

I wiped my eyes again so as to see. With great excitement I read the well-known words: "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts".

A calm came over me. It took some time for the experience to sink into my heart. I was still in prayer when I finally went to bed. Ulla slept very calmly and peacefully. The next morning, she wasn't even awake as I eagerly began to tell her of my experience the night before.

"Take it easy", she said. "I have to wake up before you start to tell me what happened to you."

The Spirit of the Lord had, in a peculiar way, taken me on a trip around the entire Communist world

My face showed that something exciting had happened to me and Ulla was very eager to hear my story.

Later at the breakfast table I told her, in detail, what had happened. The same deep presence of the Lord I had experienced during the night was also present in our kitchen. We knew that God had a plan for our lives and that He wanted us to affirm and accept it. We did!

From that moment on, we both knew, that God had called us for a special purpose in those countries. At the time, we had no idea how it should be done. The only thing that was clear to us, was that if we did everything in our power to remain faithful and follow His calling, God would take care of the rest.

Whom God calls - He equips

As previously mentioned, it's impossible to summarize 40 years of People to People International's work. Since Oliver is no longer with us, I, as co-founder, would like to share some thoughts and experiences from this time. As I think back, what stands out clearly are words like, gratitude, and God's faithfulness.



There are many events that have remained in my memory. When we understood that God had a new path for us and our family, it became important for me to know if I was also included in the calling that Oliver had received. Previously, in this booklet you read about how God called him through the experiences he had. I was convinced of that calling on his life, but we were a married couple, so what would happen to me and the family? What would the future hold?

I was experiencing doubt and began to pray that God would show me if He had also called me into the work. Faced with an important decision, a decision that would affect the future of our family, I felt anxiety and fear. The night before the decision was made, I woke up to the sound of Oliver praying and speaking in tongues, while still asleep. That had never happened before. Eventually the praying stopped and the holy Spirit spoke to me. As I lay still, I felt that something special was happening. The Lord spoke and I heard the words I had hoped for in my prayer; "I, the Lord, have seen and heard your worries and fears, but I will be with you and help you if you trust Me. For I am the Lord Your God, who holds you by your right hand, who says to you: 'Fear not, I will help you'". Isaiah 41:13.

**I am convinced
that it was the
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me**

I woke Oliver up and asked him if he was aware of what had just happened. His only response was: "It feels good now," then he fell asleep again. I am convinced that it was the sign I needed. I knew that God had also called me. This moment has carried me through all the years we have ministered. It has carried me through good times and bad. I am so thankful that God looks after us personally and knows what we need. I can say that I never again felt anxiety or fear in all the years we worked. I have been secure in the promise God gave. Whom God calls - He equips.

Over the past 40 years, we have seen the Eastern European countries submit to communist rule and also gain their freedom. I can look back on times when it was not even possible to make a phone call. We had to order one through an operator. You then had to wait for the call to be connected sometime later in the day. On top of that, we knew the call was very likely bugged. We also had a communication code system with some of our contacts in the East, as it was not possible to speak freely with our friends there.

The first trip I made to a communist country, was with a woman from the USA. She was actually of Russian decent and we had an assignment to complete from inside the Soviet Union. We knew it was fraught with risk, so we were very unsure of what would happen. We entered through customs and the first thing we heard was: "You should have arrived yesterday!" The trip had been delayed one day, due to visa issues. They knew this and so it was clear that we were being watched. It continued throughout our stay. In those days, when you traveled from the West to a communist country, it was difficult to be anonymous. Whatever you did, however you dressed, you stood out from the crowd. When we tried to make contact with the person we were there to meet, we clearly felt that we were

being watched and therefore had to cancel our attempts.

The next day we went to a predetermined place to attempt another meet up. Things got better and we were able to complete our mission. We also received a gift for a Church back home in Sweden. We were happy that we managed to get the gift with us through customs, as this was not a given. It was the late 70s and this was my first exciting trip to a communist country.

One day we received a postcard from one of our contacts in the East. It was a picture of an official looking building. We immediately understood this to mean that the person had problems with the authorities. A female friend and I went to the country to find out what was going on. Once there, we traveled to see another contact, with the hope of renting a hotel room from them. But we couldn't tell them we were coming. Arriving near our destination, we had to park a long way from their house and ring the doorbell under the cover of darkness. I'll never forget the moment when she slowly opened the door. Even though we had never met, we received such a welcome when I said, "I'm Oliver's wife!". Sure enough we managed to get a hotel room and after sleeping, then traveling for an hour, we reached the place where we hoped to meet the person who sent the postcard. We took cover behind the house. We didn't want to go in, as we didn't know if the person was home. After sitting there for a long time, a car stopped and we saw someone enter. We had a photo of the person, and after "spying" on the house for a couple of hours, realising we were in the right place, we finally got to meet them and hear what happened. After some time there, our friend made a visit to the police and the authorities. Everything was sorted out and we realised how important it was that we were there to listen, advise and support our friend and his family.

The construction of the Teenage House in Oradea, Romania has also lingered in my heart. It's a large apartment house that has become a home for many young adults. This is the story of how it all began. One evening a couple of friends rang our doorbell. One of the friends worked in the construction industry and after we talked for a while over a coffee, he asked if People to People International would be interested in buying a prefabricated house

after "spying" on the house for a couple of hours, realising we were in the right place

with 14 apartments for a good price. We just looked at each other and not much more was said about it. At the time, we couldn't think what we would use such a house for. But after our friends left, we both thought about Romania. In the morning, Oliver called Lars Hornberg, founder of Caminul Felix Family Villages in Oradea and asked if they needed a large house with 14 apartments. Lars started to cry and told me that he had just come from a prayer meeting where they discussed and prayed for a solution to a major challenge regarding the older teens under their care. By law at the time, any young person over 18 years of age, had to move out of their Caminul Felix family home and live independently. But Lars and the team knew their care for these

young people must continue. Well, when we heard that, there was no doubt that it was the Lord who had spoken through our friend.

Right then and there, a challenging and lengthy work began. As the house was to be built on an old cemetery, donated by the municipality, a great deal of work was required. But it was so much fun watching as this building that would be used to house many young people, heading into adulthood, was constructed. We travelled to Romania and fully furnished one of the apartments with items from Sweden. From that point on, it was called the 'The Swedish Apartment'. The build was completed just around the turn of the millennium. The inauguration was a day of joy!

It is so exciting to cooperate with the Lord. And these are some of the events that linger in my heart and memory.

There have been many eventful years. We have experienced both joy and sorrow, struggle and victory. But through it all, God has been faithful. Many years have passed and we are so grateful that God called us to serve Him. My heart is full of gratitude for God's love and care. As I wrote earlier, whom God calls - He equips.

Ulla Lindberg
Co-Founder

The first assignment

About a month after People to People International started its work, we embraced the responsibility of helping diabetic and gluten-intolerant children in Poland. For several years, we provided one orphanage with both gluten-free flour and insulin, among other things.

