

Annick Wasn't Learning Anything!

Working mom paid for class, but job and kids made it tough to attend.

by Tara Luther

Two years ago, after studying the French language, I moved to Lille to teach English. Did the French really want to learn English? The answer, I found, was a clear *mais oui!*

I was surprised by the enthusiasm of my students. This group wasn't taking the course for their jobs; they simply wanted to learn a new language, and they enjoyed being together in the class.

Annick enrolled in an evening class but was unable to attend often due to the demands of her job and kids. I was happy to see her the few times she came. Normally I would have panicked because she had paid for the course but was not learning anything! Later I found out that she came to class not to improve her English, but because she loved being there. Somehow, in the midst of pronunciation exercises and grammar, she became my friend. She knew that I loved her and prayed for her.

A new year has begun, and someone else occupies Annick's seat. But it was Annick who came over to have coffee and cake with me and who drove me to the airport at Christmas. The Lord is working in her life, just as He is working in mine.

What language do we speak when we're together? Here's a hint: It isn't English!

Eating Ice Cream for Jesus

Recreation, food, fun, and teaching showcase the love of Christ.

by Michael A. Carlson, Ronciglione, Italy

Each summer for the past five years GEM has offered evangelistic English Camps in Rome and the surrounding region. And each year we confirm that *the quickest way to a person's heart is through his or her stomach!*

In a country in which most people have never even met a Protestant believer and have been taught that Protestants are cult members, it is imperative to make friends before presenting the Gospel.

Though it is difficult to develop deep friendships while memorizing English prepositions, our Italian students love to get to know us while swimming in the lake, playing volleyball, tossing around an American football or—you guessed it—*eating together!*

Italians love to eat. You can almost see barriers dissolving and hearts opening as we share simple things like pizza and ice cream and spend time building relationships.

After each English course's graduation ceremony, we invite students and parents alike to an American ice cream social. With a party atmosphere and the emotion of knowing that this may be the last time they see their new American friends, our Italian students ask questions that they have been harboring in their hearts all week: "Why don't you swear?" "Why do you believe in the Bible?" "What is your Italian church like?" "Why don't you treat each other meanly?" "How can you say God is good?"

Through the English Camps, Protestant groups—formerly viewed as dangerous cults—are being appreciated for serving the community. Also, many young people are hearing the Gospel clearly for the first time, and they want to know more.

Western Europeans rarely make instantaneous decisions for Christ. They ask questions, evaluate, and—more than anything else—observe how Jesus has changed our lives. They need information, stories, and often lots of time.



GEM conducts topflight TEFL program.

People come for better education or better jobs to improve their lives. The integrity of GEM TEFL witnesses a sincere Christianity that inspires outsiders.

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TEFL in Greater Europe

Teaching English is a great way to meet foreign nationals... and GEM's program is one of the best. by Micki Green

We had just finished lunch with our TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) students at Camp Bradatel in Romania when Alin, a 15-year-old intermediate student, asked if he could talk to me.

Alin was quiet, well behaved, and a good student. He seemed shy and avoided eye contact with the team members from the States. But now, as he began to talk, I saw a sparkle in his eyes that had not been there before.

The previous night, at the group meeting, I had drawn a chalk picture of a broken vessel on a potter's wheel. I shared how God had allowed me to go through circumstances that left me broken—but then Jesus restored me, piece by piece, to a vessel that was usable in His hands. Then I turned on the black light. A soft chorus of "ohs" was followed by silence as the group saw Jesus with His hands on the rim of the vessel, which was now whole again. This touched Alin's heart, and he wanted to know Christ. Later that evening he prayed with a Romanian pastor and gave his life to Christ.

Despite his limited English, during the next few days Alin talked with me for hours about his new life in Christ. He had many questions about his new faith and soaked up truth like a sponge. The joy on his face testified to the change within.

When he went home for the weekend, he told his parents, "A boy in my room accepted Christ this past week—and that boy was me!" Alin's parents, who were believers, were thrilled by the news.

After the camp ended, we stayed in touch. When I returned to Bradatel for another TEFL program, he drove quite a distance to bring his family to meet me. Now, five years later, he is in college and recently shared his hope of becoming a youth counselor in a school setting or in Christian ministry.

What a privilege to serve God in this way! Teaching English as a Foreign Language provides opportunities to share the Gospel and build relationships that will last for eternity.



North Americans help nationals build witnessing fellowships.

TEFL students are invited to attend church and social functions with their teachers. This connects the students with locals in believing fellowships.

English-teaching Teams in Romania

North Americans help nationals build witnessing fellowships. by Bev Charles

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) helps plant churches? Yes! Many individuals from North America use part of their summer vacation to join a TEFL team.

TEFL contacts are connected with an existing fellowship from the very first day that a team member begins to teach a class. Local church members and leaders are integrated during chapel times, activities, and social events. Many churches require church members to bring an unchurched friend in order to attend the English classes with their friend.

Sometimes the purpose of an TEFL outreach is to jump-start or begin a new fellowship of believers. These teams have conducted English outreach and Vacation Bible School in at

least eight villages around Sibiu. Many of these villages have no evangelical church. The villagers are amazed that someone is interested in them—interested enough to come over and teach them English. Many village schools do not offer English; consequently, the parents are very grateful for the TEFL teams because they know that English will give their children a great educational advantage.

All the English outreach projects include a pastor or other Christian worker who knows the villagers and can follow up with the students after the team leaves. TEFL classes give the local pastors a real boost because so many children and parents participate, and church growth results!



