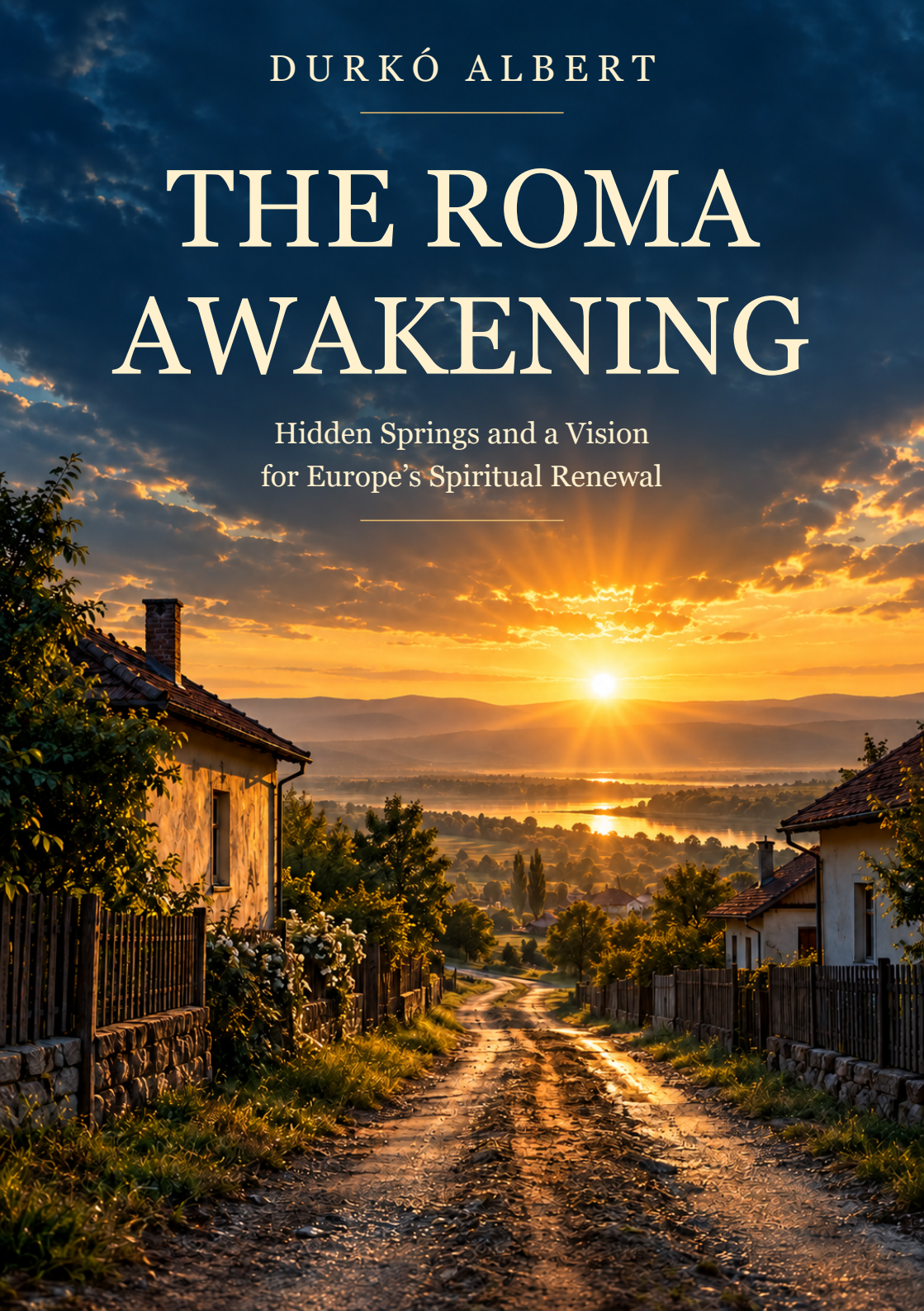
DURKÓ ALBERT

THE ROMA AWAKENING

Hidden Springs and a Vision for Europe's Spiritual Renewal



DURKÓ ALBERT

The Roma Awakening

Hidden Springs and a Vision for Europe's Spiritual Renewal

"I will open rivers on barren heights and springs in the valleys."
– after Isaiah 41:18

Mégis Remény Egyesület
Békés, 2026

Durkó Albert

The Roma Awakening

© Durkó Albert, 2026

First edition

Published by Mégis Remény Egyesület

5630 Békés, Petőfi utca 56., Hungary

megisremeny.org

Responsible publisher: Durkó Albert

Békés, 2026

All rights reserved.

Cover artwork: AI-generated illustration.

English translation prepared using artificial intelligence. Biblical references are given alongside the quotations. The word “after” identifies a paraphrase of the cited passage.

A Note to the Reader

This is not the story of an organization, although organizations, churches, schools, ministries, and the lives of many thousands of people are woven through its pages. Nor is it one man's success story. I cannot look at what I have lived through and call it my achievement. This is the story of a calling: a word that set me in motion as a child and has never released me. It is also the story of a people who have often been pushed aside, yet over whom God has not written a full stop. He has written a promise.

As you read, I hope you will come to know more than my story. I want you to see the people God placed in my path: the small homes, the prayers and tears, the conversions and new beginnings, the failures, and those moments when every human possibility had been exhausted and grace still appeared. Roma mission has never been a program to me. It has faces. Names. Stories. And a future.

After all these years, I believe more strongly than I did at the beginning that the springs are in the Roma settlements. I do not mean that poverty is holy, or that suffering should ever be romanticized. I mean that God repeatedly reveals his glory where human pride has nothing left to lean on. He takes the one who was last and calls that person forward. He turns the rejected into a messenger and the empty vessel into a carrier of oil.

I have written for those who are willing to see with me, pray with me, think with me, and, when the time comes, act with me. I am not looking for spectators. I am looking for fellow travelers—people who understand that what lies before us is larger than any one of us, yet that each of us has a place in it.

Contents

A Note to the Reader 3
A Meeting That Shaped a Lifetime 5
1. I Took the Roma Road 9
2. Grace in the Place of Rejection 12
3. I Met Them 16
4. Uszka—Where the Road Became Real 24
5. The Springs Are in the Roma Settlements 29
6. Do Not Dig Cracked Cisterns 36
7. Speak to the Rock 43
8. Empty Vessels, Overflowing Oil 50
9. How I Moved from Church-Centred Thinking to Kingdom Thinking 53
10. Where Two or Three Gather 62
11. Antioch—When a Center Becomes a Doorway 74
12. From Covenant to Movement 86
13. A Culture of Multiplication 103
14. From 3,250 to 325,000 108
15. Europe's Spiritual Renewal 127
16. Many Who Are Last Will Be First 146
I Cannot Keep Silent 165
Notes on Sources and Language 178

A Meeting That Shaped a Lifetime

A direction received in childhood that became a lifelong calling

> *"It was the meeting that shaped my life. It gave me direction. It called me. I was only ten."*

Some moments pass and yet remain with us. Their details may blur, but from that day onward our life moves in a different direction. That is how it was for me. I was ten years old. I understood very little about the world, but I knew one thing with certainty: I had to prepare. Something greater than I could yet name lay ahead, and my life was not meant to be lived for itself.

I did not know theological language. I could not have explained strategy, movement building, leadership development, or international ministry. I simply knew that Someone had spoken to me. I had not discovered a cause; God had found me. When God calls a person, he gives more than a task. Over time he changes the way that person sees. He teaches us to recognize possibility where others see only need, and to recognize worth where the world has already delivered its verdict.

That fire has been in me ever since. I often think of Jeremiah's words about a fire shut up in his bones. A person can grow tired, suffer wounds, face disappointment, and even long to be quiet for a while, but the inner fire does not let go. I cannot keep silent. I must act. I must go. This is not because I am always strong or because I have an answer to every question. The calling has simply become stronger in me than fear, failure, and even the longing I sometimes feel to stop carrying the pain of others.

When I hear people speak about the Roma, the first word that comes to mind is *rejection*. I think of childhoods without safety, families that were easier to discuss than to sit beside, settlements that many people avoided from a distance, and men and women whom prejudice named before anyone cared to learn their names. Yet another word rises in me immediately after rejection: *grace*.

I have watched God bend down in love and make the last first. I have seen him overturn the rankings we assumed were secure and begin to use ordinary Roma men and women filled with faith and the Holy Spirit. People whom no one took seriously yesterday begin to pray for the sick. Families with very little open their homes to a community of believers. Men and women whom the world would never have commissioned carry the gospel to the next village. God commissions them.

This grace is not pity. Pity looks down from above. Grace comes near, lifts a person up, stands beside them, and says, “Let us walk together.” Pity can preserve distance; grace creates relationship. Pity sees a recipient of aid. Grace sees a son or daughter, a brother or sister, a disciple, a leader, and one who will be sent.

I met them in Békés and Uszka, in towns and on the edges of villages, in orderly church halls and in poor, crowded homes. I did not meet statistics. I met faces. I met people who laughed and wept, searched for God, fell and rose again. When Christ entered their lives, change began that no regulation, project, or well-intentioned intervention from outside could have produced.

Those encounters taught me that the future of Roma communities cannot be designed without Roma people themselves. For generations, others have told them what they needed, how they should live, what they should learn, and how they should fit in. God intends more than helping a people survive. He is raising from among them men and women who hear his voice for themselves, carry his presence, lead their families, make disciples, plant churches, and become a blessing to other nations.

When we were first able to account for 3,250 Roma men and women who had turned to Christ, I was grateful. Every number represented a changed life. Yet gratitude was joined by a holy restlessness. Why should we stop at what we had already seen if God was showing us something larger? That is how the vision of 325,000 was born in me. It is not a campaign slogan or an impressive figure invented to stir a crowd. It is a signpost that keeps reminding me that God's heart is not limited to a few selected communities. Hundreds of thousands still need to hear the gospel, become disciples of Christ, and find a home in living local churches.

I dream because I see reality, not because I ignore it. I see dry ground. I see deprivation, misunderstood suffering, families under strain, exhausted leaders, rivalry between churches, exclusion, and division. Yet behind all of this I see God's promise: rivers on barren heights, springs in the valleys, pools in the wilderness, and water rising from dry ground. Where we see an ending, God begins a new story.

Now, after many years and at the close of a long season of ministry, I understand something more clearly than ever: my calling never fitted inside a title, an institution, or an organizational chart. These things can be useful instruments, and I am grateful for what God has done through them. But they were never the source of the calling. When a structure changes, the mission does not end. Sometimes that is precisely when the calling is released again for its original purpose.

I do not want to rescue a former season. I want to move forward in obedience to what God is saying now. I want to reconnect people whom distance, history, wounds, or organizational boundaries have separated. I want to see covenant relationships among leaders, churches, communities, and nations. I want to pass on a culture of multiplication—not so that a handful of ministries become ever larger, but so that thousands of living, Christ-centered communities are born in many places.

I believe the Roma are a key—not the answer to one social problem, but one of the doors through which spiritual renewal may come to Europe. A people treated as foreigners in many countries are at home in almost every European nation. A people without a nation-state of their own can become a bridge between nations. A people repeatedly placed last may, in God's hands, be among the first to carry good news into places where Christian culture remains as memory and architecture while hearts have grown dry.

That is why I am writing. I want to tell where I came from, what I witnessed, where I failed, what I learned, and what I now see. I want those who have watched Roma mission from a distance to come closer. I want those who have carried it for years to receive fresh hope. And I want those to whom God has entrusted relationships, prayer, experience, expertise, or financial resources to recognize that they are not being asked to maintain one man's dream. They are being invited to become fellow travelers in a work God has given to all of us.

It was the meeting that shaped my life. It gave me direction. It called me. And the road is not over.

1. I Took the Roma Road

When God does more than show us a people—when he binds our heart to theirs

The Hungarian title of this book, *Cigány-Útra ment*, carries a resonance that cannot be transferred into English in a single phrase. It means that I set out on the Roma road, but also that the road itself became inseparable from the Roma people. I cannot tell my story without the Roma men and women I met along the way. In time, what God was doing in me could no longer be separated from what he was showing me through them.

At first I may have imagined that I was going to them. Later I understood that God had been there long before me. In truth, he was calling me closer to something he had already begun.