ECIL, the organization the Lindbergs worked for before People to People International was founded, had taken it upon themselves to provide insulin and gluten-free flour to sick children in Poland. The products that Poland produced were of such poor quality, that those who used them risked dying at a young age. This commitment required the provision of 2,000 bottles of insulin and 2.5 – 3 tons of gluten-free flour annually. The cost of the flour was \$1,500 USD per ton and the cost of 2,000 bottles of insulin was approximately \$9,000 USD annually. In today's money, this amounts to \$4,500 USD per ton of flour and approximately \$29 500 USD for the insulin (or 4,000€ and 26,500€ respectively)

What initiated this work, was a distress call from a lady called Danuta. She was living with her two year old son, Michael in Poland. He was severely intolerant to gluten. His illness was so bad, that he was in danger of death. We responded by bringing gluten-free flour for him. It likely saved his life. A few years later, we received this thank you message from Michael himself:

“Dear Oliver! I don't know if you remember me. I was two years old when you first came to visit us. I was very sick then. You brought us gluten-free flour to use for bread and cooking. For four whole years, I have been cared for and kept on a diet. Thanks to you and your friends I have had bread to eat during this time. Today I am eight years old and healthy. Now I am like all other people. I will always be grateful to you and your friends, Oliver.”

Piotr Cieslar on the far right together with representatives of the Polish authorities in front of a shipment of gluten-free flour.



Michael and his sister.



The Letter Ministry

God's Word knows no human limitations or boundaries. It can never be stopped, nor suppressed. It also knows no national borders.

Before the fall of communism, we worked a lot with Bible distribution and smuggling of evangelical literature.

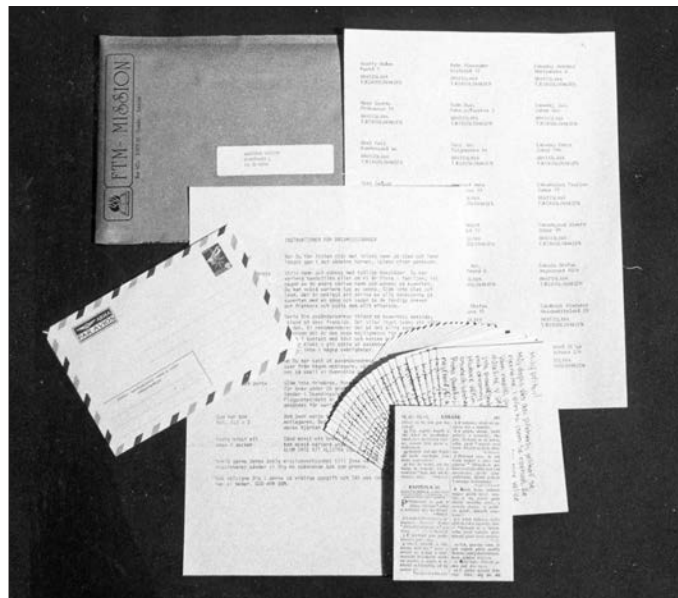
The Letter Ministry was a work we had been involved in, prior to the founding of People to People International and felt it must continue. Although the evangelical church was persecuted, God's word could still be conveyed to people behind the Iron Curtain. God's calling to us was to support the suffering, persecuted church, so we smuggled Telephone directories out of the countries suffering under communist oppression.

The phone ledgers contained names and addresses of persons, unknown to us, but known to God. These people received the Word of God through the "army" of Letter Missionaries, who regularly sent portions of the New Testament to the names on those lists. The genius of evangelizing in this way, was that the authorities could never trace the letters. All the envelopes were different and looked like private mail from some acquaintance in the West. So in this way, we were able to spread the Word of God for many years, to people in these countries. It was as simple as it was ingenious. However, smuggling out these phone ledgers was not entirely without risk.

What the fruit of this ministry has been, only God knows, but we want to believe that it has yielded a rich heavenly harvest of people who otherwise would not have been able to read God's word.

Upper picture: Each Letter Missionary was sent this package, which contained: Bible pages, addresses and instructions.

Bottom image: Letters from a believing friend in the West.



Former Soviet Union, distribution of Bibles.



Printing of Bibles and Bible smuggling

In the early years that followed the founding of People to People International, the printing and smuggling of Bibles was one of the ministry's main missions. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of varied publications were distributed to countries behind the Iron Curtain.

Following the founding of People to People International in 1984, a large part of our work was devoted to raising money to print Bibles and other Christian literature. We contributed to the printing of Bibles in many Eastern European languages as well as Chinese. They were then smuggled in by our various contacts.

There was a period of many years, where countries in eastern Europe were completely closed to the Gospel. Sharing it was banned. Our recurring mission during this time was to print and distribute Hundreds of thousands of Bibles and New Testaments to the people who lived there.

After the Iron Curtain fell, there was an increased need to supply Christian literature. We began providing the affected countries with their own equipment so they could print what was needed for themselves. During this time, we purchased everything that was needed for 10 complete printing houses. This included offset presses, developing equipment, printing plates, cutting machines and staplers plus ink and paper for one year's production. We supplied printing houses to Poland, Romania, Russia, India, Latvia, Estonia and Albania. In Romania alone, 500,000 books were printed in three months (1993).

Throughout the 90s and beyond, these printers served the churches of Poland and Romania in particular, by supplying them with evangelical literature. Although it was not the primary goal, several families were able to support themselves as the print house became a means of self-help. One of the Printing Houses located in Oradea, Romania is still in operation today.

Upper image. Ulla Lindberg visiting one of the print houses that People to People International supplied.



Our Romanian contact helps with the loading of a printing press at our former office in Trană.

