

Small Church Gets Help

Gap Year Workers at Morley Community Church

by Andy Dalton

Morley Community Church is one of the more recent churches to affiliate to EFCC. Morley is a former textile town located in the West Yorkshire conurbation. The church was planted in 2000 and affiliated to EFCC in 2005. Its fledgling congregation have found innovative ways to take the gospel to its community where there is little evangelical witness.

Like most EFCC churches, Morley Community Church has a small congregation. On Sunday mornings a congregation of 20-24 adults will be attending the main worship service of the day. The church faced the dilemma of how to grow without having the manpower to run additional programmes. The church leadership identified the employment of gap year workers as one of the answers to the problem.

MCC started having gap year workers in 2006 and since then has had them every year (except for one). A total of nine people (2 male and 7 females) have served in this capacity. In addition to extra workers

for the life of the congregation, it provides a wide range of experience of local church work for these workers. The programme has varied according to the people involved each year—their spiritual maturity, life experience, personality, gifts and abilities. So, at one end of the spectrum, a bible college graduate worked as Minister's Assistant to gain some pastoral experience while he applied for a full time pastorate for himself. This concluded with him being called to pastor another EFCC church. At the other end of the spectrum, the church has been served by 18 year old school leavers from the continent (usually Germany) who are wanting a year working with a church and are eager to serve the Lord but lack experience.

The programme has worked well with most of those coming to the church testifying to their year being transformational. The church finds that having a worker each year enriches the life of the congregation immensely, keeps its members outward looking and they have become a real asset. It also helps the Gap Year Workers sort out their next step in their guidance from the Lord.

While there are challenging expenses for what is a small church in a working class area, the church leadership feel that this is money well spent. The Gap Year workers tend to work well and the church see it as an investment in the lives of younger people. Sources of finding a worker have varied too—such as personal networks, Capernwray Bible School, a christian organisation which arranges international gap years, and other churches.

In early September the church welcomed the arrival of two Gap Year workers from Transylvania and Germany—22 year old Elisabet Suvanjeiev and 18 year old Lina Horn.

They have started work on a number of outreach projects organized by the church. They have already been meeting local pensioners. They have also become popular visitors to pensioners' coffee mornings in the town where they make friends and engage them in conversation. Their energy and agility have also been put to good use in the regular sessions by young people attending the midweek Youth Club as well as the Parent & Toddler group run at the church.

Lina comes from the small village of Hartha in the middle of the Saxony countryside in Eastern Germany. Its significance is that it is near the town of Colditz—infamous for its castle which incarcerated allied officer prisoners of war who were deemed as dangerous and difficult by the German military authorities in the second world war. Lina said that her home village was very rural compared to the industrial heritage of

a town like Morley. She recently completed her 'A' levels before coming to Morley.

Elisabet hails from Transylvania on the Romanian/Hungarian border. The area is associated with the stories of Count Dracula who she assures members of the Community Church, was not a vampire but actually a wicked ruler centuries ago in the Transylvanian region. Her family home is in Romania but she is ethnically Hungarian. Elisabet attends a Reformed Church while Lina has a Lutheran background.

Soon after arrival in Morley they met Town Mayor Cllr Wyn Kidger who welcomed them to the town and assured them of the warmest Yorkshire welcome and her support for them while they are working with the church.

Neither of them had met each other until their arrival in the UK. Elisabet and Lina both commented that during their stay they hope to gain experience of church work and improve their English. They are also using the time to read widely, deepen their theological and cultural understanding and prepare for future service when they return home in 2015.

In recent years MCC has welcomed young people from all over the world to work alongside the church and local organisations. American, Zimbabwean, South African, Irish and German young people have been provided with a year of valuable experience and they have made a welcome contribution to a church working in a town apathetic to the gospel and Christian witness.



Left to Right
Lina Horn and
Elisabet Suvanjeiev
with the
Mayor of Morley
Cllr Wyn Kidger
at the
Mayor's Parlour
Morley Town Hal