Early in ministry, it is easy to think that we possess what others lack. *I have the gospel; they have the need. I have knowledge; they have the deficit. I have the answer; they have the problem.* Along the road, God broke that proud and simple formula in me. He showed me that although I truly came as one who had been sent, I also arrived as a disciple. I gave, but I also received. I preached the Word, but the Word also examined, cleansed, and changed me.

The Roma road was not a well-marked highway. It was often narrow, muddy, and uncertain. By ordinary measures it led nowhere that would make others envious. There were closed doors, misunderstandings, financial need, weariness, inward battles, and days when failure spoke more loudly than any visible result. Yet on this road I learned that the kingdom of God does not always begin when spotlights come on. It often begins when two or three people in a small room first dare to speak the name of Jesus together.

> *“Where two or three gather in my name, I am there among them.”*
> *— Matthew 18:20*

At first I heard only the promise that Jesus would be with us. Later one word took hold of me: *among*. Christ enters the space between people. When two or three turn toward one another in faith, pray together, and begin to obey Jesus, they make room for the oil.

That is why church became a much larger reality to me than a building, a Sunday program, or an official membership list can describe. Church begins wherever Christ becomes real among people. It may be a large congregation, but it may begin around a kitchen table. It may be served by a trained pastor, but it can also begin with the obedience of an ordinary believer who says, “I will open my home. I will pray for my family. I will invite my neighbor. What I have received from Jesus, I will not keep to myself.”

Once I saw this, the map in front of me changed. I no longer asked only where a church already existed. I began asking different questions. Where are two or three people who could be brought together? Where is an empty vessel? Who still has a small jar of oil, even after losing almost everything else? Where is the Roma woman or man, the young person or elder, who may not yet suspect that God intends to reach a whole family, street, or village through their life?

For me, taking the Roma road was never the selection of a target group. It was a covenant. Their joy became my joy, their pain my pain, their victories my gratitude. Their failures were not a reason to turn away but a call to stand beside them again.

I did not always do this well. There are decisions I would make differently today. At times, under the pressure of growth, the system seemed more important than the person. Yet God repeatedly returned me to the first encounter: to the human being he loves and calls by name, the person in whom he sees not only what is present today but what grace can form tomorrow.

This road also taught me that calling is not ownership. The people God entrusted to me do not belong to me. I was not given relationships, leaders, and churches so that I could gather them around myself. I was called to lead them toward Christ, strengthen them, and then send them. A faithful leader does not measure success by how many people remain beneath him. He asks how many have risen beside him—and how many have gone farther than he ever could.

With all my heart, I believe this is the hour to recognize and prepare local people. Christ is the center, not a handful of powerful centers or one commanding personality. We need maturity in place of dependence: disciples who make disciples, leaders who raise other leaders, and communities that give birth to new communities.

This is the Roma road. It is personal because faces and names travel with me. It is narrow because pride has no room on it. It is demanding because it cannot be walked from a distance. And it is full of hope because we are not breaking open dry ground by our own strength. God has already hidden springs within it.

2. Grace in the Place of Rejection

God does not deny the wound; he can reshape it into a calling

There is nothing romantic about rejection. A child learns that he is worth less. People walk past a family's door as though no human being lived inside. A person is judged by a name, skin color, or address before anyone has heard a single sentence from them. These things cause real wounds. Silence does not make them disappear, and good intentions alone do not heal them.

Yet a wound is not an identity. This is one of the gospel's most liberating truths. What was done to you has affected you, but it has no right to name you forever. What you lost was a real loss, but it cannot decide what God may still entrust to you. The judgment spoken by other people cannot cancel the name by which the Father calls you.

> *God chose what the world considers weak to humble the strong, and what it dismisses as nothing to bring human pride to nothing.*
> *— after 1 Corinthians 1:27–29*

Paul is not saying that weakness is a virtue in itself, or that God delights in human misery. He is saying that God's choice does not follow our rankings. God deliberately raises people on whom the world would never build. Then, when power becomes visible through them, no one should confuse the vessel with the Source. The glory belongs to God, but he does not discard the vessel. He cleans it, fills it, and uses it.

That is why I can speak of grace in the place of rejection. I do not call injustice grace. I am speaking of the mystery that God can enter the very place injustice has devastated and cause a new beginning to rise there. Where shame silenced a person, God can restore dignity and voice. Where addiction ruled, he can awaken

responsibility. Where isolation closed every door, he can form community.

I have heard ordinary Roma believers pray in ways that stirred something deep in everyone present. I have watched people become leaders after others had dismissed them as incapable. I have seen conversion bring more than a decision on a Sunday: a new way of speaking, new relationships, new responsibility, and new hope. None of this means that every story became easy or that every change came quickly. It means that life received a new direction. Grace may take years to complete its work, but it can change the direction of a life in a single moment.

The Wounds We Receive—and the Wounds We Cause

Over the years I also had to learn that ministry is not only a place where we are wounded. It is a place where we can wound others. Sometimes we cause harm through inattention, exhaustion, or impatience. Sometimes the urgency of the mission carries us forward so quickly that we fail to notice a person's heart falling behind. We try to solve a situation by force of personality and, without wisdom, add new injuries to old ones.

Jesus does not ask us to pretend that pain is insignificant. The psalmist says that God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. The image of binding a wound describes a process. Healing is real, but it is not always as fast as we wish. It needs time, Scripture, prayer, honest truth-telling, and the presence of people who will not force the appearance of order ahead of genuine restoration.

As a leader, I cannot stop with the question, "Who wounded me?" I must also ask, "Whom have I wounded? To whom do I owe a sincere apology? Where did I defend myself when I should have listened?" An apology does not diminish true authority. It cleanses authority of the false appearance that a leader must always be right.

Forgiveness does not call evil good, and it does not mean that trust must return to its former place after a single sentence. Forgiveness releases us from the prison of revenge and bitterness. Trust is rebuilt through truth, changed behavior, and time. Sometimes the relationship itself can be restored. Sometimes it cannot. Even then, a wound can be released so that it no longer directs the rest of our life.

Our security does not rest on universal approval. It rests on the truth that God knows us completely, loves us, and gives us new life in Christ. From that place we no longer have to let fear of loneliness, the need to prove ourselves, or old shame govern our relationships. We can love without surrendering to control, serve without abandoning God-given dignity, and establish boundaries without carrying hatred.

A healed wound eventually becomes compassion rather than a weapon. The scar may remain, but we no longer speak from it, lead from it, or use it as the lens through which we see everyone else. What we suffered—or what we ourselves mishandled—need not become the final chapter of our story. It can become one of the places where grace is revealed.

There is a danger greater than wider society failing to see what God has placed among the Roma. We may fail to see it ourselves. After generations of rejection, a lie can settle inside us: perhaps we are capable of less; perhaps our place will always be on the receiving side; perhaps we may become disciples but never leaders; perhaps we may ask for help but never carry a ministry that blesses nations.

That lie must be broken—not with ethnic pride, but with identity in Christ. We do need help, and we should not be ashamed to receive it. Yet help must have the right purpose. True help prepares and releases; it does not preserve permanent dependence. It binds people to Christ and reminds them that whatever God places within us brings both responsibility and fruit.

Churches face the same truth. It is painful to admit that patterns of exclusion can continue inside church walls. They appear in rivalry and suspicion, in one ministry treating another's growth as a threat, and in old wounds producing new divisions. We can speak passionately about revival while being unable to sit at the same table with people who proclaim the same Christ.

God wants to heal relationships as well as individuals. Covenant does not require us to become identical, abandon conviction, or refuse responsibility for difficult decisions. It asks us to recognize God's work in one another, honor the other person's gift, and lay down the question of who will receive the glory in public.

Here grace in the place of rejection becomes mission. Those who know what it is to stand outside may learn to open doors for others. The person God lifts is not given a higher place in order to look down on someone else, but to bend down and help them rise. Those healed from wounds may hear the cry of the wounded more clearly. And a people who have lived without a secure home in many parts of Europe may, in Christ, show a spiritually homeless continent the way home.

This vision is not flattery. It is responsibility. If God makes the last first, then the first must serve. If he raises leaders, they must walk with clean hands and humble hearts. If he opens springs in the Roma settlements, the water cannot stop at the edge of the settlement. It must flow toward towns, villages, and nations.

I believe the time has come when Roma men and women will not merely be the subject of other people's plans. They will rise and serve others as ambassadors of Christ—without isolation, resentment, or a need to prove their worth. They will stand by grace. And those who stand by grace do not need to make others smaller in order to appear greater.

3. I Met Them

God did not entrust me with an issue. He entrusted me with people.

> *"The church was where I first truly met them."*
> *— oral history interview recorded in 2015*

One of my earliest memories is of the Roma tinsmith who walked along our street calling out that he could mend pots, umbrellas, chairs—anything still worth saving. We children ran after him because we wanted to watch him work. That may be the first image of a Roma man that I remember. But the real encounter did not happen in the street.

I truly met Roma people in church. I met the Rácz family, the Horváth family, and the Farkas family. They were not visitors standing along the wall. They sang in the choir, took part in youth ministry, prayed, served, and belonged. As a child, I did not understand the social walls they had crossed or the depth of the change God had worked in their lives. To me they were simply there. They were my brothers and sisters.

At home, the word *Roma* was never used as an insult. My parents did not give us lectures about prejudice. They lived as though a person's worth could not be decided by ancestry. We saw poverty, disorder, and the consequences of sin. We also saw the same things in non-Roma lives. In our home, ethnicity did not become a verdict. Only later did I understand what a valuable inheritance that was.

Auntie Horváth at the Ironing Board

The written history of our church in Békés records that Mrs. Béla Horváth was the first Roma woman to join the congregation, in 1961. To me, she was not a historical record. She was Auntie Horváth.

I remember seeing her ironing in our home. She went to other large Christian families as well, washing, cooking, cleaning, and helping wherever she could, although she had many children of her own and lived in deep poverty. She did not give from abundance. She gave what was in her hands: time, labor, and attention.

Her face carried the weight of her life. We knew that her husband drank and abused her, even because she attended church. That cannot be softened. Abuse is sin, and suffering does not make a person holy. Yet even as a child I saw something in her: bitterness was not what shone from her. Love did. She was deeply afflicted, and she still found the strength to serve.

Years later I understood that the story of God's kingdom in Békés did not begin with a great event. It began with a woman who ironed, prayed, and remained present in other people's lives while carrying pain of her own. She had no title, office, or strategy. She had faith and the heart of a servant. God often hides the first seeds of a later awakening in quiet lives like hers.

Auntie Horváth did not live to see the answer to her prayers. The church history records that at the baptism held at Dánfok at Pentecost in 1990, four of her sons played music and three of them stood in white, ready to confess their faith publicly. The woman who had pleaded for them for so many years did not live to see that day. Yet not one of her prayers had been wasted.

When I read this story, I think about how quickly we want to see fruit. We sow the seed and look for the grain the next morning. God, however, does not work according to our clock. Some prayers are harvested by others. Some mothers sow in tears, and another generation gathers the harvest with joy.

Auntie Horváth's story is therefore more than part of the beginning of Roma mission in Békés. It also bears witness that quiet faithfulness outlives the person who carried it. God remembers what we place before him in love and faith, even while we can see no result.

When the Atmosphere of the Church Changed

Others came after Auntie Horváth. The church records preserve the names of Mrs. Árpád Farkas, Mrs. Jenő Rácz, then Jenő Rácz and the Farkas family. I did not experience this as a timeline. I experienced it as more and more faces becoming familiar, and more family stories becoming joined to ours.

In the early 1970s, D. Gábor Nagy, then my father, Sándor Durkó, and members of our family regularly went to the Roma settlement in Békés. They preached the gospel, taught, and gathered people in their homes.

By the end of that decade, a growing number of Roma believers were attending the church. Suddenly twenty or thirty new people were present in a congregation of sixty to eighty. No one could pretend that nothing had changed. The singing changed. Conversations changed. The atmosphere of worship changed. Joy increased, but so did questions and tension. A living community is never sterile. When new people arrive, they are not the only ones who must change. The receiving church must also make room.

I see it more clearly now. A finished and flawless church did not simply welcome a few needy people. God seated families of different backgrounds beside one another and began teaching all of us. Our Roma brothers and sisters did not remain guests. They became people who shaped the community. They brought their voices, faith, openness, wounds, and gifts. The church became richer when it stopped asking how to make them resemble everyone else and began making room for what God was forming in them.

Not everything in Békés was easy, and prejudice existed there too. Yet I saw another possibility: in Christ, the *we* we share can become stronger than the line between Roma and non-Roma. No one has to deny their heritage. At the same time, no ancestry gives one of us the right to stand above another, and no ancestry should be branded with shame.