Hunger for God's word

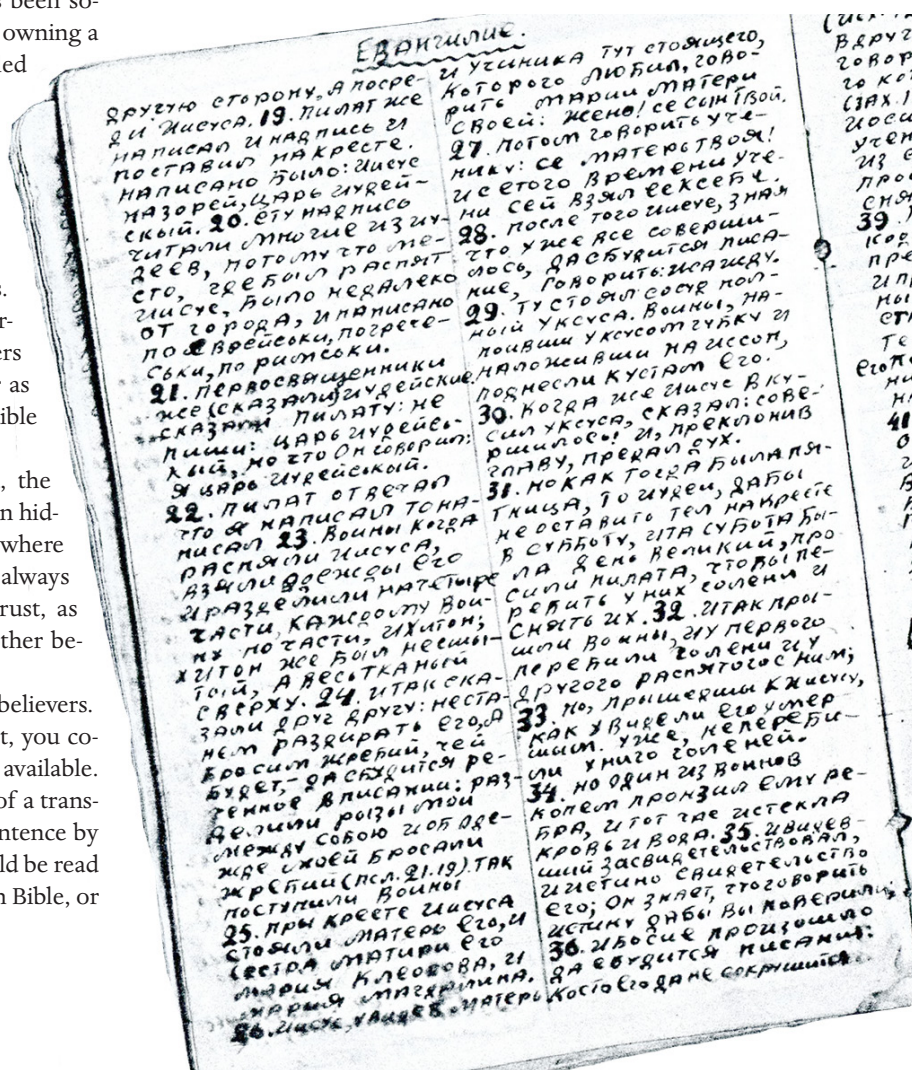
One of the main pillars of People to People International's mission, has been teaching pastors and other leaders the Word of God. God has been clear in His calling, that it was to the Christians behind the Iron Curtain that help should be directed.

The importance of owning one's own Bible has been greatly undervalued by those of us who live in the West. But for those who have suffered, been persecuted or served a prison sentence for their faith, God's Word has always been something of priceless value. During the communist era, owning a Bible was, in the vast majority of cases, something that led to imprisonment. In their quest to gain access to God's word, many were prepared to risk much. Many times, a prison sentence was no deterrent at all; Quite the opposite - it presented an opportunity to evangelize.

In both Poland and Romania, the secret police were very active in infiltrating the churches. Representatives of the secret police were present in many congregations. In Romania, there are examples of choir leaders who served in the church for many years, actually being informers for the secret police, the Securitate. People went as far as to "learn" to speak in tongues, in order to appear credible within a particular church.

During the years that these countries were closed, the Word of God had to be taught in secret. Pastors taught in hidden places, such as abandoned buildings, forests or anywhere the authorities would not search. However, there was always the risk of being discovered. No one knew who to trust, as denunciation was rife among neighbors, friends, and other believers.

The few Bibles that existed were shared among the believers. When you got the Bible in your hand, you didn't read it, you copied it. In this way, one always had a part of God's word available. The Bible on this page is an example of this. It is a copy of a transcribed Russian Bible. Letter by letter, word by word, sentence by sentence, the words were written down so that they could be read later on. After many hours of writing, you had your own Bible, or at least parts of it.



Looking back over 40 years

Pawel Cieslar was one of our contacts in Poland. Pawel also helped at the pastors' conferences that we organized. He was one of the key figures there during the 1980s and 90s.

Forty years - it's a long time. It's hard to believe how much is now behind us. It's good to look back and try to remember some of the things that happened in our life and what was accomplished for the Kingdom of God throughout these years. I especially remember the first few meetings with Oliver and Ulla Lindberg. They came to Poland to find out how they could help needy Christians in our country. We had a Communist Government and we had to be very careful how we met with Christians from the West. We knew we were being closely watched all the time and if we were not careful, we could be accused of being spies. But we appreciated the way Oliver and Ulla took great care in their approach, so that they would not create a problem for us. Oliver left his 30 liter containers of "Swedish water" in my garage and I kept them for several years. They were a testimony of God's guidance and protection in bringing Bibles and literature to Poland. But they also brought a question from Polish customs officers. They wanted to know why this man would bring water to Poland. His explanation was that he had stomach problems and Polish water was not so good for him, so he needed to bring Swedish water for cooking, drinking and washing. When Oliver and Ulla found out what was most needed in Poland, they started to organize such help and bring trucks of food, medicines, hospital beds, syringes, clothing, vitamins and other things.

One of the most urgent needs, was for good quality, gluten free flour for the children. This was not available in our country and so it was very much appreciated. This was actually the best way to open the doors to Poland, as it gave People to People International, and Oliver Lindberg a good name in the governme-



nt offices. This was also very helpful for the Churches here. We were granted permission to bring Bibles and Christian literature into the country. Oliver was introduced to high Government officials and awarded honors and thanks. We, as a church, also shared the goods with our neighbors, and it was very much appreciated. Even now, so many years later, our neighbors remember it and talk about it.

Oliver learned that pastors and leaders would appreciate some good, solid Bible teaching and so he got in touch with some excellent, well known Bible teachers from America and organized conferences for pastors and leaders. He sponsored the events so that pastors who were not able to cover the costs could attend. It was a great blessing for many pastors and churches in Poland. People to People also financially supported some pastors in need for some time.

At the beginning of their ministry in Poland, we did not have much Christian literature in Polish, so Oliver had the idea to copy cassette tapes with good ministry from well-known Bible teachers and make them available to pastors and leaders in Poland. They then sent the cassettes to many people from all over Poland who could understand English. This was so appreciated and helpful. In addition, PTPI provided some written teaching series, which we translated into Polish. Then, PTPI printed the material in Sweden and shipped it back to our country.

It has been a great personal privilege of mine, to get to know Oliver and Ulla, to work in the kingdom of God together and enjoy our friendship over many years. During the time of Martial Law in Poland, when the shops were empty and we had to use special food cards to buy what we could, we used to say: "In such time of need and crisis, it is good to have a Father in Heaven and Brother in the West".

*Pawel Cieslar, Olesnica, Poland
ex. pastor*

A baptismal service held somewhere in Eastern Europe.



We thank God for friends

Jan Cieslar was one of our contacts in Poland. He was a pastor that led one of the congregations that received aid shipments from People to People International over the years.

As we get older, we think back to how it was when we were young. We often reminisce nostalgically about the good old days, but it wasn't always better than it is now. At a time when everything in Poland was controlled by the government and the communist party, we, as Christians, had a little more freedom than other communist countries because we always had Bibles. There was a store with Bibles in Poland, but it was hard to get hold of them. Then, as a church, we were allowed to import Bibles if someone in the West could give them to us. At that time, 40 years ago, we had friends in Sweden.

