



By Tom Edwards
COUNTRY COORDINATOR
for SLOVAKIA

Tom is Renewal Ministries' country coordinator for Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Tanzania. Tom began full-time ministry in 1974; it soon evolved into an international outreach of lay Catholic evangelization and mission with an emphasis on preaching and teaching Scripture. Tom lives in Florida and, with his late wife Pam, has two children, nine grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

Spreading the **GOSPEL** in Romania & Slovakia

“ REMAINING STRONG WITH LITTLE SUPPORT ”

► Oradia, Romania

Our first event in Romania was an all-day meeting at Ave Maria Radio. The forty-five participants were hungry souls with open hearts, seeking encouragement and exhortation from God's Word. The worship session was lively and Spirit-filled. Team member Marilyn Bergeron, of Cornwall, Ontario, presented a teaching session on fear versus boldness. It struck a chord, and many later testified of the need to be free of fear in the sharing and living out of their faith.

We then broke into workshop groups, with team member Jean Thompson leading a pro-life workshop, Romanian Country Coordinator and native Tibi Majoros sharing on the gift of tongues, and another local brother teaching on the gift of prophecy. Bohdan Novak, from Slovakia, shared his powerful testimony, which brought him from a life of bondage and addiction to a ministry of full-time lay Catholic evangelization and mission. I also taught on the Great Invitation.



The combination of the teachings, workshops, and a video on our Asian missions paved the way for a period of personal empowerment and healing prayer. Every participant received personal prayer by our teams. Tears flowed freely, as the Holy Spirit graced us with His powerful presence, deeply touching the hearts and minds of this people so utterly ready to yield to a touch from the Lord.

► Babes Bolyai University (UBB)

With more than 41,000 students, UBB is the largest university in the country. In a dimly lit room of an ancient building high above the city streets, a group of forty Catholic students gathered together for five hours on a Sunday afternoon.

These “kids” have been gathering weekly to worship, pray, and seek God in spite of being surrounded by a very ungodly atmosphere.

Worship was an anointed time of
“purity in the Spirit.”

These young people have a measure of maturity not found in many other parts of the world.

Marilyn observed:

“ I am always inspired by the community life we find in these countries, with people living much as the early Church. They are so committed to meeting and praying together—all ages and different walks of life—for each other and the needs of the Church. Our team offers them much needed encouragement to keep moving forward. Knowing that Renewal Ministries cares enough to send a team to their country means a great deal to them. They realize that they are not alone in their efforts. As outsiders, our perspective is different, and they listen very attentively to talks by our team members. Their leaders have identified poor knowledge of the Bible as a concern in a number of the communities. Our talks are biblically based, and I believe God uses them to underline the importance of studying the Bible. ”



Jean Thompson reflected on the impact the pro-life message had on these university students:

“ I was surprised to find out that a pro-life message was included in the workshops, along with tongues and prophesy. Tibi was obviously listening to the Holy Spirit, as the hunger for information and guidance soon became evident.

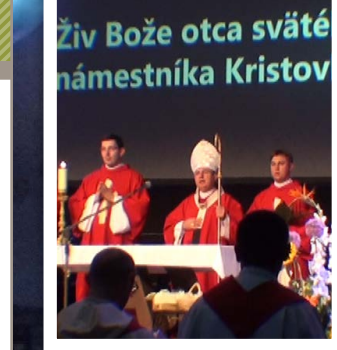
Romania has the highest abortion rate in all of Europe. There have been times when yearly abortions far outnumbered live births. The men and women who attended the workshop wanted to know how abortions are done; its spiritual, emotional, and psychological effects; what has been proven effective in other countries to stop it; what’s the law in their country; how we can help someone who’s had an abortion; and so many, many other questions. It was a joy to be with these students who are remaining strong with very little support! ”

► Odorhei

Our mission here was to share with a strong Catholic Renewal community and surrounding smaller communities. Around ninety people attended, not a few of them young adults and families. The praise ministry was strong and lively. Our team moved among the participants following a time of quiet reflection, and the Holy Spirit began to work in profound ways, as hearts were touched.

We knew the next day would entail a very early departure and a day’s drive to our destination in Slovakia. Therefore, we were grateful when a woman who had been profoundly moved by the evening’s ministry asked us to stop by her bakery early the next morning.

We accepted the offer. The bakery was filled with freshly baked bread and goodies of every kind. The woman had already prepared bags of things to go—loaves of fresh bread, assorted sweet pastries, sandwiches loaded with meat and veggies, and cups of the strongest coffee ever to touch human lips. We prayed for the lady and her staff, and off we went. We were set for the journey.



► Presov, Slovakia

About 4000 people attended the Fire Rally in Slovakia. In addition to powerful talks, the day was punctuated with vibrant music and praise, dramatic sacred dance and mime presentations, as well as times of prayer ministry, in which thousands responded. The day closed with Archbishop Bernard celebrating Holy Mass (with live telecast to all of Slovakia) and sharing a tremendous word of hope and encouragement for the ongoing work of the Renewal in the Church.

Jean Thompson reflected:

“ I was excited to hear what our good Lord has been doing since the team was last in Slovakia. As always with the Lord, I was not disappointed, but richly blessed.

Many told us how they continue to be blessed and strengthened through the teachings, testimonies, and prayer they received last year, especially in the area of forgiveness in the families. They articulated clearly what they heard and took into their hearts. One woman, whose husband was a Communist leader and who has been harshly criticized for her faith throughout the years, came running up and gave me the biggest hug. She shared that ever since she received prayer last year, Jesus was lifting lifelong burdens off her and blessing her family.

Last year, we prayed for peace and unity in the parish of her son, a Greek Catholic priest. This year, he shared the beautiful blessings our Lord was pouring out in his parish. Instead of hurt and frustration, he was brimming with joy and holy expectation. ”



Above [inset]: Archbishop Bernard at the Fire Rally, celebrating Mass for 4000 people.

Above: Tom Edwards speaks at the Fire Rally on *The Family as Living Stones*.



Renewal Ministries continues to have an impact on several Eastern European countries. Other Renewal Ministries' associates also have worked diligently and with great zeal in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Lithuania, and Latvia, to advance the Gospel and renew the Church. They have labored hard and well to lay a foundation upon which we are privileged to continue to build.✠