The awakening did not first become visible in the main hall of the prayer house. According to the church records, in 1978 and 1979 thirty or forty people often crowded into a single one-room-and-kitchen home. Sitting on the floor, they listened to Scripture, sang, and prayed. There was no stage, sound system, or comfortable order. There was hunger for God, and there were doors that opened.

These gatherings did not go unnoticed. The house meetings and Roma mission brought pressure upon the workers both from within the church and from the authorities of the time. D. Gábor Nagy was also called to account, yet on one occasion he said, 'What they have already heard from the Word made it worthwhile.'

I do not want to smooth this into a simple heroic story. There were fears, misunderstandings, and wounds. Yet the point remains: while people debated whether it was right to go, the gospel had already entered the homes. God often opens a door in an ordinary house before we are ready for what he has begun there.

In 1979 this became visible in a literal way. When the prayer house in Békés was enlarged and renovated, Roma brothers and sisters who had come to faith that year joined the work with their relatives. They laid tiles on the roof, put the yard in order, and cleaned. Those who had recently been regarded as outsiders were now helping to build the house in which we worshipped God.

To me, this remains one of the most beautiful pictures of belonging. They were not merely given a place somewhere at the back. The labour, dust, weariness, and joy became shared. They were no longer guests but builders. And while they rebuilt the prayer house, God was also rebuilding the church through them.

The Eleven-Year-Old Librarian

I met Jesus when I was ten, and from that time I was eager to act. If I saw that something needed doing, I began, whether anyone had asked me or not. At eleven or twelve, I collected the few Christian books scattered among members of the church and started a library. By fifteen I was leading young people in the church, and every week we visited elderly people to help them. We cleaned, put their yards in order, shovelled snow in winter, and did what they no longer had the strength to do. I was the youngest, yet people listened to me. I thought this was normal. Now I recognize an early training ground for my calling: faith must become tangible in the lives of others.

I noticed tasks easily. Learning to see people took longer.

For years I assumed ministry mostly meant telling people what needed to be done, then arranging for it to happen. In the Roma settlement I learned that no one can be reached through a task list. You have to step into a home, sit down, listen, and receive what is placed before you.

Milk, Biscuits, and a Broken Bed

In 1984 my sister, Márta, began a new job and asked whether I would take over the children's work in the settlement. I was eighteen. One week I worked from six in the morning until six at night; the next week I had no shift. I spent my free weeks in the area known locally as the "Paris" settlement.

We worked with two age groups, and sometimes twenty or thirty children came. During the day I visited their parents. Slowly, almost every family opened its door to me.

Éva Czinanó stood beside us in this work. She lived in the settlement and had already served with my sister before continuing the children's ministry with me. She knew the families, moved naturally within the community, and faithfully helped us reach the

children and, through them, their parents. The story of that beginning would not be complete without her.

At eighteen, I thought I had a great deal to teach them: biblical foundations, order, responsibility, and habits needed for everyday life. There was truth in that, but there was also the confidence of youth. Later I saw how easily we confuse the gospel with our own cultural patterns. While I intended to teach, they taught me hospitality, generosity, and the weight of a gift given from scarcity rather than surplus.

I suffered serious stomach pain in those days and had an ulcer. Families set aside milk for me to drink and bought biscuits for the children. They were not wealthy, yet they surrounded me with what they had. I went there to serve, and they cared for me. Mission became mutual. The simple formula—*I give, they receive*—no longer held. We all gave. We all received.

Among the older children was Kati Farkas. She sang beautifully, played guitar, and took on things for which I had less ability. She helped with the music, the order, and the children. I did not yet know that in her God was preparing not only a fellow worker but a lifelong companion for me.

There was also a particularly energetic boy named László Surman. Once he jumped on my bed until it broke beneath him. At the time, I saw little evidence of a future researcher. Decades later he sat across from me, asked questions about my life, and wrote his thesis on the history of Hungary's national Roma mission. A broken bed is only an irritation. A transformed life reveals why endurance matters.

Not every child followed a straight road. Not every seed grew as I hoped, and not every relationship remained unbroken. Yet when I think of László, I remember that we do not always see the fruit of service when we sow. Sometimes the child we once knew only as unruly sits across from us decades later and, through his questions, helps us understand our own story.

My Companion on the Road

I came to know Katalin Farkas more closely through the children's ministry in the settlement. Most people call her Katika. From childhood she has loved God with a pure heart and has always been ready to serve wherever she is needed. Even then, she did not seek visibility. She sang, played guitar, helped among the children, and carried out what God entrusted to her with natural simplicity.

Worship is a particular gift in her life. Some people sing beautifully; in the singing of others, something opens the heart to the presence of God. When Katika sings, heaven opens for me. I do not hear a performance. I hear prayer.

She became my wife in 1989 and has remained my faithful companion ever since. God has given us five children and, so far, five grandchildren. After the Lord, family has always come first for Katika. This faithfulness did not exist alongside ministry; it was itself a ministry.

Many journeys, encounters, and decisions in this book are connected with my name. Yet if only my footsteps were visible, the story would not be true. Katika has stood beside me throughout—with her love, prayer, willingness to serve, and gift of worship. I thank God for her. In her he gave me a wife, a companion in the calling, a mother to our children, and a grandmother to our grandchildren.

People, Not Cases

I met them: Auntie Horváth beside the ironing board; the Rácz and Farkas families in church; parents in their homes; younger and older children in their groups; Kati with her guitar; László first beside a broken bed and later beside a recording device. None of them is an illustration for a mission presentation. They are people without whom I would not be the same man and without whom this book could not have been written.

Before I received a national assignment, God gave me relationships. Before I wrote a strategy, he sat me down in kitchens and simple rooms. Before I built an organization, he showed me an iron, a glass of milk, biscuits, a guitar, and a broken bed.

Roma mission did not begin for me in 1996. That was when it took a national form. It began much earlier—when I stopped passing people by, entered their homes, and stayed with them.

In Békés I learned that mission becomes calling when it becomes relationship. Later, the story of an entire village called Uszka would show me the same truth. Yet the foundation was laid by these first encounters.

Faces. Names. Doors. Stories.

I met them, and through them God changed me.

4. Uszka—Where the Road Became Real

A woman came home, an evangelist set out, and the fire moved from village to village

> *"Go out to the roads and the hedges and urge them to come in, so that my house may be filled."*
> *— Luke 14:23*

I Was Not There at the Beginning

I cannot tell Uszka's story as an eyewitness to its first days. I was still a child in Békés when these events began. What I know comes from personal recollections, later research, and the fruit of a ministry that eventually reached my own town. This matters. The history of mission should not be polished into a beautiful legend. Faith does not need invented details. Reality is strong enough.

Yet Uszka belongs to my story. This small village in eastern Hungary, close to the Ukrainian border, showed that a place considered remote and unimportant can become a point of departure in God's hands. What began there in the early 1970s moved from village to village and left a mark on Hungary's Roma Pentecostal movement for decades. It did not emerge from the headquarters of an institution. It began in homes, personal conversations, prayer, and the obedience of people whom others barely noticed.

A Woman Brought Home What She Had Received

At the beginning stands Gizella Jósa, a Roma woman from Uszka. She had lived in Germany and returned to her village around 1970 or 1971. She did not organize a public event. She spoke with women about her faith, sang, told stories, brought sweets for the children, and carried soap and towels for the adults. These were simple things, but they carried a message: *I see you. What I have received from God, I do not want to keep for myself.*

The recollections do not agree on every detail of how her work became connected with the church that later emerged. One tradition says that she told Jenő Kopasz that spiritual ministry was needed in Uszka; other accounts speak more cautiously. The sources do agree on something more important: seeds had already been planted before the evangelist arrived. God's work often begins before a recognized leader steps into view.

This detail matters to me. When great stories are told, it is easy to remember only the names of the men who preached and forget the women who talked, sang, cared, and opened doors. In Uszka, a Roma woman was not merely an object of mission. She was one of its first carriers.

Jenő Kopasz Beside the Roads and Hedges

Jenő Kopasz had traveled a long road before he reached Uszka. He came from a Reformed background, turned to Christ at nineteen, and became connected with the Bethany fellowship. During the 1950s, under Hungary's communist government, he carried his Bible openly and he and his wife suffered retaliation at work because of their faith.

He later accepted believer's baptism. He was baptized in Nyíregyháza in 1966 and joined the Baptists. He had no theological

degree, but he possessed something no diploma can confer: an inward compulsion to go to people.

In 1972 a fresh experience of the Holy Spirit gave new momentum to his ministry. That autumn, at the invitation of a Roma church member, he traveled by truck from Kölcse to Túrricse. A house on Jókai Street filled with people, and at the first gathering many responded to Jesus. Later an elderly woman invited him to Uszka. From there, the work spread toward Tiszabecs and other villages in the region.

Jenő did not wait for people to reach a church building. He went into the street, stopped beside ditches, and sat in homes. He began with ordinary conversation and then told people what he knew about Jesus. If someone was absent from a meeting, he went looking for them. Evening after evening he traveled to another village, while on Sundays many gathered in Uszka. He took Christ's invitation literally: go out to the roads and hedges.

He was not trying to claim denominational territory. His church affiliations changed over the years, yet he refused to close the gospel inside denominational boundaries. He regarded anyone who followed Christ as a brother or sister and went wherever he found an open door. In 1975 he joined the Free Christian Church. For a time he carried out the mission alongside his small business; from 1989 he served full time. He died in 1992, but the roads he traveled did not become empty.

A Church Formed in Homes

The first communities gathered in houses, some for three or four years. Their own building did not make them a church. Scripture, prayer, repentance, and responsibility for one another did.

At first, the work aroused suspicion and even threats. Men such as Miklós Mursa and József Kóczé later joined the community themselves and accepted responsibility within it.

The first converts were baptized in 1972 at the Baptist church in Nyírbátor. Not every pastor was willing to receive the fruit of a mission growing outside the accepted structures of the time; in the end, Imre Asztalos baptized the first group. This tension returns throughout the history of awakening. Institutions can provide order and protection, while newly emerging life rarely conforms at once to every familiar form. We do not have to choose one and reject the other. We need churches capable of recognizing life and then helping it grow with wisdom and responsibility.

From Uszka the ministry moved toward Méhtelek, Tiszabecs, Tuzsér, Fényeslitke, Bagamér, Nagyvarsány, and other communities. Not every church remained united or active in later decades. Divisions and closures came too, and they should not be hidden. An awakening never makes teaching, character formation, or healthy leadership unnecessary. The lighting of a fire is a gift. Tending the hearth requires long obedience.

When Uszka Reached Békés

Uszka is not a distant history to me because its ripples reached Békés. In 1976 and 1977, Pentecostal believers in Békés came into contact with the Free Christian Church and with Jenő Kopasz's ministry. In 1977, about twenty people were baptized in Békés as a result of the work that had grown from Uszka. That particular cooperation ended in 1978, but its fruit did not disappear. Local ministry continued, and more Roma families became connected with the church.

As a child, I saw the consequences: new faces in worship, Roma families in the choir, believers going into the settlement, and later doors opening for me personally. I cannot say that I stood at Uszka's beginning. I can say that its fruit helped shape my spiritual home. An awakening in an eastern Hungarian village reached me because others had first set out and allowed the familiar order of their own community to change.

The Margin Became a Starting Point

Uszka's deepest message is not that every ministry must reproduce the same history. It is that God can open a spring where we see only lack.

Roma people were not passive listeners to the gospel. They opened homes, invited others, testified, led, and passed on what they had received. Mission became movement when the people who had been reached became people who were sent.

Throughout my later ministry I returned to this discovery. Taking programs into Roma settlements is not enough. We must recognize the people God is already preparing there: the woman who talks and sings; the family that opens its home; the man who opposed the church yesterday and accepts responsibility today; the young person in whom no one yet sees a leader.

The springs are in the Roma settlements.

For that reason, Uszka is not a monument to me. It is a compass. It points toward a church that does not try to solve people's lives from a distance. The church must come close, remain present, and entrust responsibility to those among whom God is already at work. Roma believers are not at the edge of the Church. They are part of its heart. When we take that seriously, mission ceases to be something done *about* them and becomes a road traveled *with* them.

In Uszka the road became real. A woman came home. An evangelist set out. Homes opened, people were baptized, and lights came on in other villages.

