

HUNGARY, SERBIA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO, CROATIA

From October 16-28 an HQ delegation (Ron and Dervilla Ward, David and Joy Kim) visited Hungary and some nations of former Yugoslavia: Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia. The visit was hosted by Andrew and Sarah Kim (Hungary). It began with an Autumn Bible Conference in Hungary (Oct. 18-20) and concluded with a weekend stay in Croatia for a special Sunday worship service (Oct. 26-27). During the six days between events, the delegation visited UBF missionaries and leaders in Serbia and Croatia, and stopped by Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, which do not have UBF missionaries. The six journey team members traveled together by van, covering a distance of more than 2,000 kilometers, going through six separate border crossings. In most of the places we visited, it was possible to communicate effectively in English. The U.S. State Department had issued a level two warning to exercise caution in Serbia and Bosnia. This encouraged us to pray more and to go by faith in God. We also deeply appreciated being led by Andrew Kim, a seasoned travel guide. By God's grace, we did not encounter any threats or dangers; the people were kind and welcoming.



HQ Team Arrival in Budapest, Greeted by Andrew & Sarah Kim

The Hungary UBF Autumn Bible Conference was held in Keckemet, Hungary. The conference title was, "By His Wounds." About 20 people attended. The first and last messages were about Jesus' healings: a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years, and a man with a shriveled hand. In between was the message of Jesus' cross from Isaiah 53. The words of God planted faith in Jesus who heals, and the hope that healed people can become influential servants of God. It was a fitting program for Hungary UBF, which prays to reach out to wounded young souls with the message of Jesus' grace, and to raise disciples of Jesus.



Arrival at the Hungary UBF Center
In back: Hak-yung, Rebecca Jo, Grace Kim

UBF mission in Hungary began when Sarah Kim heard God’s call through Dr. Samuel Lee’s message at the 1991 World Mission Report. She went to Yugoslavia as a missionary as war was breaking out. Later, she married Andrew Kim, who joined her. Andrew is indeed a man of faith who steps out boldly to offer his “five loaves and two fish” to Jesus. A few years later, they moved to Hungary where they have served for the last 23 years. Their two daughters, Grace and Nada, have grown well and fully participate in their ministry. Grace served as conference coordinator and Nada delivered the main message from Isaiah 53. This family is a source of blessing to Hungary and to the scattered house churches in Balkan Europe.

God has blessed Hungary UBF with good coworkers: Josephine An and her daughter Hannah, James and Naomi Kim, and their sons Daniel and Elia, newlyweds Samuel and Rebecca Jo, Eduardo — a student missionary from Venezuela — and Ming, a Chinese businessman and a long time Bible student of M. Andrew Kim. Samuel Jo delivered the first message on John 5:1-15, which moved the hearts of attendants. Joy Kim and I each led group Bible studies; Dervilla shared her life testimony; David Kim delivered a lecture on the Spirituality of the Cross. The American team sang “Amazing Grace”, and I delivered the final message titled, “Here Is My Servant (A bruised reed he will not break).” We all learned a joyful Hungarian dance led by Naomi Kim. Hungary UBF prays for each leader to teach the Bible to one person, and for the raising of 12 disciples of Jesus among Hungarian students. May God bless Hungary through the prayer and faith and beautiful coworking of his servants.



Hungary’s New Gens: Hak-yung, Samuel Jo, Nada Kim, Grace Kim, Rebecca Jo



Samuel’s gracious message



Hungarian dance performance

After the conference, our journey team traveled from Budapest to Belgrade, Serbia. Our point was to visit the house church of Abraham and Deborah Park. They have four children: Joanna (14), Isaac (11), Deborah (8) and David (6). Three months ago, they moved from Nis in southern Serbia, following the termination of Deborah's job. By God's grace, she found a new job at Hankook Tires in Belgrade. Their determination to stay in their mission field was inspiring. They were very happy to receive our journey team in their home and prepared a delicious dinner with authentic Serbian food, as well as rice and kimchi. David Kim led a study of Isaiah 40 in Korean, and God's word comforted them. We also celebrated holy communion and prayed together. The Lord was present with us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Abraham prays to study Genesis deeply, to meet the God of Genesis personally, and to prepare life-giving Sunday messages. Deborah prays for success in her new job and for her Serbian Bible students. They pray for their children to adjust well to the new environment and especially for Joanna to enter a good high school. As we experienced the reality of this family's daily life we could understand that they feel lonely and need our prayer support. At the same time, we deeply respect them, for they are the light of Christ in Belgrade and the Lord enables them to stand by his power and grace.



Prayer for Serbian students with Abraham Park



M. Deborah, Isaac (11), Deborah (8), Joanna (14), M. Abraham, David (6)

After leaving Serbia, we crossed through Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is a nation of about four million people of mixed ethnicities and religions: 51% Muslim, 31% Serbian Orthodox, and 15% Catholic. Upon entering each village, we soon noted either a mosque with a crescent on top, or a church with a cross on top. Accordingly, the entire village would be identified as Muslim or Christian. My most impressive memory of this nation was formed in the city of Sarajevo. It is a beautiful city, sometimes called the Jerusalem of the Balkans. Within a single neighborhood there is a mosque, an Eastern Orthodox church, a Catholic church and a Jewish synagogue.