It was Oliver Lindberg, the leader of People to People International, who started bringing shipments of Bibles that we could then distribute to thousands of Polish families. In addition, when martial law was imposed in Poland and our stores were empty and almost everything you needed could only be bought with special coupons, Oliver and Ulla, through their organization, began to bring shipments of food, medicines and other necessities to Poland. It not only helped us, but we in turn were able to help hospitals, orphanages, nursing homes and individuals. This helped us gain a good name with the people and the authorities in our cities.

Another very important help for the church in Poland was People to People International's conferences and seminars for pastors. They brought many well-known pastors and preachers from the West and taught us how to better serve the Polish church and our nation.

People to People International sponsored these conferences, as many Polish pastors could not afford to pay for themselves to attend. Every day I thank God for Oliver and Ulla, because what they did has been a great and lasting blessing. I also thank God that they were my close personal friends.

*Jan Cieslar
ex pastor*



Jan Cieslar ex pastor and one of our contacts in Poland.

Teaching to pastors and spiritual leaders

One of the most important aspects of People to People's history has been the provision of good teaching to pastors and leaders in Eastern Europe. This has happened by hosting pastors' conferences and sending recorded teaching.

In the vision that Oliver Lindberg received, which you can read about at the beginning of this booklet, God gave a clear mission; to provide pastors with teaching from the Word of God. As it was not always possible to travel, we sent teaching material on both VHS and cassette tape for a number of years.

In our office, we had such recordings in English. They had been sent to us by our various contacts. We had a few hundred video tapes and about four thousand cassettes! These were then duplicated and sent by post to our contacts in Eastern Europe. We sent around 200 shipments, six times a year. We could not be there physically but these recordings greatly contributed to the pastors' knowledge of God's Word.

At regular intervals, we then arranged on-site conferences in the majority of the countries worked in. In the early days, they had to be kept secret, but as each nation gained their religious freedom, they were made public. These conferences were always greatly appreciated by the pastors, who also brought their wives. We actually made this a requirement for signing up because we knew that husbands needed to share the pastoral burden with them. We believe this created a more open view of the pastor's role and has strengthened couples in their common vocation. In recent times, we have financially supported pastor training through Asist in Oradea, Romania.

The pictures taken during a conference in Poland in 2004, where pastors from all over south-western Poland participated.





Piotr Cieslar together with a good friend (behind Piotr) from Denmark, who participated as an instructor.

September 1977, Wisła, Poland

Piotr Cieslar is one of the pastors we supported financially in Poland, and one of the recipients of the shipments sent. He was also involved in the printing side of things.

I had just come back from Bible school in England and met Rune Brännström and his family who were on a mission trip with Oliver. Oliver knew very little English at the time, so he listened in silence to my conversation with Rune. That evening we attended a wedding in our church and I learned from Rune that Oliver was interested in mission trips and organizing humanitarian aid collections. At the time, Poland was experiencing an economic crisis, so many products were simply not available or rationed. We received food stamps for most of the food products. Meeting someone who was interested in helping us survive these difficult times sounded like a great idea to me.



Oliver gave me his address and asked me to write to him sometime. The only problem was the language barrier. If everything was OK, I would send him a postcard with a picture of nature. If something was wrong, I would send a postcard with a photo of an official government building. We exchanged a few short letters for a few years and then, when I got married, I sent a postcard from Opole with my new address.

In February of 1981, Oliver's wife Ulla came to visit us and from that moment, our friendship with Oliver and Ulla reached a new level, lasting over 30 years. Well, that's how it all started. The story of how Ulla and her friend came to Opole and found that they did not have my correct address, is another story. Oliver and Ulla had hearts full of love for God and for people they didn't know.

The result of our relationship was both spiritual and material. Oliver and Ulla through People to People International, sponsored a number of pastors. They also sponsored many pastors' conferences in our country, sent thousands of Bibles, prostheses for children without arms or legs and several hundred trucks of humanitarian aid for the needy. They containing food, shoes, clothes and medical equipment.

Another area where Oliver and Ulla made a real difference, was in the provision of gluten-free flour to children with celiac disease and of insulin and syringes for children with diabetes. Every month they brought shipments worth in excess of 10,000 Euros. Whenever they heard of children suffering in some way, they did everything they could to help. Because of their service to our people, made without any demand of reciprocation, Oliver and Ulla were always received with great honor. The Polish authorities even awarded them with various medals and diplomas.

At one point Oliver was asked by one of the Polish government officials, "Mr. Oliver, why do you do what you do with such zeal and sacrifice and never expect anything in return?" What a question! But he replied: "Because I am a Christian and Christian faith is about love. I have experienced God's love in my own life and this is my way of showing God's love in a practical way to other people, especially those who need it". Such a question always gave Oliver the opportunity to share the gospel. Because he proved to be trustworthy, people were ready to listen to his testimony of Christ's love.

Only heaven will reveal the true blessing that people in Poland received through this couple. They simply responded positively to God's call, to be an instrument of God's blessing to the needy. In a brief text, such as this, I cannot describe how grateful I am to God that He sent our friends, Oliver and Ulla, to us.

I am convinced that their works have gone to heaven before them and that their reward is already waiting for them. Their work was not in vain. Revelation 14:13.

Piotr Cieslar, Opole, Poland, May 2024

*One of the hundreds of thousands of children
who grew up in the state orphanages in Romania.*



The abandoned children

After more than 40 years of dictatorial rule, December 1989 saw Romania's governmental system fall. In a summary trial, their leader - Nicolae Ceausescu, was executed alongside his wife Elena. Shortly thereafter, the outside world became aware of the immense misery that prevailed in the state orphanages and that of the children who lived on the streets. A situation that the country's leaders caused through their family policy.

In December 1989, the struggle of the Romanian people against the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu reached its end. Since 1967, Ceausescu had been the country's head of state and the Romanian people had lived under oppression throughout this time. The people were guarded by the Securitate, the country's secret police, and denunciation among the population was widespread, including Christians.

When the country gained its political and religious freedom and the borders to the outside were opened, the whole world became aware of the seemingly endless misery in which the many children of this nation lived. The news was broadcast through the world's news outlets and many were touched by the terrible living conditions that existed.

Tens of thousands of children lived on the streets, in sewage systems and in substandard state institutions. During Ceausescu's time in power, the country's birth rate had greatly increased, because Romanian women were instructed to have at least five children. Contraceptives were essentially forbidden and only distributed to women who had already given birth to five children. Families that failed to follow the rules, were punished with high taxation. Giving birth to a child with special needs, whether physical, mental, or a combination of the two, was associated with great shame. Any child with a deformity or disability, was hidden - "kept" in earthen cellars, locked in closets, never to be seen by the outside world. And here they stayed, forgotten.

When the news about these children reached Sweden, many people acted. The following years saw major efforts to make a difference in Romania. Many Swedish families came to adopt Romanian children. A great deal of aid was supplied by many organizations that wanted to help. Several organizations were founded in the country, with the aim of providing for the needs of children in particular. For example, Lars and Linda Hörnberg founded in 1990 Caminul Felix ("Happy Home"). This organization was

birthed to fundamentally reform the work being done amongst these vulnerable and marginalized children.