The question was no longer whether Roma people could be reached. The question was whether we would recognize in them the very people through whom God intended to reach others.

5. The Springs Are in the Roma Settlements

What God has hidden in dry ground has the final word, not what appears to be missing

For many years I have repeated one sentence: the springs are in the Roma settlements.

At first it was a declaration. Over time it became a vision and then a strategy. Today it sums up both what I have seen and the direction in which I believe we must go.

For an international reader, the phrase *Roma settlement* may need explanation. In Hungary and across Central and Eastern Europe, it often refers to a segregated or severely underserved neighborhood, frequently on the edge of a village or town. Such places have been described almost entirely by what they lack. When I speak of springs there, I am not calling poverty a spiritual gift. Poverty is not the spring. Neither ethnicity nor a ministry method is the spring. God is the Source.

Jeremiah calls him the fountain of living water. Jesus says that rivers of living water will flow from within the one who believes in him. That is the miracle: the one Source becomes rivers within human lives.

> *"Whoever believes in me … rivers of living water will flow from within."*
> *— John 7:38*

Not a few drops. Rivers. Enough not only for a believer to survive the drought, but for life to rise around that person.

That is why I speak in the plural: *springs*. When a Roma woman or man receives new life in Christ, more than one individual is rescued. The direction of a family's future may change. When a small community becomes full of the Holy Spirit and love, the atmosphere of a street can change. When a local leader accepts responsibility, new disciples and new communities can be born.

Dry ground promises nothing at first glance. It is hard and cracked. We are tempted to pass by because there seems to be nothing left to find. Yet through Isaiah, God promises rivers on barren heights, springs in the valleys, pools in the wilderness, and water rising from dry land. He does not merely transport water from somewhere else. He opens a spring from within.

That difference is fundamental. Anything that must be sustained entirely from outside remains expensive and fragile. It functions while money, specialists, programs, and outside energy continue to arrive. When they stop, everything stops. A spring nourishes life from within.

Support, training, relationships, and practical resources are necessary. Their purpose, however, is to release local life, not replace it. I want to help build a multiplying movement rather than an institution permanently maintained from outside: local disciples forming new disciples; local leaders raising new leaders; communities meeting in homes becoming the cradle of further communities.

We need international friends and supporters too—not patrons who take ownership, but fellow travelers who stand beside us, strengthen us, and help us grow toward maturity.

Early Rain in the Valley of Weeping

In the autumn of 2018, when I spoke again about awakening in Kecskemét, I had come through an unusual season. I had spent ten months in Transylvania, seeking renewal, rest, and quiet before God. I did not receive an entirely new message. Instead, what I had preached for years became stronger in me: God had not abandoned the Roma, and he would not leave unfinished what he had begun.

My return was not followed by celebration. I met open resistance. Some wanted me to dismantle what we had built, withdraw the promises I had proclaimed, and admit that I had been wrong—that none of it had come from God.

It was painful. Yet I learned again that before a promise is fulfilled, the promise itself is often tested. The question is not only what we once heard from God. It is whether we remain faithful when nothing visible yet confirms what we heard.

During that period I met Pentecostal leaders from across Europe and people serving in the Roma movement in Spain. The same testimony came from different countries: God was calling Roma men and women, awakening churches, raising leaders, and beginning something too wide for a single nation or denomination. The numbers mattered less to me than the confirmation. What we saw in Hungary as early drops was already moving in stronger waves elsewhere in Europe.

> *"As they pass through the Valley of Weeping, they make it a place of springs; the early rain covers it with blessing."*
> *— after Psalm 84:6*

In Kecskemét, those words became both map and promise. I thought of Roma settlements in Hungary, Transylvania, Ukraine, the Balkans, and Slovakia. I had seen places where poverty, contempt, exclusion, violence, and pain seemed to gather in concentrated form. I will not beautify them. A valley of weeping contains real tears.

The psalm does not tell us to remain there. It says that people pass through the valley and, as they do, make it a place of springs.

Passing through means refusing to deny the injustice done to us, while also refusing to accept responsibility for other people's sin. It means refusing to let the wound speak the last word. We face reality. We confess our own sin. We release lies and self-destruction. Then, in Christ, we receive a new name and direction. I am no longer merely the unfortunate person who was pushed aside. Through Christ, I am God's child, an heir, and one who is sent.

The image of early rain moved me because it is not a violent storm beating the ground apart. The first rain softens soil hardened by drought so that seed can germinate and take root. Awakening begins in the same way. It does not begin with us announcing judgment over everyone else. It begins when we stand in God's rain ourselves and allow him to soften our hearts, wash away bitterness, disappointment, unbelief, and resentment.

Those of us who serve need renewal first. We have given again and again, sometimes while no one served us. We became tired, hard, and driven by duty. The early rain does more than comfort. It teaches, forms, and prepares. It makes the heart ready for the Word planted within it to become more than seed—to bear fruit.

When this happens, the presence of Christ rises within believers. Homes open. Churches are born around kitchen tables. New speech and a new atmosphere enter families. Where weeping once dominated, worship gradually finds a place. The valley is still a real place, but God's presence appears within it and gives it a new direction.

That day in Kecskemét I told weary workers: "Do not hide. Step out into the rain." I say it again today. Do not try to sustain by yesterday's strength what only God can keep alive. Stand before him again. The spring must first rise in us; only then can it flow toward others.

Sometimes we prevent the spring from breaking through because we cling to cracked cisterns. A past success can become such a cistern. So can an organization that has grown larger than the life it was meant to serve, a borrowed method, or a leadership system in which every decision runs back to one person.

We can honor the past, but yesterday's manna cannot nourish us today. Yesterday's experience of the spring cannot replace today's obedience. God still speaks. He may lead us to the same Rock, yet ask us to approach in another way.

> *"Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will pour out its water."*
> *— after Numbers 20:8*

Earlier, Moses had struck the rock and water had come. This time God said, "Speak to it." That warns me deeply. An instrument that was obedient yesterday may not be obedient today. Yesterday may have required hard work, organization, and forceful effort. Today God may ask us to listen, then speak to what he has already hidden within people.

We must not keep striking them. We cannot force from a person what only the Holy Spirit can release. We speak in faith. We proclaim Christ. We call by name what God has placed within them.

If the springs are in the Roma settlements, we must arrive with different questions. We still ask what needs to be repaired, but we also ask: What has God already placed here? Whom has he prepared? Who is the person of peace? Who will open a home? Who carries prayer? Who can gather two or three people? Who has been faithful with little and may one day care spiritually for an entire community?

Recognizing a spring requires respect. Contempt never releases people. Leaders do not mature where they are never given genuine responsibility. Covenant cannot grow while every relationship

hides a desire for control. Water flows downward, and grace follows the path of humility.

That is why one of our most important tasks in the coming season is to gather vessels. In Elisha's story, a widow had almost nothing left except a small jar of oil. The prophet did not begin by asking what she lacked. He asked, "What do you have in your house?" Then he told her to gather empty vessels—and not just a few. As long as an empty vessel remained, the oil continued to flow.

This image has stayed with me for years. A home may be poor. What remains may seem insignificant. Every outward circumstance may say, "There is nothing here." God looks at the oil that remains and asks for vessels.

We gather people, small fellowships, local leaders, churches, and ministries so that what God intends to pour out has somewhere to flow. We do not gather them to make them the property of one leader.

Roma communities are present across Europe. What appears humanly as a history of scattering can become, in God's hands, a missionary network. Relationships already cross nations, languages, and cultures. If disciples of Christ are formed in these communities, if leaders enter covenant relationships, and if multiplication becomes daily practice rather than a slogan, springs can become rivers. Those rivers can cross the boundaries of settlements, towns, and nations.

I believe with all my heart that awakening is not a distant date for which we wait passively. It begins when someone hears Jesus and obeys; when two or three gather and place an empty vessel before God; when a leader raises others instead of gathering everything to himself. It begins when we leave our cracked cisterns and return to the Source of living water.

The springs are in the Roma settlements.

They are not there to remain there. Living water must flow from them toward Europe.

6. Do Not Dig Cracked Cisterns

We must be able to return to God even what he once entrusted to us

> *"They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug their own cisterns—cracked cisterns that cannot hold water."*
> *— Jeremiah 2:13*

Other people's cracked cisterns are easy to see. We quickly identify the church form that has become rigid, the institution that has lost its original calling, or the leader clinging too tightly to a preferred method. It is much harder to recognize the cistern we dug ourselves—especially when God once truly gave faith, people, and opportunity for its construction.

Jeremiah does not say that a reservoir is evil in itself. The tragedy is that God's people left the living Source and placed their trust in a container made by their own hands. A tool took the place of the spring. They kept pouring their strength into it without noticing that the water was leaking away beneath them.

I cannot write as though I always remained beside the Source while everyone else built cisterns. There were seasons when I confused what God had given with God himself. We began good works that bore genuine fruit, yet a time came when they had to be released. There were also things I failed to release in time.

When an Old Form Could No Longer Carry Life

In the autumn of 1989 I became pastor of a church in Paks, a town on the Danube in central Hungary. The congregation had twenty-seven members, most of them elderly. It had been many years since anyone had been baptized. To the surrounding community, our faith was often defined by prohibitions: places one should not go, things one should not do, and people with whom one should not associate. We wanted to protect the faith, but walls had grown around it.

I do not say this to condemn those who served before me. They gave what they knew and preserved much with faithfulness. Yet I realized that a church concerned only with protecting itself eventually forgets why it is present in the world. Holiness is not isolation. Jesus separated us from sin and sent us close to sinners.

In the early 1990s we therefore founded an association called *Mégis van Remény*—"There Is Hope After All." It gave us a civic framework for going into the streets, reaching young people and children, organizing community programs, and coming close to people who would never have crossed the threshold of a prayer house.

At that time the association was a new vessel. It served life. It opened what had been closed.

The church in Paks began to grow. New people turned to Christ and were baptized. The community came alive. Yet even during what appeared to be the most successful period, we sensed that it was time to move on. There I first learned that fruit does not always mean we are meant to stay. Sometimes God asks us to release something at its height, because success itself can become a place where we quietly settle down.

The Great Dream of Zsinóros

Years later in Békés, a larger dream took shape. We wanted to create a place for young people free from alcohol, drugs, and cigarette smoke. At first we imagined a Christian bookshop with a small coffee corner. When that opportunity did not open, I learned that the town's former synagogue stood empty. After one short conversation, we agreed to rent it. In 2004 the Zsinóros Community House opened.

The Hungarian name suggested our dream: tying people together.

The building filled with life. A restaurant served between one hundred and one hundred and fifty meals a day. We opened a pizzeria and a café. Employment development and placement services, outreach to people living on the streets, community psychiatric care, a guitar club, exhibitions, concerts, public discussions, and children's programmes all found a home there. We also launched programmes for women that offered training and pathways into employment. Later, in partnership with several companies, we expanded the training, job creation, and employment support. Thirty-five to forty full-time staff worked with us. Grace Church also began there with eight people.

I refuse to make the good smaller because of the collapse that followed. People found work, help, community, and hope. Young people gained a safe place. Artists had space to present their work. A new church was born. Zsinóros did not begin as a mistake, and its ending does not erase its fruit.

But a crack appeared.

We understood the final accounting deadline for a large grant differently from the administering authority. We completed the program and paid the expenses, but we did not receive approximately twelve to thirteen million Hungarian forints in expected reimbursement. We borrowed money to meet our obligations. For a time we continued paying wages, but payroll

taxes, rent, and other debts accumulated. Both the association and the company operating the center entered liquidation.

They Took the Last Spoon

One sentence from that period was literally true: they took the last spoon.

The cars were auctioned, along with the scooters used for pizza delivery and the office and kitchen equipment. In November 2008 we had to leave the building. By 2009 the organization in its existing form had ceased to exist. Our own apartment carried a heavy mortgage, and we feared losing that too.

An institution did not collapse in isolation. My family carried the consequences with me. I walked in shoes with holes in them. At times my mother-in-law used part of her pension to put food in our refrigerator. Loans had to be repaid when almost no one would lend us anything more. To many observers, I had become the great dreamer who wanted too much and left bankruptcy behind. I felt as though no one would have paid a worthless coin for me.

I cannot tell this story by assigning all responsibility to the authority or to circumstances. We misunderstood the deadline. We chose to continue operating on borrowed money. I was the leader. I was responsible for ensuring that faith was accompanied by sound financial, legal, and supervisory structures. Good intentions do not remove the need for exact accounting. Faith does not replace wise stewardship.