Greater Europe Mission®

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To assist the peoples of Greater Europe in building up the Body of Christ so that every person is within reach of a witnessing fellowship.

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Greater Europe Mission
18950 Base Camp Road
Monument, Colorado 80132 USA
800.436.4488
E-mail: info@GEMission.com
www.GEMission.org

100 Ontario Street
Oshawa, ON L1G 4Z1 Canada
1.866.241.3579
E-mail: GEMcanada@GEMission.com
www.GEMission.org

President: Ted Noble
Canada Director: Howard Moore
Europe Director: Gordon Saunders
U.S. Director: Jay Butler

Editor: Bill Bennett
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"Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together."

Psalm 34:3 (NIV)

Kandern by Candlelight

Outstanding BFA production draws local dignitary. by Ruth Robinson

Seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church^a, and whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.^b

A February evening in Kandern, Germany. Low lights . . . long tables . . . candlelight . . . the hum of nearly 300 voices and the clinking of glasses in the auditorium at Black Forest Academy (BFA). The large hall has been transformed into a town square, complete with central columns turned into trees, and the show is about to begin. The townspeople's expectations—which always run high at the annual Candlelight Dinners—are higher than usual because this year the school celebrates its 50th anniversary.

A stunning backdrop of richly colored paintings of Kandern buildings, 55 yards long and almost 10 feet high, forms a semicircle on three walls, creating a virtual theater in the round. Mary Beth Holladay, artist and mother of three BFA students, painted the mural in the style of August Macke, an area resident known for his paintings of Kandern. The design team added local art and images to tell the school's story and to thank the town for warmly welcoming this international institution into their midst half a century ago.

Phil Peters, former student and local resident, shares why BFA exists: to provide a Christian, English-language education and a

support community for children of Christian workers so they can continue their ministries while the students prepare for university or other pursuits. BFA has more than 360 students, representing ministries in 40+ countries. Many GEMers serve at the school, and many students from GEM families study there.

A variety of musical selections by current and former students and staff, interspersed with drama, keep the crowd clapping. Highlights include a vibrant four-piece band, grandchildren of the school's founders as vocalists (now in their 20s), lively banjo pickin' with barn dancing, and a choir of talented students singing backup for the soloists. Woven into the show is the story of God's faithfulness to the school and His love for each person in the audience.

For the first time in the 10-year history of the Candlelight Dinners, Kandern's mayor attends. He publicly thanks the school—and promises not to miss next year's event. As the program draws to a close around 10:15, it seems that no one wants to leave. Over dessert and coffee, many stay to talk, building relationships and discussing topics brought up during an evening where the warmth of Christ overcame the cold wintry night.

^a1 Cor. 14:12 ^bCol. 3:23

Black Forest Academy Turns 50

"Because you are, I am!" A small Christian school in rural Germany has worldwide impact. by Don Stotts, Director of BFA

Black Forest Academy (BFA) began as a family venture. Six school-age children were among the families who moved to Basel, Switzerland for a music/evangelism ministry in 1955. They were part of the Janz Brothers Gospel Association, now known as Janz Team Ministries.

At first, the children attended Swiss schools, but it was difficult to adapt to the educational system. In 1956, Vera Kroeker from St. Catherines, Ontario became the first of many teachers with the courage and vision to follow God's call to teach children of missionaries. Her vision became an educational institution that has grown from six students to 367, with more than 2,000 graduates.

Greater Europe Mission joined the BFA Board of participating agencies in 1988, and since that time more than 50 GEM students have graduated from BFA. Over the years, GEM has also provided the school with teaching staff and administrators. More than 90% of the students come from families who serve as missionaries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and well into Asia. BFA's residence program allows nearly 200 students (Jr. High age and older) to have a home away from home while their parents minister in 40+ countries.

"Pray Now?"

A listening ear and receptive heart result in an astonishing request.

It was to be a quick stop in a busy day. This GEM mom, serving in a former communist country, wanted to ask a question of the acting director of her children's school, a woman she had first known as her son's teacher. But the director had much on her mind and was at ease enough to speak about the stress she felt in her new position.

Fortunately, our GEM mom (name withheld to respect the director's privacy) was able to adjust her schedule and take time to listen as the director shared what was on her heart. As the afternoon wore on and GEM mom prepared to leave, she told the director that she was there for her and would help in any way she could.

Then the unexpected happened. The director volunteered that she could pray for her. GEM mom, sensing an urgency in the way the director spoke, asked, "Do you mean, 'Pray now'?"

"Yes, pray now," answered the director. So what was to be a quick pop-by turned out to be a divine appointment to do something that would not ordinarily occur in this society, much less with a person in authority. How wonderful to witness the moving of the Holy Spirit!



LeAnn Custer, BFA Board member and fellow missionary, recently shared these insights with the BFA staff:

"Because you are here as the staff and faculty of Black Forest Academy, I can be what I am, a missionary parent living and ministering in Europe. Because you are, I am! In fact, many others can say:

"Because you are, national pastors are being trained in Russia and national churches are being strengthened in Germany.

"Because you are, there is a Christian bookstore in Israel and a Christian camp in Spain.

"Because you are, churches are being planted in Uzbekistan, Turkey, Portugal, Belgium, France, Ireland, Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Balkans.

"Because you are, there are literature distribution projects and ESL programs and evangelistic outreaches and theological institutions—not only in Europe but in Central Asia, West Africa, and the Mideast.

"So, as a missionary—on behalf of all the missionaries Black Forest Academy serves—thank you, BFA!"

Black Forest Academy is on the web at www.BFAcademy.com.