Many other organizations have come and gone since then and the situation has greatly improved. However, despite the fact that most state orphanages were closed, many children are still abandoned, neglected, orphaned and abused to this day. There are several underlying reasons for this; Social misery, unemployment, alcoholism, abuse and crime, are all strong contributing factors. And so the problems persist.

Since 1995, People to People International has, in various ways, supported their amazing work in Oradea. On two particular occasions, with God's help, we were able to respond to two urgent needs that have since been recognised as decisive moments in the development of Caminul Felix. The first was the purchase of a large plot of farm land in Santandrei, Oradea. This became the site of 10 family homes known as - "Caminul Felix Village 2". These homes were filled with children and remain so to this day. The second was the supply and construction of a home for young adults called "The Teenager House". It contained 14 apartments and was completed around the year 2000.



The house gives young adults a way forward after the government ruled that those over 18 years of age, must leave home and become independent.

Relief transports

After Eastern Europe opened up, extensive aid work began. During the 1980s and 90s, we sent approximately 350 trucks of emergency aid to different countries.

In the book 'My journey – from rascal to missionary', Oliver Lindberg writes about how these aid transports became an increasingly large part of People to People International's work, time and commitment.

Oliver writes:

"Over a period of 10-15 years through the 1980's and 90's, we were able to send out hundreds of trucks containing emergency aid. Some travelled to Romania, Ukraine and the Soviet Union, while others went exclusively to Poland. Each shipment contained 80 cubic meters of essential items. We had an incredible advantage when it came to our transportation; There were many shipments from Poland to Sweden during these years and we discovered that in most cases, the trucks returned to Poland empty. So we contacted the Swedish freight forwarder, the result of which was that we were able to use the lorries' return journeys to ship our aid to Poland, at a cost of just 30 Euros per lorry! This was the freight forwarder's cost. They even allowed to us to dictate the destination of each lorry in Poland.

The transports typically contained food, clothes, hospital supplies & beds, dental equipment, school desks, furniture and playground equipment to name a few. We always let the local evangelical congregations stand as recipients of the transports. Because of this, they gained great favor with the authorities. The congregations then distributed the aid to the Polish people as needed. It opened doors for them and us, to present the gospel."





We always let the local evangelical congregations stand as recipients of the transports. Because of this they gained great favor with the authorities.



A long-lasting friendship

Pastor Sam Smucker is the founder of Worship Center in Pennsylvania, USA. This friendship with both the congregation and Pastor Sam, has meant a lot over the years. Here, Pastor Sam shares some of those memories.

I was introduced to Oliver & Ulla Lindberg in 1983 by my cousin, Sam Smucker. Sherlyn and I had an immediate heart to heart connection with Oliver & Ulla and their family. We invited them to visit us in Lancaster County, PA. in the U.S. We also invited them to become missionaries of our church - Worship Center. We visited each other's homes many times over the years. Our friendship became a wonderful relationship that has lasted for 40 years. We are forever grateful for the impact the Lindberg family has had on our lives and the life of the Worship Center church family.



Oliver & Ulla's compassion for hurting people touched our hearts deeply. That deep compassion helped us as a congregation to have a mission's mindset and have a love for the nations of the world. Oliver's visionary approach to life and ministry inspired us to reach beyond our church walls and set our sights on bringing hope, help, and healing to the nations. As a church we were inspired to take steps of faith and reach into new areas of the world.

Oliver and I traveled to Poland, Romania and several other nations in that region of the world. We conducted pastor's Conferences and transported bibles to those who didn't have them. We also took many truckloads of materials for those in need. I have many wonderful memories of our travels together. On one such trip we took a night ferry from Sweden to Poland. We had a big chest of bibles in our vehicle and wondered how we would get them into Poland. Oliver noticed that I had a new pair of jeans. He said, "I sense The Holy Spirit is saying that you should put those jeans on top of the clothes in your suitcase". So I folded the pair of jeans and put them on top of my clothes so that when I

opened the suitcase the jeans were the first thing you would see. When we got to the checkpoint the officer rather roughly told me to open my suitcase. When I opened the suitcase, he saw the pair of jeans and wondered what they were. I told him they were a new pair of jeans and asked him if he wanted them. He said he wanted them, so I gave him the jeans and he motioned us to go through the checkpoint. He never looked inside our vehicle where all the bibles were. When we arrived at the pastor's conference the pastors were very happy to receive the bibles for themselves and for the people of their churches. Some of the pastors and many of the people, had never had a Bible. This was a major part of Oliver's vision. It gave him great joy to put the Word of God into the hands of people. Many such trips and experiences continued to leave a mark on my life and the life of our congregation.

When Oliver went home to be with the Lord, we were very saddened and miss him greatly. We are glad Oliver is in our future and we will be reunited with him. We are glad Oliver and Ulla's son Jorgen & Maria are continuing this ministry reaching out to the nations with the love of Jesus Christ. As this ministry reaches into the future and takes steps of faith to continue to fulfill the vision God has given, many more people will receive hope, help, and healing in Jesus' Name. Oliver is cheering you on from the grandstands of heaven. Sherlyn and I pray that People to People International, will continue to fulfill its assignment from God with Jorgen and Maria leading the ministry.

Sam Smucker
Pastor



*One of the Bible school's former students,
Lenora Leivi, trying out the new studio equipment.*

Eastern European Bible College

Since 2007, People to People International has supported the Eastern European Bible College with various projects. We have, amongst other things, built and partly paid for two radio studios. Here is an overview of the work we have done over the years.

God's Word can be spread in many different ways. One of these ways is through media, and in particular the timeless medium of radio. Over the years, many young people have received their theological and media training at this college. Many of the college's former students are today out on the mission field, serving in different capacities. The school has also trained media students, many of which work in this field in various ways today.

On a few occasions, People to People International donated technical equipment for general use in the school. But on two particular occasions, we donated equipment to be used at the Bible School's two radio studios, one, a traditional recording studio, the other, a broadcasting studio. They are used to produce radio programs transmitted via the Internet and for the production of video and other social media formats, including podcast recording.

For several years, Jörgen Lindberg and Craciun Derecichei taught sound technology at the school too. The purpose of the training was to equip church sound technicians with skills that will improve their mixing and production output at the fellowship they attended.

It's both interesting and inspiring to follow the school's work as it changes over time. Being able to spread the gospel in a relevant way, at a particular time, is so incredibly important! The work the school does is significant for the times in which we live today.

Top image: The first studio built, was funded by People to People International.



A few years later, studio no. 2 was built. The equipment needed was donated by Brunnsparkskyrkan in Tranås, Sweden.

Blaj, Romania. Pastor Trajan Caputa and Oliver Lindberg during a service on a cold morning in February 1990. Behind them a wall of bricks from the church demolished by the authorities.



Church Constructions in Eastern Europe

Over the years, People to People International has partially, or fully covered the cost of the construction of church premises, predominantly in Romania, but also in Kazan in southern Russia.