The crack was not only in the accounts. It was in me.

For a year and a half I clung to the association and everything we had built. I told myself, “God gave this to me, so I cannot let it be lost.” I borrowed again to buy more time. Sometimes we gained a few months of breathing room, but the situation did not heal.

Now I know how deceptive the sentence *God gave this to me* can become. It may be true, but it does not mean I must possess the gift

forever. Isaac was genuinely the son of promise, yet Abraham still had to place him on the altar. Ministry is a gift, not property. An institution may be an instrument given by God, but it becomes an idol when we sacrifice family, relationships, and clear judgment in order to save it.

Thank God for the Mortar

In one of my first sermons in Paks I had said, “If you feel as though you have been placed in a mortar and are being crushed, say, ‘Thank God—I am in the mortar!’” It was easier to preach than to live.

A mortar and pestle are not poetic images when your shoes have holes, the refrigerator is empty, and you do not know whether you will lose your home. Yet I discovered that God did not intend to destroy me in the breaking. He was freeing me from something I could no longer lay down by myself.

Meanwhile, not everything could stop. I traveled to preach in Méhkerék, served in Roma communities, led Grace Church, and met each week with a discipleship group of young men. They saw my struggle. They did not receive the carefully edited story of a victorious leader. They received a man who prayed with them while clinging to God for himself.

All ten of those young men later became leaders. Their lives taught me something I have never forgotten: disciples need to see more than our revelations and victories. They need to see how we walk through failure. Can we accept responsibility? Can we apologize? Can we let go? Does faith remain when we have no result with which to justify ourselves?

Two sentences remained with me: there is still hope; there is still faith. I had no idea how everything would be resolved. In the end, my hope did not remain in Zsinóros, the association, or other people’s opinion of me. It remained in Christ.

When I Gave It Back

After a year and a half of struggle, I finally said aloud that the Zsinóros Community House, the association, Roma mission, my ministry, and everything we had built belonged to God. I could not preserve it, so I returned it to him.

This was not a triumphant moment. It was the admission that my strength was gone and my rescue plan had ended.

As I remember it, a new opportunity opened in the days and weeks after that surrender. We were able to establish a home-care service. We applied for authorization to care for one thousand people, a scale that seemed almost impossible at the time. The service began in 2009, reached several thousand people in its first year, and later grew into a national network.

I do not turn this sequence into a formula: “Release something, and within weeks God will give you something bigger.” Many people release faithfully and receive no immediate, visible new beginning. For me, however, the sequence became a clear sign. The Source did not run dry when the old vessel broke. Once I stopped using all my strength to patch it, I became free to notice something new.

The Helping Service was not the Source either. It was another vessel—a tremendous gift, a source of help to thousands, and a place of service for many staff members. Yet it too had to remain returnable to God.

Any organization can become a cracked cistern the moment its survival matters more than the person for whom it was created, or when it begins to identify itself with the work of God.

Paternalism Is a Cracked Cistern Too

Many well-intentioned Roma initiatives began with a simple assumption: *we* bring knowledge, order, money, and faith; Roma people receive these things gratefully and change. A program can be built on that assumption. A spring is rarely released by it. Where responsibility should grow, dependence takes root instead.

I had to unlearn this too. As a young leader, I often saw a task faster than I saw the person. Organizing something was easier than waiting for a local leader to grow strong, make mistakes, learn, and take genuine responsibility. An institution easily gathers everything around itself. A movement gives away what it has received and rejoices when life continues without it.

So I say: do not dig cracked cisterns. A method cannot take the place of obedience. We cannot call it unity when everyone depends on one center. Care should help the other person grow. Faith is not an excuse for disorder, and wisdom must not become another name for the fear that keeps us from a new road.

Let us honor the past. Let us give thanks for every person, every conversion, every church, and every institution through which God gave life. But let us not fight to preserve yesterday's water in yesterday's vessel at any cost. The wall of a cistern is not our security. Our life is in the living Source.

The most important question is not how to patch every old crack. It is whether we still hear God. Do we recognize when the same Rock asks for a different obedience today?

The water comes from God. The servant must hear today's word.

7. Speak to the Rock

The power is not in the staff, but in the One who gives the water

> *"They drank from the spiritual Rock that accompanied them, and that Rock was Christ."*
> *— 1 Corinthians 10:4*

Leaving a cracked cistern is only half the journey. We may have recognized that an old form can no longer hold water. We may have released, with great pain, what we spent years building. Emptiness, however, is not renewal. We must return from the old cistern to the living Source.

The question is not only what we should stop doing. It is also: What is God saying now?

Twice in Moses' story a thirsty people stood in the wilderness. Twice the rock was present, and twice God gave water. From the outside, the two situations appeared almost identical. God's instruction was not the same. The first time he told Moses to strike the rock. The second time he told him to speak to it.

This is one of leadership's hardest tests. Yesterday we acted at God's word and saw fruit. Today we see a similar need and instinctively repeat the same action. Yet yesterday's obedience can become today's disobedience when we are no longer answering God's present word and are acting only from experience.

The Same Need, a Different Command

At Rephidim the people quarreled with Moses because they had no water. God told him to take the staff with which he had struck the Nile, go before the elders to the rock at Horeb, and strike it. Moses obeyed, and water came from the rock. On that occasion the staff was not an expression of human anger. It was a sign of God's authority and judgment.

Years later, at Kadesh, there was no water again. The people gathered against Moses and Aaron. God once more told Moses to take the staff, but he did not tell him to use it. He was to gather the community and speak to the rock before their eyes. God promised that the rock would give water.

Moses held a staff connected with great stories. Through it, the Nile had turned to blood, the sea had opened, and water had previously come from rock. It reminded him of God's power and of his own calling. This time the staff had to remain in his hand without directing his action. He had to be present with it and refrain from using it.

That picture speaks deeply to me. We may possess tools, experience, effective organizations, and proven programs. We do not have to throw them all away. God did not discard the staff. But God alone must decide what the tool is for at this moment. What is in our hand must never silence the One who placed it there.

When Anger Raises the Staff

Moses did not speak to the rock. He spoke angrily to the people: "Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then he struck the rock twice. Years of burden, repeated complaint, and one more rebellion broke through in a single act.

I understand Moses' weariness. Leaders can carry people for a long time and face the same complaints, unbelief, and backward steps again and again. One day they speak in a voice unworthy of their calling—not because they no longer love God, but because they have become exhausted with people.

We still cannot make disobedience acceptable by calling it understandable. God told Moses and Aaron that they had not trusted him enough to reveal his holiness before Israel. The leader's anger concealed God's character. The people did not see a holy and merciful God giving water to the thirsty. They saw an angry leader striking.

A leader's tone is never merely private. The way we speak to people communicates something about God. We may gain outward compliance by shaming, intimidating, or keeping people under constant pressure, while giving them a false picture of the Father. Truth must be spoken and sin named. Neither gives us permission to humiliate.

The Water Came Anyway

One of the most sobering lines in the story is that water poured out abundantly despite Moses' disobedience. The people and animals drank. From the outside, the method appeared to work. Moses struck; water came. If visible results were our only measure, we might say that the old action was still anointed.

God made clear that the water did not validate Moses' method. It revealed God's mercy toward a thirsty people.

This should make every leader tremble. We can see results while failing to obey precisely. People may turn to Christ. Attendance may grow. A program may function and an institution expand while something has already gone wrong in a leader's heart or methods.

Fruit matters, but fruit alone does not justify everything. God loves people and may bless them through us even while correcting and disciplining us. His faithfulness is not proof of our infallibility. The arrival of water does not remove the question: Did I act as God told me?

I learned this in the crisis at Zsinóros. When the work began to collapse, I tried to sustain it with more borrowing, more labor, and greater effort. Perseverance had often brought breakthrough before, so I repeated the same movement. Then a point came when I did not need to strike harder. I needed to stop, hear God, and return to him what I was clutching.

The Rock Was Christ

Paul reads the wilderness story in the light of Christ: “That Rock was Christ.” The Source is not a method, a gifted leader, or a natural quality of any people. Christ is the Source. He was struck for us. He carried the cross. Life flows from him.

For Christian readers, the rock struck twice also points toward the finality of Christ’s sacrifice. His offering cannot and need not be repeated. He gave himself once for all. We must not force people to pay another price for what Jesus has already accomplished. We proclaim grace and turn in faith toward Christ.

When I say that the springs are in Roma settlements, I am not claiming that poverty, Roma ancestry, or a cultural trait carries life in itself. I mean that Christ is present there too, and that rivers of living water can begin to flow from within the person who believes in him. The Source is one; springs rise in many lives.

Our ministry is not the manufacture of water. Faith, calling, and anointing cannot be beaten out of anyone. Organizational pressure cannot produce what only the Holy Spirit gives. We can show Christ, preach Scripture, pray, teach, and make room. The water comes from him.

Do Not Strike the People

A staff need not be physical. Shame can be a staff. So can threats, constant interrogation, authority built on title, or financial dependence that allows someone to remain in the work only while agreeing with us in everything. Training itself can become a staff when it reproduces the trainer instead of releasing the disciple.

Striking promises a quick result. A person complies because they are afraid. A group moves because pressure has been applied. A local leader carries out the center’s decision because support may disappear. Everything looks orderly from the outside. Inside,

conviction, responsibility, and maturity have not been born. When the staff disappears, everything stops.

The spoken word works differently. It addresses the person. It tells the truth and calls forth faith. It names what God has hidden within a life. It does not remove responsibility but awakens it. It does not say, “Without me you can do nothing.” It says, “Christ can live in you. The Holy Spirit can guide you. You too have a calling.”

Speaking to the Rock does not mean flattering people. We cannot call everyone a leader before they have learned to serve. We cannot label irresponsibility as faith or keep silent about sin. Correction, however, should form Christ in the person rather than crush them. Truth is Christlike when it is spoken in love and leads toward life.

The Holy Spirit Leads in the Present Tense

The Holy Spirit is not opposed to methods. He can use a staff, organization, training, an institution, technology, or a carefully written action plan. None of these may take his place. A tool remains a blessing only while it is continually submitted to what God is saying now.

The first movement of ministry is therefore not action, but attention. Moses had to enter the presence of the Lord. We too return to Scripture, prayer, and communal discernment. Fresh guidance is not a sudden idea or an unaccountable inner voice. It does not contradict Scripture, the character of Christ, or the fruit of the Spirit.

We do not have to deny yesterday’s revelation. God has not changed, and the heart of the calling remains. We still preach the gospel, make disciples, prepare leaders, and send people. The questions are about form, order, people, and emphasis: how should we do these things now, in what sequence, through whom, and with what weight?

Fresh guidance is not a search for fashion. It does not make everything old bad or everything new good. The Lord leads; yesterday's success does not. Sometimes he asks the same thing as yesterday. At other times he stops us: "Take the staff with you, but do not raise it now. Speak."

Words That Release a Spring

As I carry a renewed burden to connect scattered Roma churches, I must take this seriously. We cannot force every community into the same organizational shape, and covenant must not become a new dependence. There must be room among us for those who use different language or follow methods unfamiliar to us.

We proclaim Christ and listen to one another. We recognize what God has entrusted to each church. One may be strong in prayer; another in reaching children. One gives birth to evangelists. Another has received grace for pastoral care, worship, training, or service to the wider community. Covenant does not erase these distinctions. It joins them in Christ.

With our words we name what God sees: calling beyond poverty, and a possible new beginning in Christ beyond yesterday's failure. A person whom society has called a recipient, target group, or problem is recognized as a son or daughter, disciple, leader, and messenger.

Words also give responsibility. If I tell a young person that God wants to use them, I must make room for them. If I recognize a local leader, I must entrust real work to that person. If I preach that a spring can rise within them, I cannot keep every decision, microphone, and measure of trust forever in my own hands. Spoken faith must be followed by transferred responsibility.

The Water Is Not Ours

Perhaps Moses' most dangerous sentence was, "Must *we* bring water out of this rock for you?" For a moment, he and Aaron sounded like the source. Heavy responsibility can draw a leader into the belief that he is indispensable—as if without him there will be no water, order, or future.

The water is not ours. The vision is not our property. The people do not belong to us. We are servants who hear the Lord's word and do what he says. The greatness of a ministry is not measured by how many people depend on us, but by how many learn, alongside us, to drink from Christ.