Proclaiming Jesus' victory In downtown Sarajevo

As former Yugoslavia was collapsing, Sarajevo came under siege in 1992. Lasting for over three years, it was the longest siege of a capital city in modern history. From the high ground surrounding the city, there was constant shelling and gunfire. Many Bosnians were killed and their women violated. It is one of the three instances of genocide since WWII that is officially recognized by the UN. Thirty years later, there are still many signs of the violence which was done to this city — buildings riddled with bullet holes and the craters left by bombs. More seriously, there are scars in the hearts of Bosnian people. The weakness of the economy was evident through the exchange rate; it seemed that everything was half price when using U.S. dollars. The people of Sarajevo have suffered a great deal. They have been oppressed. As I surveyed the city, Jesus' word came to my mind, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3). I believe Sarajevo is ripe for a season of Christ. It is time to preach the gospel and to demonstrate the love of God as witnesses of Christ. I earnestly pray that God may raise and send missionaries to Sarajevo.

From Bosnia-Herzegovina, we forayed into Montenegro and then traveled up the coast of Croatia. In the city of Split, we were welcomed by Andreii and Halyna Severyn and their sons Darii, Zakharii and Levii. Andreii is from Kiev and Halyna is from Odessa, both in Ukraine. They married by faith and served in Kiev UBF as a faithful house church. When the war broke out in 2022, Andreii was able to transfer his tech job to Split. They have adjusted well and participate in a local church, where they teach the Bible in Ukrainian to other refugees. Halyna prepared a remarkable dinner. Afterward, Dervilla and I had a Bible study on Isaiah 53 with Andreii and Halyna. It was a most blessed time of spiritual fellowship, filled with the grace of Jesus. The following Sunday, this family joined Croatia's Sunday worship service online. They are a very precious house church and we must pray for them and continue to encourage them.



With Andreii, Haylena, Darii, Zakharii and Levii

Our final destination was Zagreb, Croatia, where there is a beautiful UBF ministry. Joseph and Maria Bae have served in Zagreb for the last 16 years, together with their daughter Rebecca (22) and son Samuel (20). They are joined by Ezekiel and Grace Lee and their son Hak-Je (16), and Timothy Seo — wife Hannah has been in Korea due to health issues. There is an older Croatian woman named Sarah Yassenka who has become part of their spiritual family. She serves the members with love and is also cared for by them. A Croatian man, Yuri, also participates. Joseph Bae’s prayer topic is to prepare Bible study material and messages on the whole Bible in the Croatian language and to leave this for the next generation. He believes the next generation will do greater work than their parents have done.



Prayer at Zagreb University, which has 70,000 students



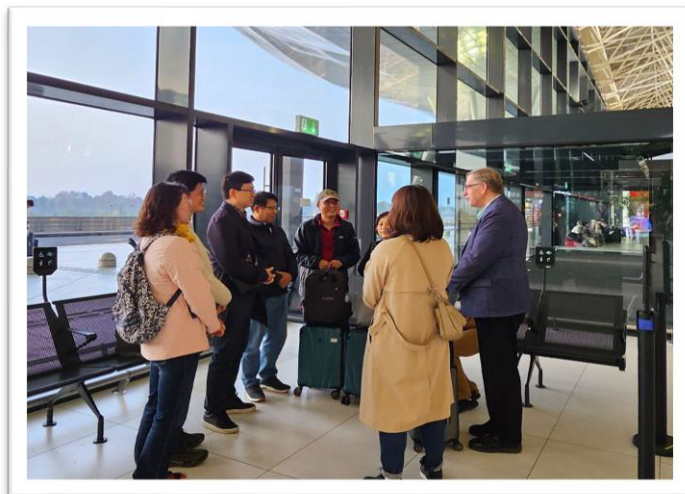
Timothy Seo, Ezekiel and Grace Lee, Maria and Joseph Bae, Croatia



Sunday message in Zagreb

We held Bible studies on Saturday evening. The missionaries studied in Korean with David and Joy Kim. The younger leaders and Croatians studied in English with Dervilla and I. On Sunday, we worshiped together. I delivered the message with the title “Here is my Servant (A bruised reed he will not break)” from Matthew 12:9-21, and the response was very good. We also celebrated holy communion. Afterward we had a cookout in a beautiful park, in which the next generation served the older generation. Included was a “talent show.” Hak-je Lee amazed us with his magic

card tricks and yo-yo performance on “Croatia’s Got Talent.” He and his family members were interviewed in their home and he appeared on national television. The following morning the Croatian missionaries, together with Andrew and Sarah Kim, accompanied us to the airport and prayed for us. We thank God for the hospitality of the brothers and sisters throughout Balkan Europe and for the prayer support of all UBF members who intercede for us — especially on such journeys. May our gracious Lord encourage, renew and empower his people all over the world and help us carry out his Great Commission together, crossing generational and cultural and national barriers for the glory of God.



Zagreb Airport Prayer with Croatian missionaries and Andrew and Sarah Kim