Every occasion is unique but each and every time, God has provided the finances to build these houses of worship. We could go into detail about each of them, but that would simply take up too much space in this booklet. Nevertheless, we were incredibly happy each and every time such a church building was constructed. There has, of course, also been much joy among the recipients.

One story that stands out a little from the others, took place in the city of Blaj (pronounced Blash) in Romania. We received an appeal for help and thanks to a joint effort, we were able to financially assist in the construction of the church. Two previous attempts to construct the building, resulted in the authorities demolishing their progress with bulldozers. At the time, Trajan Caputa was pastor of the congregation.

In the picture on the left, Oliver Lindberg and pastor Trajan Caputa (far right) stand at an outdoor service on the site where their church once stood. Many had gathered on the occasion and during the service, Oliver experienced something special; he described how the bricks from the razed church behind him, began to "speak". They said - "build us up again". Shortly afterwards, the reconstruction of the Church began. At this, the third attempt, the authorities allowed the church building to remain. It still stands today as the Emanuel Baptist church.

We have also been involved in the construction of other church premises; Filadelfia and Tabor in Oradea and Speranta in Petru Groza, now Stej have all benefitted from our help. In recent years, we have assisted in the construction of a building in Spinus, an extension in Les and the provision of a sound system in a church in Batar. A Church has also been constructed in Bashkortostan, Kazan in southern Russia with financial assistance from People to People International.



Top picture: Petru Groza, now Stei. The picture below is from Spinus, which today is the only evangelical congregation in the town. Both are in Romania.



Poland. Orthopedist Tage Plym is adjusting a prosthetic arm on a little girl.

Help for the disabled

Since the start 1984, People to People International has had the privilege of being able to help people in need with the help of our partners. The provision of prostheses to disabled people, is very much a part of this work.

It started in Poland. Through our partners there, we were made aware of those in need of a prostheses. Historically, the countries in Eastern Europe have not prioritized helping people with such challenges and their healthcare systems have not been as developed as they are in Western Europe. Oftentimes, people with such physical needs have been pushed aside and forgotten. They have been considered both a shame and a burden to society.

Over the years, thanks to good contacts in the West, we have been able to provide people of all ages with prostheses in all their forms. A large part of this work was carried out by the orthopedist Tage Plym, whom we have come to know very well. For a number of years, he traveled with us in Poland to meet this need. He took cast molds in plaster there, then manufactured the prostheses in Sweden. He then traveled back to adjust each prosthesis as needed. Through this great work, many people's dignity and productivity was restored. They enjoyed a quality of life that was previously unknown to them.

In Romania, this work has continued in recent years. Through great contacts at TheraNova, one of Eastern Europe's most advanced orthopedic clinics for testing and fabrication of prostheses, we have been able to continue this work. For several years, we have been privileged to help several young people experience a more fulfilled existence. Thanks to their prosthesis, they have been able to live a normal life. Take a look at the pictures, both here and on the following page. They show some of those who have benefitted from a prosthesis through financial help from People to People International.



Andrea, Tudor, Daniel and Alex have received help.



Unuti received a prosthetic arm.



Work among the Roma

One of the areas in which People to People International has tried to make a difference is in working with Eastern Europe's Roma population. The Roma are Europe's largest minority. They can be found in every European country, even within Scandinavia. There are around 11 million Roma in Europe.

The Roma originally came to Europe from India, probably in the 11th century. In the 14th century, many of them served in the Ottoman Empire's army, fighting countries in Western Europe. Because of their professional skills in leather and metalworking, they were permitted to serve. When the Ottoman Empire fell, many Roma remained in the European countries they were serving in at the time. After Romania abolished slavery in 1860, there came a large wave of migrant Roma.

Without a homeland of their own, the Roma have often been subject to marginalization and antiziganism. In recent years, the Roma have become a part of our everyday life.

Approximately 2.5 million Roma live in Romania today. They are part of the cityscape, but often live a vulnerable and marginalized life. Analphabetism is widespread. About 75% of the Roma who grow up there are illiterate, compared to just 5% for other Romanians. Approximately 90% of the Roma live below the UN poverty line compared to just 17% for the rest of Europe. Only one in five Roma children attends school regularly. A terrible reality.

People to People International has been active in two different contexts; We have contributed towards the improvement of living conditions for Roma in the town of Tinca, via Pastor Florin Popa. Here there is a Roma community of several thousand. We also regularly financially support the organization Children of Promise in Oradea. They are actively working to improve literacy among Roma children, at the same time as preserving their cultural heritage. The work they do is built on Christian values.

Roma children who come to Children of Promise. Here they get help with their homework, play computer games, learn to play an instrument and memorize Bible verses.







40 years of relief work

One of the pastors who worked together with People to People International for the majority of its existence, is Dan Mitra, Romania. Here he writes about his experiences and what the help has meant.

The first time I met Oliver Lindberg was in February 1990, just two months after the Romanian revolution. He came to visit our congregation in Oradea together with another brother and I was their interpreter. By this time, they came openly but prior to this, they had visited secretly for several years, bringing Christian literature and money to build churches. Oliver was so full of compassion and wanted to share all he had with his brothers and sisters, who were deprived by the communist regime of all the basics needed to live.



Our situation then was similar to that of Cuba, so he needed a "bridgehead" in Oradea; someone trustworthy who could receive and, with fairness, distribute the help he was about to send. This bridgehead became the newly established Pentecostal Missionary Society which provided a legal umbrella for donations, storage, interpretation, transportation and distribution of food, clothing, cleaning equipment and even medical supplies for hospitals.

I quit my job as an electrician, gave up a good salary and started helping with this work, that is, to live by faith and take on completely new tasks. For me, that meant translating, publishing, printing, unloading aid shipments, developing fair rules for their distribution and rules for correspondence Bible courses. I became the point of contact for foreign visitors who wanted to preach, teach or organize conferences.

People to People International helped us in many areas. We became friends with hospitals, orphanages and schools because of the material donated there. But most of all, they helped with a huge need; to supply food, clothes, milk powder, diapers and shoes for children and adults. Why do I say a huge need? Because in addition to the lack of domestic production of these items, there was incredible inflation during the 10 years that followed the revolution. This meant that the value of our currency dropped dramatically.

In 1992, I remember that Oliver invited my wife Maria and me

to a conference in Sweden. It cost me a month's salary to buy a new pair of shoes! At that time, we had two children and Maria had to go back to work so that we had enough to live on. But in January 1996, People to People International offered us monthly financial support, so that Maria could stay at home with the children, while I was engaged full-time in the work.

At the time, I was a presenter on the radio channel Voice of the Gospel here in Oradea. We would broadcast 24 hours a day without a program bank. This meant we had to produce continuously in order to broadcast. I therefore had to work a lot of extra hours. I received the promised salary from the Radio but inflation shrank it heavily. If I hadn't had the support from People to People International, I don't know how we would have managed.

After I left the radio, I started a brand new service with the drama "The Gates of Heaven and the Flames of Hell". This pioneer work meant two weeks a month away from my family, for 4 years. Having two small children at home, People to People International's help met a huge need. Then, for 13 years, I worked with my brother Samuil at a day center for Roma children. Once again, the help from People to People International was a lifesaver for us.