I take Moses' story seriously because a leader who has been faithful for a lifetime can still misjudge the movement required in the next season. He may have witnessed miracles and yet act from habit or anger. My greatest danger is probably not that I will do nothing. It is that I will continue doing, with great strength, something God no longer asks me to do in that way.

So I must stand before the Rock again and again. I do not want to strike people or repeat yesterday's method. I want to proclaim Christ and obey what the Holy Spirit says today.

He is the Source. He gives the water.

We must be ready to gather vessels that will receive the life and carry it onward.

8. Empty Vessels, Overflowing Oil

Gathering vessels is not an organizational technique. It is preparation for what God intends to pour out.

In the widow's story, the oil did not begin to flow after every circumstance had been resolved. The debt remained. The threat was real. The house was still poor.

Then came a question: "What do you have?"

And a command: "Go and gather empty vessels—and do not gather only a few."

God often begins a miracle not with what we still need to obtain, but with what he has preserved in the middle of despair: a small jar of oil; a person who still prays; a home that will still open; a leader who has not surrendered to bitterness; a relationship that many divisions have not completely torn apart.

Our task now is to gather vessels. I do not mean collecting people beneath a new name or center. I mean forming relationships in Christ—a covenant space in which vessels do not compete to prove which one is more valuable, but each offers itself to God.

The larger does not shame the smaller. The older does not exclude the new. The trained person does not rule over the ordinary believer. Every vessel has a place. Every vessel is needed.

The oil is not ours. We cannot manufacture it; we can only receive it. But we can gather vessels. We can pray, train, encourage, connect, and send. We can prepare the human conditions so that, when God acts, what he has prepared for communities, families, and nations is not poured out onto the ground.

We Must Become Empty First

In Kecskemét I added an important qualification. When we speak of empty vessels, we easily think first of those who do not yet know Christ. But gathering vessels begins with us. Believers too must pass through an emptying.

We pour out resentment, possessiveness, self-justification, and the compulsion to control everything. God does not intend to make us into nothing. He is making room within us for what he wants to give.

A vessel can therefore be both a person and a community. It is a person becoming a disciple; a home opening its door; a house church where two or three remain together in Christ's name, learn, pray, and obey; a local leader no longer content only to listen, but ready to carry responsibility. Every such life and every such community becomes new space for the oil.

At the beginning of Romans, Paul calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ before he calls himself an apostle. The order matters. Mission always grows from our relationship to the Lord. Title, authority, and commission cannot come before a servant's heart. People should first see that we belong to Christ and serve them in love.

Grace freely received cannot be repaid, yet it makes us debtors to love. We cannot keep what we have received. As long as someone has not heard the good news, or a young person carries the hidden beginnings of a leader, our task remains. The oil was not given for us alone. It must flow.

This requires focus. We cannot begin everything simply because it is possible. We must not accept burdens that slowly turn our eyes from the first calling: find people, proclaim Christ, form disciples, prepare them, and send them. The Holy Spirit may lead through creative paths and into places we would never have imagined. Yet

the road always moves toward the lost person and the messenger Christ forms from that life.

At this point vision becomes a practical plan. A relational network, training, travel, communication, and financial support are needed because obedience has both a cost and an order. None can replace the Holy Spirit. God conceived Noah's ark, but Noah had to build it. God multiplied the widow's oil, but she and her sons had to gather the vessels.

Now it is our turn to go out and gather them.

9. How I Moved from Church-Centred Thinking to Kingdom Thinking

Not a new method, but a new centre: the present rule of God

> *'Make disciples of all nations.'*

When I came to faith, I lived through a season in which the presence of God was powerful and tangible in the churches. The work of the Holy Spirit was not merely a teaching or a theological idea. People encountered God, and that encounter truly changed their lives. Conversion carried weight: the old life collided with Christ, and new life came out of that collision.

Later, however, I increasingly saw conversion reduced in many places to a conscious decision, an emotional experience, or joining a community. People said a sinner's prayer, began attending church, and found friends, while what no Christian life can do without was sometimes missing: a personal encounter with God, being filled with his presence, and bowing to his rule.

I have often said that a person must meet Christ head-on. There must be a complete collision with him. Christ does not come so that we can add a few religious habits to our old life. He calls us to himself, and that encounter cannot leave untouched our hearts, our families, our decisions, or the way we treat other people.

Not Members, but Disciples

Through this I came to understand more deeply that it is not enough to call people to conversion. It is not enough to lead them in a prayer and then say, 'Now come to church, and everything will be all right.' A sinner's prayer is not in itself discipleship, and church membership is not the same as living under the rule of God. Jesus' command takes us further: make disciples of all nations.

A disciple is not simply a member of a denomination, church, or local congregation. A disciple is a follower of Christ—wanting to be where Christ is, to go where he leads, to listen, learn, and do what he says. Disciples do not merely hear the Word. They allow it to transform their thinking, character, relationships, family life, attitude to money and work, decisions, and whole way of life.

This conviction led us to establish several forms of training, including the Christian Roma Folk College. It was important for people to receive biblical foundations and be equipped for ministry. Over the years, however, I had to face a hard truth: a curriculum alone cannot make anyone a disciple. Information can be passed to a crowd; life is passed through relationship.

Discipleship requires personal accompaniment, mentoring, and spiritual fatherhood. Every person needs someone behind them who notices, asks, listens, prays with them, discusses Scripture with them, stays beside them through failure, and demonstrates through life what it means to follow Christ. Someone who receives only a Sunday message, with no one walking alongside from Monday to Saturday, can easily be left alone precisely where the greatest battles are being fought.

We often treat a new believer as though we were saying to a small child, 'There is the refrigerator. You will find sausage and fat inside, and you know where the bread is. Make yourself something to eat.' But a child first needs milk, then soft food, and only later solid food. In spiritual life too, we must patiently nourish, accompany, and strengthen those who have been born again. If we neglect this,

we should not be surprised when many are converted and then become stuck.

When One Transformed Life Speaks to an Entire Settlement

I remember a man who lived with his wife and five children in a Roma settlement, in what was known as a reduced-value house. The state had built these one-room-and-kitchen homes in the 1960s and 1970s. The man drank heavily, spent all the family's money on alcohol, beat his wife, and terrified his children. There was no furniture. They slept on straw, kept their clothes on a washing line stretched across the room, and had no bathroom.

When he came to faith, an immediate and visible change took place. He gave up alcohol and cigarettes, no longer abused his wife, and family life began to come into order. This was a genuine deliverance, but the story could not end there. A changed heart did not automatically teach him how to manage money, create a home, or establish new family habits.

He received practical help and personal guidance. He learned to budget, furnish the house, and use as a family the things that entered their home. In time he built a bathroom and added a small room to the house. Faith did not remain an invisible, private matter. It took visible form in peace within the family, personal responsibility, and the order of their home.

His transformation did not remain within his own walls. People in the settlement saw what had happened and said, 'If he could do it, why couldn't we?' Even people who did not attend church followed his example: they built bathrooms, extended houses, and bought furniture. One transformed man became a model for his community. The Kingdom of God took root in one life and then awakened hope across a settlement.

I witnessed a similar process in another completely segregated Roma settlement about two hundred kilometres away. It lay three or four kilometres outside the nearby town, and even the police were afraid to enter. Yet we went in to preach the gospel. One family came to faith first, and through that family we reached others. Twenty years later, we see better-built and more orderly houses, people looking for work, and a safer, better-cared-for environment. It began with one family, but it did not stop with one family.

The Person Someone Had to Notice

I also think of someone whose life looked reasonably well ordered from the outside. This person had come to faith, prayed, attended church, and tried to live as a good believer. Yet bitterness remained, joy and peace were missing, health was poor, and many burdens were still being carried. This person sat in church, but no one truly paid attention. Someone can be present at every meeting and still remain invisible.

When I recognised what was happening, I began meeting regularly with this believer and offering personal discipleship. During that season, the person encountered Christ personally. Bitterness disappeared, joy and peace appeared, and physical restoration was also experienced. The change could begin because someone noticed, came alongside, and made time.

This story engraved something deeply in me: it is not enough to count how many people sit in church. We must see who is sitting alone in the crowd, who fulfils religious expectations while remaining inwardly bound, and beside whom we must sit so that we can lead that person closer not merely to church practice, but to Christ himself.

Life Can Only Be Passed on through Life

About twenty years ago, I met weekly with a group of ten young people. This was more than a Bible school, a teaching programme, or a house group. I shared my personal struggles, failures, and questions with them. During one of the hardest seasons of my life, they saw how I wept, how I laid my burdens before God, how I stood up again, and how God turned my mourning into joy.

We walked together for more than two years, and all ten young people became leaders. This was not because they had watched a perfect leader, but because they had seen the work of Christ up close in the life of a real person. I understood more deeply that discipleship is not merely the transfer of teaching; it is a shared life. I pass on what I live in Christ, and the other person will one day pass it on to someone else.

A Vision Long Suppressed by Church Culture

Looking back, I can see that this way of thinking was present from the beginning of my ministry. At fifteen, I led young people in visiting older people to clean, tidy their gardens, and shovel snow. In the early 2000s, we created an alcohol-free, drug-free, and smoke-free place for young people in a renovated, abandoned synagogue. We ran a pizzeria, café, and restaurant, then launched employment, training, women's, and social programmes. I always sensed that the gospel had to address the whole person and the whole community.

Yet the church culture around me and the prevailing teaching of that time often suppressed this conviction within me. The main questions were frequently how the church could grow, how many people attended a meeting, and how someone could fit into the system of the congregation. A different question kept rising within me: what happens to a person, a family, a street, and a settlement after the sinner's prayer has been said?

The vision did not die; it simply lacked room for a long time. By the early 2000s, I was already teaching about multiplication through the picture of a strawberry plant: a single plant sends out runners, the runners take root and become new plants, and then those plants multiply until the whole garden bears fruit. I could not yet place every element into a precise framework, but I understood that the gospel does not merely gather people around one centre. It produces life that produces more life.

When the Kingdom of God Became the Centre

The decisive turning point came through the message of the Kingdom of God. I did not simply add a new topic to my existing teaching, nor did I merely receive a better method for building a church. The Kingdom message shifted my thinking about the church, ministry, leadership, success, and the human person. The centre changed. It was no longer what we build for God, but what the King does when his rule is given room in people and communities.

For me, the Kingdom of God means the present rule of Jesus Christ. It is not another name for the church, a denominational system, a social programme, or only a distant future reality. It becomes visible wherever a person allows Christ to bring faith, character, relationships, family life, work, money, decisions, and the use of entrusted authority under his direction.

The teaching of Prepare International helped the convictions already living within me—but often held as separate insights—come together as a coherent biblical vision. Teaching on the Kingdom of God and the Antioch church model revealed the unity of discipleship, preparing leaders, sending, multiplication, and caring for those in need. What I had carried as an inner restlessness and in partial insights received a name, a language, and a direction.

Ian Green's personal encouragement, our conversations, and his teaching on discipleship also helped me greatly in this process. The

Talmidim perspective placed Jesus' command before me again: the task is not to gather occasional participants, but to form disciples who can themselves call and accompany others into following Christ. Ian gave me more than a theory. He challenged me to think consistently about what this means in practice for leaders, small communities, and a movement.

Eddy Leo's teaching on disciples formed through relationship, life-giving community, and the calling of every believer to minister also confronted me sharply with the limits of spectator Christianity. If people remain merely an audience for ministry, a church easily becomes the work of a few. When everyone is both a disciple and a minister, the community becomes a living body: every member gives, carries responsibility, grows, and passes on what has been received.

The ministry of Ian Green and Eddy Leo, together with the Prepare International community, confirmed and sharpened what God had planted in me earlier. They did not receive the vision in my place; they helped me recognise its full consequences. I could no longer measure success in the same way. The first question was no longer how many people attended, but who had encountered Christ, who was learning to obey him, who had someone walking alongside personally, who was becoming a disciple-maker, and where a family or community had begun to change.

The Place of the Church in the Kingdom

This revelation did not lead me away from the church. It freed me from treating the church as the final destination. The local church is indispensable: a home for the presence of Christ, a family of disciples, a place of healing and equipping, and a sending community. But it does not exist for itself. It fulfils its calling when it becomes a visible local expression of the Kingdom of God, equipping and sending people to live under and represent the rule of Christ in every sphere of life.