In 2015, I started a pastoral ministry and to my surprise, a Christian businessman offered me a salary in his company, to be a kind of "fake" consultant. The idea was simply to help me out financially. The congregation was in his village, so it made sense. I accepted his offer, but the following night I could hear the voice of God as He forbade me to accept the offer. I went back to the businessman, thanked him for his offer and explained that my spirit urged me to decline. I learnt from other pastors that whoever pays, decides the rules. During almost 10 years of serving as a pastor, I have clearly seen how God has personally blessed us. I feel it is not good to be financially dependent on the person I serve. I attribute that blessing to People to People International, my faithful partner in various evangelical works that I was a part of. It was God who orchestrated different sources of income for us every month, according to our needs. But I must admit that every month is a miracle in this regard.

Dan Mitra, pastor



The Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova is sandwiched between Romania and Ukraine on the far edge of Europe. Moldova is a beautiful country, but also Europe's poorest. Since June 2010, People to People International has been ministering there.

The Republic of Moldova is a small country, sandwiched between Romania in the west and Ukraine in the east. It is only a day's travel from us. This tucked away country is not talked or written about much in the media. The population is made up of ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Romanians, Bulgarians and, in the south, the minority Gagauz people. They live in an area the size of the island of Mauritius. Moldova has a population of approximately 3.3 million (2024), but due to the country's economic situation, corruption and general mismanagement, over a number of years, it has lost a quarter of its population. With the promise of a better future, many Moldovans have taken the decision to live and work in other countries. Because of this, they now have the highest rate of depopulation in all of Europe; 40-50,000 inhabitants aged 34 on average, choose to leave annually. Moldova is the only country in Europe with a negative population trend (2024).

Moldova is dependent on imports of both electricity and natural gas because it doesn't produce any of its own. Up until now, the nation has predominantly imported Russian gas from Ukraine, however infrastructure is currently being built which will allow for the importation of gas and electricity from Romania. This will reduce its dependence on Russian energy and bring it into closer relationship with the EU and Western Europe.

Today, 2024, the median salary in Moldova is around 600€ per month. On average, pensioners receive about 220€ a month. Since the 2020-22 pandemic, the country has been hit by high inflation, largely due to unrest in the immediate area. Moldova is also fighting a battle against corruption and economic mismanagement. However, in recent years progress has been made to address these issues. Moldova is, per capita, one of the world's largest wine exporters. Agriculture supports much of the country's economy.

In 2007, God spoke to People to People International about Moldova. Three years later, we visited the country for the first

time. Since then, in collaboration with the local Pentecostal church and the Foundation, A Loaf of Bread A Day, we've supported several social and humanitarian efforts in Glodeni, a city in the northwest of the country with approximately 10,000 inhabitants. The results of poverty and hunger are very evident here.

These projects aim to provide the most vulnerable people with daily bread. The bread is baked weekly, then distributed free of charge. Today, in 2024, approx. 150-200 people receive this bread. In this nation many go hungry, sometimes for days at a time. This bread is essential. It is life-saving. Without it, many would soon perish.

When we visited Glodeni, we saw up close the suffering many people experience. Hardship in some places is widespread and severe and people receive limited help from the authorities. Whether children, adults, or those suffering from physical and mental disabilities, the story is the same. Pastor Igor Lazar and his wife, Svetlana, are part of the few doing what they can, to alleviate this need.

To complement the distribution of bread, People to People International has also started a small-scale food package project. Currently, around 30 families receive them and we know that both are vitally important.

People to People International supports the Church in its other areas of ministry too; For example, Every day, approximately 15 orphans come to the church to eat. Then, there is an after school club organized by the Church, where many young people attend. We also support a yearly summer camp, where around 100 children of varying ages attend for a few days.

We participate in other humanitarian efforts, as and when they come our way. The need is great and many need help. It is not always possible to help everyone, but with the resources we have at our disposal, we do what we can to alleviate the distress and suffering people live with.



Svetlana Lazar, (pastor Igor's wife), together with a woman who has just received a loaf of bread.

Pastor Igor Lazar hands out bread after a church service.



A loaf of bread a day

The project - A loaf of Bread a Day, was started in 2002 through the initiative of Romanian pastor - Ilie Jolta. It was in direct response to the widespread hunger that prevailed in Glodeni, Moldova. In the first year, the number who received a single loaf of bread, grew to 50. Today. In 2024, approx. 200 people receive daily bread.



After our initial visit in 2010, People to People International decided that we wanted to support the work in Glodeni. During the summer months of 2010, we collected approximately 16,000€ for the purchase of bakery equipment which was subsequently installed in a building adjacent to the church. The existing equipment was very old and outdated. Since then, we have supported this project financially.

Every week, the bread is baked and distributed to those attending the church services. But the team also visits the sick and elderly, supplying them with bread in their homes. These home visits have become increasingly important for the recipients, but the societal impact the church is having through this ministry is even greater.

Igor and Svetlana Lazar, who lead the work, have been able to cultivate meaningful relationships with those they visit, simply by ministering into their lives. They meet various needs, in addition to the distribution of food parcels and bread.

The result is that new people have started attending various church services. Those previously closed to the gospel, have opened their hearts, receiving salvation and being baptized. This is a congregation that now better meets the social needs of those around them. The church has become a central point in many people's daily lives.



The purchased proofing and baking ovens. The dough kneader is a great blessing, as the dough was previously kneaded by hand.

With gentle hands, the smaller buns are kneaded before they are placed in molds for baking.



VBS & Summer Camps

Every summer since 2011, the Church in Glodeni, Moldova has organized various activities, including a multi-age summer camp for the children in their community. These have been greatly appreciated by the children and families alike.

After getting involved with the Church in Glodeni, pastor Igor asked if we would consider helping to finance and organize summer camps for the children of the city. So we did this for the first time in the summer of 2011. Approximately 35 children came to that first camp and we have made financial provision every year since then, for these children to attend. This is one of the most popular summer activities in the city. Over the years, the number of children signing up has grown. Today, these camps gather around a hundred children. Each summer we aim to organise two camps, one for the younger children and one for teenagers. Occasionally a camp is held in other locations with other participating churches. When this happens, the numbers are even greater.

For a number of years, we have benefitted from committed leaders who have been responsible for the content of these camps. This is thanks to the commitment of the congregation at Worship Center in Lancaster PA, USA,

It's easy to observe the vital importance of these camps, not only for the families and children, but for the church congregation. Summer is a difficult time for many of the children. The lack of routine means many can drift. The dangers are great and it's easy for these youngsters to become vulnerable to dark and destructive forces. The vast majority come from socially disadvantaged families who often struggle to meet their needs, so we make sure the children go home with a full stomach.

The summer camps have also meant a big change for the Church. They have come into contact with many families who otherwise might never have heard the gospel. The wonderful news is that several families have found Christ, become part of the Church and been baptized. For this we are extremely grateful. All of the above considered, it's easy to see why these camps play such an important role in the lives of so many.