This is why the relationship between micro- and macro-communities became decisive for me. Jesus said that where two or three gather in his name, he is there among them. Christ lives in me, but when we gather in his name, Christ is also present among us. A community of two or three disciples is not an insignificant version of a large church. It is a real place where people know one another, take responsibility for one another's lives, obey, serve, and multiply.

Jesus did not send his disciples out in pairs by accident. They proclaimed that the Kingdom of God had come near, healed the sick, brought freedom, and were accompanied by signs. The Kingdom appeared not merely as correct doctrine, but with power, presence, and obedience. I do not want to tame this supernatural reality out of my message, because I have experienced it repeatedly in my own life and ministry.

The Kingdom beyond the Walls of the Church

Kingdom thinking also changed the way I see social work, education, employment, and community development. These are not substitutes for the gospel. They belong to our mission because God is not seeking to save a soul detached from the rest of life; he addresses the whole person. We cannot say that we care about someone's soul while the future of their children, their housing, unemployment, or daily vulnerability is none of our concern.

The story of the Zsinóros Community House, described earlier, became a tangible example. The desire to serve had been in me since I was fifteen, but in the early 2000s it took organised form. Evangelism led to discipleship; personal relationships revealed struggles with family life, housing, education, and employment; and the Kingdom vision moved us to respond responsibly to those realities as well.

God entrusts to us what we can do through natural means. We must learn, work, organise, plan, and serve. Yet there are situations

in which every human possibility is exhausted. Then only a miracle can help. The supernatural is natural to God. When he reaches into what seems impossible, a spring can rise in the desert.

This is why I believe that Roma settlements, which many see only as places of misery and failure, can become flourishing oases. Life-giving water can rise where others see no future. God can begin radical change in the very communities the world has written off, confounding the confidence of the wise, the powerful, and the decision-makers. People will ask, 'How could this happen here?'

I am convinced that processes can begin in Roma settlements that touch not only individual families or villages, but Hungary, the Carpathian Basin, and Europe. This is my calling. I long for a movement across denominational boundaries that connects centres of Kingdom power and carries discipleship into small villages and Roma settlements. I do not want to found a new church or a new religion. I want the power of the Kingdom to flow through existing churches, personal relationships, and multiplying communities of disciples.

My journey, then, was more than an expansion of church-centred thinking. The message of the Kingdom of God transformed my thinking and my posture. It changed what I consider the goal, how I measure fruit, what I expect of a leader, and how I see the person who first walks through a church door. The final aim is not that the person should remain inside, but that they should meet the King, learn to live under his rule, become a disciple, make other disciples, and become a channel through which their surroundings are transformed.

The church is not the final destination. It is a gateway, a workshop, a family, and a sending community. At the centre stand neither our institution, our name, nor our programme, but the King and his Kingdom.

10. Where Two or Three Gather

Presence forms community; community forms disciples; discipleship becomes mission

> *"Where two or three gather in my name, I am there among them."*
> *— Matthew 18:20*

We often quote this verse when attendance is low. We reassure ourselves that empty chairs do not matter because Jesus promised his presence even to two or three. That is true, but his words mean far more. They are not a consolation prize for a poorly attended meeting or an explanation for why we reached no one else. Jesus is showing us one of the deepest secrets of how community is born.

In Matthew's Gospel, this promise stands among teachings about searching for the one who wandered, restoring a brother or sister, praying in agreement, and forgiving. Jesus is not describing a few people holding a religious program in a room. He is speaking of people who turn toward one another in his name, bring relationships into truth and love, ask together, obey together, and refuse to give up on the one who is lost.

For me, the key word remains *among*. Christ does not live only in believers as isolated individuals. He enters the space of their relationships. When two people forgive one another, when three pray for someone far from God, when one speaks honestly about fear and another carries rather than judges that burden, the essence of church begins to become visible.

Two or three are not necessarily what remains after a church has declined. They may be the seed from which a church grows. This is not a reduced worship service. It is a relational space in which the

Word takes flesh, love becomes practice, and a newcomer can find room.

Once we see this, a kitchen table, an opened living room, and two uncertain people learning to pray look different. We stop asking, "Are these all who came?" We ask, "What might be born here from the presence of Christ?"

Not a Discount for Small Numbers

Small is not automatically healthy. Two people can become as inward-looking as two thousand. A house group can develop control, resentment, false teaching, or dependence on one personality. Jesus' promise is not attached to every gathering. It belongs to those who gather *in his name*.

His name is more than a sign on the door. It means his rule. He decides how we treat one another, what we believe, how we act, and toward whom we move.

A micro-community is therefore not an escape from church. It is not a secret circle of people who consider themselves purer or more spiritual than everyone else. Nor is it an audience gathered around one powerful person. It is a discipleship relationship ordered around Christ, open toward those who do not yet know him, willing to be taught, and connected to the wider body of Christ.

Our aim is not to create the smallest possible communities. It is to ensure that no person remains invisible. In a crowd, we can hide pain, unbelief, unresolved relationships, and the fact that we have not spoken to anyone about Jesus in months. Among two or three, what lies behind our words soon becomes visible. Nearness makes it harder to perform a role.

In the Temple and from House to House

The first church in Acts lived in two rhythms. Believers gathered in the temple courts and broke bread from house to house. They needed both the larger fellowship and the smaller one.

The public gathering gave shared vision, apostolic teaching, celebration, and public witness. In homes, a brother or sister gained a face, questions had room, the hungry found a table, and love took an everyday form.

We do not have to choose between the large church and the small fellowship. They are healthy when they serve each other. A larger gathering lifts our eyes and reminds us that we belong to a body and mission greater than ourselves. A small fellowship brings that same truth close: Who will remain beside me today? Who will ask how I obeyed the Word? With whom will I share the good news this week?

In Békés we learned early that a long road lies between a decision and the life of a disciple. After the 1998 tent mission, fifty people indicated that a desire had awakened in their hearts, yet the church record honestly adds that only five remained. After the large evangelistic event the following year, sixty interested people needed regular visits and spiritual care. From another tent campaign, where thirty or forty responses were recorded, four or five people eventually became rooted in the fellowship.

I do not read these numbers simply as failure, but as instruction. A large event may open a door, but relationship leads a person through it. The moment of decision is precious, yet it cannot replace visits, Scripture, questions, patient support through stumbling, and the small community in which someone is missed when absent.

A response card preserves an address. Love learns a person’s name. It is therefore not enough to gather those who have come forward.

We must stand beside them, receive them, and help a decision become obedience and obedience become a new life.

Again and again, Hungary's Roma mission began in homes. In some villages, ten or fifteen relatives and neighbors gathered in one house. Certain homes hosted prayer and Bible teaching for many years. Often there was no prayer house, trained preacher, or established organization. There was an open door and a handful of people waiting for God.

Uszka began this way too. The home was not merely a temporary solution until a better venue could be found. It placed the gospel close to life. Scripture was heard in the same room where family conflict, scarcity, children's noise, and daily struggle were present. Faith could not remain a Sunday vocabulary. It had to enter the family's story.

The Micro-Community: Two or Three

I use the term *micro-community* for two or three people who gather regularly around Christ as disciples. The label is not important, and every meeting need not look the same. What matters is the presence of Scripture, honest conversation, specific prayer, obedience, and mission.

Scripture here is not a short sermon delivered by one person to the other two. They read together and ask:

- What does this show us about Jesus?
- What does it uncover in me?
- What must I obey now?
- With whom should I share this?

At the next meeting they do more than read another passage. They return to the decision made previously and ask what became of it. Knowledge becomes discipleship through obedience.

Honesty requires trust. What is shared in confidence must not become material for conversation elsewhere. We do not soften sin, but neither do we shame the person. We do not act as spiritual experts over one another. We listen, pray, seek help from a mature leader when necessary, and take the next true step together.

Confidentiality can never become cover for abuse or immediate danger. It should protect a person from gossip and humiliation, not protect harm from being addressed.

A micro-community remains alive when its door opens outward. The two or three pray by name for someone Christ wants to reach. They do not treat that person as a project. They listen, offer practical help, share their lives and the gospel, and make a place for them. The group grows not because it recruits members, but because love cannot remain closed inside itself.

This is also where the next leader often becomes visible. That person may not yet be able to teach at length, but arrives faithfully, notices when someone is missing, dares to pray, admits a mistake, and invites a relative or neighbor. The seed of leadership often appears first in quiet faithfulness rather than on a platform.

The Family-Sized Community: An Open Home

When several micro-communities connect, or when one small group grows to twelve or fourteen people, a family-sized house church may form. The number is neither law nor biblical formula. It is a practical threshold: people can still fit into a living room, sit around a table, and participate without becoming anonymous listeners.

Church life can appear more fully in this setting. There may be worship, Bible learning, intercession, testimony, care for one another's burdens, and shared service. Children are not interruptions; they are part of the life of the community. Around the table, people discover who has no food. In prayer, the need for

peace in a particular family may come to light. After reading Scripture, the group can decide what it will do.

Such a community need not reproduce every element of a large service. If the host stands behind a miniature pulpit and everyone else becomes an audience on fewer chairs, the home loses one of its greatest gifts: participation.

The leader's task is not to fill every minute. It is to order people around Christ, guard the integrity of teaching, make room for others to serve, and ensure that no one disappears unnoticed.

When the house fills, the first response need not be a search for a larger room. We should ask whether another leader has begun to emerge and another home is ready to open. A new community launched with blessing, love, and continuing relationship is not a split. We are not losing people. We are making room for those who have not yet arrived.

Two Circles, One Life

The micro-community and the family-sized house church are not competing programs. They are two circles of the same life.

Among two or three, depth, personal responsibility, and rapid movement are possible. In the house church, family life, diverse gifts, shared service, and local presence take shape. Micro-communities feed the house church; the house church protects, teaches, and sends them.

Both need the wider body of Christ. A local group cannot carry every teaching, pastoral, prophetic, and organizational responsibility alone. Some questions, crises, and decisions require mature leaders, a wider range of gifts, and shared discernment. The larger church can provide training, protection, correction, celebration, and common mission. The smaller community brings real stories, emerging leaders, and newly reached people back into the larger body.

Healthy connection is not ownership by a center. Decisions do not all need to be made far away, nor must every local community wear the same form. What we need is a shared gospel, mutual responsibility, and relationships we have chosen to honor.

A local leader receives genuine room to act without being abandoned. He or she serves freely in the entrusted place while remaining teachable and accountable.

We must protect this movement in both directions. If everything flows upward, the center grows strong and local people remain weak. If every relationship is cut, we may appear independent quickly but become isolated and lose our way. Maturity is responsibility carried in relationship.

The Law of the Strawberry Runner

I often use the picture of a strawberry plant. A healthy plant sends out a runner. At the end of it, a new plant forms. At first the young plant receives nourishment from the mother plant while taking root in its own ground. When it becomes strong, it sends out runners of its own. In a few years, one plant can become an entire bed, while every new plant is genuinely rooted.

Discipleship and church planting are healthy in the same way. If the runner is cut too early, the new plant may dry out. If it is never allowed to form roots of its own, it remains dependent and cannot reproduce. If every runner is turned back into the same pot, many leaves eventually compete for limited space and no new field appears.

A good leader both connects and releases. The leader stays near the disciple without attaching the disciple to himself. He provides nourishment while encouraging the person to become rooted in Christ. A leader’s joy becomes complete when a disciple can love, teach, strengthen, and send someone else.

Local Leaders Do Not Arrive as Finished Products

In January 1997 we opened a three-year Bible school with more than thirty students. By then one thing was clear: mission cannot be sustained by visiting a community from outside. We may preach the gospel in a village and begin meetings, but unless local people rise—people who know the families, speak the community's language, and remain on Monday—the work will stay fragile.

We saw the same pattern in later training programs. Those who arrived first as students became servants and leaders. It did not happen overnight, and a title did not create it. Scripture, shared ministry, personal accompaniment, and genuine responsibility formed them. Training reached its purpose when learning became visible in peace restored to a family, a person newly reached, or a community beginning to gather.

Most local leaders do not appear as finished products. Their speech may be uncertain. Their biblical knowledge may have gaps. Their character may still need formation. This is not a reason to abandon them, and it is not a reason to entrust them with nothing.

The first question is not how impressive they appear. Are they faithful? Teachable? Do they love people, accept responsibility, and allow Christ to bring order to their life?

The best preparation happens while serving. First a person prays for someone. Later they gather two or three, share what they understood from a short passage of Scripture, or visit someone who is ill. We entrust them with a conversation and then review together what happened. They receive room to make mistakes without carrying the consequences alone. A task becomes learning; learning becomes character; character becomes dependable leadership.