Group picture from one of the many summer camps.



In addition to breakfast and lunch, the children are also provided with a hot dinner before the end of the day.



Distribution of food packages

On the previous page, we talked about the distribution of bread in the city of Glodeni, Moldova. A food package project is also underway out of the same Church and is provided free of charge to its recipients. People to People International is involved with this project and provides financial support.

The distribution of bread started in 2002, long before People to People International came into the picture. Pastor Ilie Jolta, from Oradea, Romania introduced us to Pastor Igor in Moldova. A short time after that, we visited for the first time and felt that there was a missing dimension in this relief work. Sure, people were helped and their stomachs were filled, but there was no natural way of getting to know the people who received the bread. Maybe God wanted to do something more?

In 2011, after visiting the country a couple more times, God began to speak. We felt that we should expand the work to include the distribution of food packages to those in greatest need. And so the work began. A typical delivery would consist of a number of bags containing basic food items and other useful things. Many of residents whom we visit, have no refrigerator, so the range can be somewhat limited, but the contents have been chosen to meet particular needs. In the picture here, you can see an example of what these bags would typically contain. This is also adjusted according to the season.

With tentative steps, a completely new chapter in the Church's history began; to minister to people in their homes. Little did we know how this would impact the future. But God did!

On my first visit in 2010, it seemed that the congregation lived a stagnant existence, quite marginalized by their community. They had just a handful of members, many of them elderly. As more visits were conducted, we discovered the tremendous need that existed and therefore decided to visit more homes. We did this and as a result, more families came into contact with the Church.

At this point, it should be noted that the authorities did nothing or very little to help the community in this way and this only added to the need. Soon thereafter we noticed a change; as we offered prayer and reassurance regarding the thing that was troubling

them, people began to share their worries and concerns. Confidence slowly grew in Pastor Igor and Svetlana Lazar, who were responsible for most of the work. Invitations were extended for church events and sure enough, there were those who found the courage to dare attend one of the meetings or Sunday services.

At first it was mostly older people, but soon, families with children also started visiting the Church. Very quickly, other needs arose, as a result of the numbers visiting the church, but thanks to this project, the congregation has grown. There is now a lively children and youth work and both residents and politicians hold the congregation in high regard today.

Pastor Igor Lazar



Pastor Igor Lazar shows what a food package typically looks like.



Times of God's touch

Pastor Igor Lazar writes about the work in Glodeni and what 14 years of collaboration with People to People International has meant. In light of what God has done, they are immensely grateful.

As I recount the events of the past, I would summarize them like this:

In Glodeni, Moldova, on December 10th, 2000, Holy Trinity Church was consecrated, and commenced its ministry. At the beginning, our congregation numbered just ten people, but they were praying for a spiritual awakening among the people living in the city. Two years later, in 2002, we received a call from the Lord. He told us: "You cannot offer the gospel to the hungry and the poor, without first giving them something to eat". So, that very year, we started visiting people's homes to distribute bread. Shortly afterwards, the first electric baking oven was purchased for us. This was a pivotal moment!

Very few of the people we visited, attended the church, so we prayed that God would touch the hearts of the poor and vulnerable in our city. God answered, and in the decade that followed, we witnessed the hand of God at work through a number of projects.



Igor & Svetlana Lazar.

we received an answer to prayer that would change everything. People to People International wanted to partner with our ministry, and we saw an immediate change! What was once weak and dying, was coming to life!

In 2011, we added extra packages to our bread program, thirty in all. Following that, we started a day center, Bible studies and camps for the children, all of which demonstrated the love of God in practical, meaningful ways. People started attending the church and the building was no longer deserted.

Thanks to the help and support of People to People International, we have had the joy of seeing lives changed, needs met, and people coming to faith in Jesus and being baptised.

For 14 years, this has been our experience, and it all started as we followed the call to give just a Loaf of Bread a Day, to those around us.

The effect of People to People International's partnership and commitment is still felt today; The people of Glodeni see and hear about how God is involved in people's lives through the social projects we manage. Today, we have a congregation of 40 members, but around 100 people attend our church activities regularly.

We thank God for the impact that People to People International has had over the years. May God continue to have mercy on the needy of our city.

Igor Lazar, pastor

When God comes, change happens!

When we started our ministry, people were cold hearted, indifferent and without hope or a future. The healthy became sick and the poor, poorer. Many were in debt, simply by trying to make ends meet. They were worn out. Burdened. But, one day in 2010,



The living conditions for many people, especially the elderly, have been very difficult. Many have been forced to live in substandard housing. The woman in the picture lived in this dilapidated house.

Assistance to individuals

Through our work in Moldova and Romania, it has also been important to help individuals who have found themselves in very difficult situations. The human suffering we have witnessed has been great and by God's grace we have been able to contribute to meeting these dear people's needs.

Many vulnerable people live very difficult lives and they are difficult for various reasons. Jesus' own words - "...whatever you have done to one of the least of these, my brothers..." have been key in the efforts we have made. On occasion, we have sadly arrived too late to make a difference. But importantly, we always did our best to bring about change.

Valentina was one such example of this. We got to know about her in 2019 when she was seriously ill with cervical cancer. She didn't have the money to pay for her health insurance, so the health care system couldn't help her. So we resolved all the practical issues and she started treatment. Unfortunately, the help we could offer came far too late and she did not survive. But in the aftermath of her passing, we were able to help her two daughters, Anastasia and Sneshana. They are both now married, have started families of their own and are living good lives together with their respective families. In addition, we have also been able to help a disabled man named, Vladislav, with a greatly needed leg prosthesis.



Top image: Valentina with her three children; Sneshana, Vova and Anastasia and a good friend of the family, Ivan, who after Valentina's death moved in and took care of the children.



Bottom image. Valentina together with Svetlana Lazar in Chisinau in connection with one of the treatments.

With an eye to the future

Our hope is that through this anniversary booklet, we have conveyed part of what People to People International has been able to achieve with God's help, during its 40 years of ministry. It was God who gave the initial vision for what People to People International should do, and that vision is still the basis for the work we do today.

We believe that there is much left to do; Our mission is not yet complete. We look forward with great anticipation to what God wants to do in the years that lie ahead. Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. It means a lot to us! We appreciate you allowing us to share just a little of what we've been a part of over the years.

We still want to be involved in making this world a better place. Together with our partners, we want to continue to preach the Gospel to those who have not yet heard about what Jesus can do. We would like to thank those of you who have supported People to People International over the years. Your dedication and monetary gifts are what has made it all possible. Thank you!



”When Ulla and I on December 1, were faced with our life’s most important, but also the most difficult decision, to establish People to People International, we felt like the disciples probably did when they faced Jesus’ request to supply a large crowd of people with food, 5000 men aside from women and children. What did they have? Well, it was not much, five loaves of bread and two fish. We had the same sense of anticipation of a Godly miracle the day we went to our empty office space in Tranås.”

Excerpt from the book
My journey - from rascal to Missionary



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