This requires patience from the mentor. Doing everything ourselves would be faster and tidier. But whatever remains in one

person's hands may stop when that person stops. Discipleship slows us in the short term and opens roads in the long term to places we could never reach ourselves.

Why So Many Small Communities Stop

Roma mission has known a wearying pattern: a few traveling workers tried to keep groups alive in several communities every day. When the workers arrived, preaching and energy arrived. When they could not come, the group weakened. The problem was not a lack of faithfulness in those workers. The structure made them indispensable and trained local people to wait.

We can repeat the same mistake with modern technology. Everything is built around one charismatic leader. We send ready-made teaching but never teach people to read and obey Scripture for themselves. The center organizes meetings, provides money, resolves conflicts, and announces the next step. The group attends but never learns responsibility.

At other times, a small fellowship turns inward. The same people sit in the same place. They know one another's problems well, yet no new person has been invited for a long time. Safety becomes comfort, closeness becomes a clique, and shared history becomes resistance to change. The group remains small not because it is a seed, but because it has closed its shell.

Unresolved conflict, mistrust around money, an unaccountable leader, or shallow teaching can also stop a community. Love must not be used to hide these things. A small group needs transparency, clean financial practice, biblical correction, protection for children and vulnerable people, and a relationship through which help can be sought. A family atmosphere must never mean family secrecy.

Not every group has to be kept alive forever in exactly the same form. Some need renewal; some need connection with others; some should close in peace so that people can take root elsewhere. The

goal is not a statistic of groups. It is living disciples and people being reached.

Five Movements of an Opening Home

How can this begin in a community where there is no church?

The first movement is **prayer**. Find one or two people with whom you will come regularly before Christ. Write down the names of those God places on your hearts. Pray for their families, for the community, and for a person of peace who may open relationships and perhaps a home.

The second movement is **obedience**. Read short portions of Scripture and choose one concrete response each time: an apology, a visit, help in a practical need, a testimony, an invitation. Do not measure the amount of material covered. Look at what changes in your lives and relationships.

The third movement is **opening**. Do not wait until every question can be answered. Invite to the table someone whom God has already brought near. Listen to their story. Share simply what Jesus has done for you. As the group grows, protect the atmosphere in which every person can speak and ask.

The fourth movement is **transferred responsibility**. From the beginning, watch for the next person. Give more than errands. Let them pray, guide a conversation, care for someone, and receive honest feedback. By the time the house church reaches family size, at least two people should be able to carry leadership so that everything does not rest on one person.

The fifth movement is **sending**. When another two or three people and an open home are ready, bless them and let them begin. Remain connected. Meet with leaders, learn together, and share burdens and joys. The new community should not be a copy. It should become a new local expression of the same life of Christ.

This requires no complex administration, but it does require simple order. We should know for whom we are praying, who needs care, what we promised, who is learning to lead, and what the next missional step is. Records are not kept to justify ourselves with numbers. They help us forget no one and see honestly whether real fruit is growing.

From Presence to Network

A national vision appears impossible if we imagine only buildings, full-time pastors, and major events. We cannot build a prayer house in every Hungarian community at once or send an outside leader everywhere. But there is no place where two or three cannot begin to pray. There is no family beyond the possible reach of an opening home.

A network is not an organizational chart drawn from above. It grows from living relationships. Micro-communities connect into house churches. House churches connect with local and regional fellowships. Leaders do more than submit reports. They pray for one another, learn from one another, ask for help, and go into mission together. What remains personal at the small scale gains shared strength at the larger one.

This leads to another question. How do we connect small fires without extinguishing them? How can we share order without possessing one another? How can rivalry be healed and scattered Roma churches become allies?

The answer is not another powerful center. It is covenant in Christ.

The micro-community teaches us to look into one another's eyes. The house church teaches us to carry the people of one place together. Covenant teaches us not to keep entrusted grace for ourselves but to contribute it to the whole.

Jesus is the Source, and he is among us. When two or three truly gather in his name, a home may open. When a home opens, a

leader may rise. When leaders attach people to Christ rather than to themselves, communities multiply. When these communities enter covenant, scattered lights can become a sign that an entire nation begins to see.

11. Antioch—When a Center Becomes a Doorway

Covenant recognizes grace, supplies what is missing, and sends people onward with blessing

> *"When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad."*
> *— Acts 11:23*

The church at Antioch shows how small fires can be connected without being extinguished. Acts does not give us a completed organizational chart. It gives us a series of movements: recognize what God has already begun; strengthen the people; add the gifts that are needed; hear the Holy Spirit's call to send; and remain in relationship with those who go.

We should not copy Antioch without reflection, as though one form of church were the only biblical answer in every century and culture. The New Testament is not an organizational manual. Antioch is more like a mirror. It shows that a church can be deeply local and far-seeing, caring and sending, ordered and open to the unexpected initiative of the Holy Spirit.

Nor must we make Jerusalem the villain in order to learn from Antioch. Both churches belonged to the same Christ. They remained connected, learned from one another, and helped each other in need. Their differences are not material for constructing new camps. They warn us that any church can turn inward—and that any church can open a door toward the nations.

It Was Not Born from a Center

The church in Antioch was born through persecution and scattering. After Stephen's death, believers traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. We do not know all their names. They did not arrive as an apostolic delegation with an established office, budget, or ministry brand behind them. They carried the news of Jesus.

Some crossed a cultural boundary others had not yet crossed. They spoke not only to their own people, but also proclaimed the Lord Jesus to those of Greek background. Scripture does not celebrate their technique; it does not even record their names. It simply says that the Lord's hand was with them and many believed.

This places leadership in its proper order. Antioch did not come alive because a great leader arrived carrying life. God had already acted before Barnabas reached the city. Grace preceded the visitor. People were already speaking about Jesus. New disciples, movement, questions, hunger, and probably considerable disorder were already present.

We must remember this in Roma settlements. We can bring biblical knowledge, relationships, training, and practical help from outside. We do not bring God. He is already present before us. He has already spoken to someone. He has preserved a woman who prays for her family. He has awakened a man who may not preach elegantly but cannot remain silent about what Jesus did for him. He has already opened a home.

So I say it again: the springs are in the Roma settlements.

Outside help is needed, but its first task is to recognize and release local life, not replace it. Miss this, and we gather an audience. See it, and we may discover disciples and messengers.

Learning to See Grace

Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. It was a wise decision. A new and unfamiliar work had begun, and a mature person was needed to discern what was happening. Barnabas did not enter with a checklist. Scripture says that he saw the grace of God, rejoiced, and encouraged the people to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

First he saw. Then he rejoiced. Then he strengthened.

That order teaches us much about covenant. It is easy to enter a young community and notice the deficiencies first. The room is unsuitable. There is no trained pastor. The worship is simple. Theological language is imprecise. Financial systems are underdeveloped. Some of these may be real and urgent concerns. Barnabas still named grace before he named lack.

Recognizing grace does not mean suspending judgment. We should not call every spontaneous event the work of the Holy Spirit. Barnabas could encourage wisely because he was a good man, full of faith and the Holy Spirit. He could distinguish life from noise and early fruit from excitement alone. Yet he refused to suffocate what God had begun beneath his own system.

A regional or national ministry should arrive in a village with the same questions. Where can God's grace be seen here? Who is already carrying people? Who opens a home faithfully? Who reconciles families? Who dares to speak the gospel? Who is teachable? Who remains after visiting workers have gone home?

Once grace is recognized and named, it can be strengthened. People often begin to accept responsibility when a mature leader says, "I see God at work in you." Such words do not award a title. They awaken faith to obey what has already been received.

Barnabas Went to Find Saul

Barnabas soon recognized that the growing church needed a gift he did not carry alone. He went to Tarsus, searched for Saul, and brought him to Antioch. Together they taught the church for a year.

An insecure leader fears that a strong gift will take his place. A kingdom-minded leader asks, “What do these people need, and whom has God prepared to meet that need?” Barnabas did not build a protected territory around himself. He brought alongside him a man whose ministry would later become more visible and reach farther than his own.

This is easy to admire and difficult to live. We gladly encourage an emerging leader while that person still needs us. Fear can rise when others begin seeking them, when they teach better than we do, when new doors open before them, or when they ask questions we never asked. Will there still be a place for me? Will anyone remember that I helped them begin?

Barnabas shows that the joy of spiritual fatherhood or motherhood is another person’s growth. When a disciple discovers a calling and reaches places the mentor could never reach, the relationship has borne fruit. Without Barnabas, perhaps we would not know Paul as we do. Part of Barnabas’ greatness is that he did not insist on remaining first.

Complementary gifts became a team in Antioch. Barnabas encouraged and raised people. Saul taught, laid foundations, and later opened paths into new territories. Neither carried everything. A healthy movement does not form around a leader who can do everything. It grows through relationships among people who know what they have received and honor what God has given to others.

The year of teaching had a purpose beyond creating religious attendees. It formed disciples who resembled Christ. Antioch was the place where the disciples were first called Christians. The label

mattered less than the visible reality that people could see to whom they belonged.

Training is not complete when someone can repeat the material. It reaches its purpose when Christ becomes visible in decisions, family relationships, the use of money, a servant's heart, and the passing on of the gospel.

Different People at One Table

Acts 13 names prophets and teachers in Antioch from widely different backgrounds: Barnabas from Cyprus, Saul from Tarsus, Lucius from Cyrene, Simeon called Niger, and Manaen, who had been raised with Herod the tetrarch. Different regions, stories, and social experiences sat at one table.

This diversity was not decoration. It belonged to the mission. A single cultural viewpoint tends to reproduce itself. A diverse team recognizes more quickly when habit has been confused with the gospel. It can come close to different kinds of people, and its decisions are shaped by questions that might never arise within a uniform leadership group.

For that reason, a Roma leader's voice is not an optional addition to Roma mission. Without it, decisions are made about people whose daily reality decision-makers do not know from within.

Roma leaders do not need isolation either. In Christ's body, Roma believers need non-Roma brothers and sisters, the gifts of other denominations, the experience of elders, the questions of young people, and the service of women and men. This is not so that one group may dominate another. It is so that our obedience may become fuller together.

Covenant is not sameness. We need not sing in one style, follow one order of worship, or operate an identical program in every village. Christ is our common center, the gospel our foundation, and the

Great Commission our common direction. From that center, difference can become a gift instead of a threat.

A Center That Sends Its Best

The leaders in Antioch were worshiping the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit said to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which he had called them. The scene is sobering. Mission did not begin as one leader's plan for personal expansion. It was born from worship, fasting, and a word from God heard together.

The Holy Spirit did not ask for expendable people. Barnabas and Saul had become central leaders in the church. If they stayed, they could have continued strengthening it. Antioch released them anyway. The church did not protect its own convenience; it obeyed what God intended to do among the nations.

Here we discover whether a center is a magnet or a doorway.

A magnet draws everything toward itself: people, money, decisions, visibility, and gifts. It celebrates what remains inside.

A doorway gathers, welcomes, and prepares people in order to open a way forward. It does not consider itself poorer because someone has been sent. It knows that whatever goes onward for Christ has not been lost. It has multiplied.

The laying on of hands expressed both identification and release. The church did not say, "From now on you are no longer connected to us." It prayed, fasted, laid hands on them, and declared that their mission was also the church's mission. At the same time, it did not hold them on a leash. It entrusted the route and the unfolding work to the Holy Spirit.

Sending therefore requires real authority and real freedom. Responsibility without freedom produces only executors. Freedom without preparation and relationship can leave people abandoned. Biblical sending releases with blessing and continues to remember.

Relationship Remains After the Laying on of Hands

At the end of their first missionary journey, Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch. They gathered the church and reported everything God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith to the nations. Their return matters as much as their departure.

A person who is sent is not an independent contractor. They give an honest account to the community that prayed and stood with them—not because every step requires retroactive permission, but because the mission, the learning, and the joy are shared. At times correction must also be shared.

The sending church cannot say its task ended at the laying on of hands. A worker and family remain human at a distance. They grow tired. They face conflict, financial strain, marriage pressure, spiritual crisis, and strategic confusion. They need people who ask more than "What results did you produce?" They need someone to ask, "How is your heart? How is your marriage? What is God doing now? Where can we stand beside you?"

As the work grows, care must grow. At first one mentor may keep contact with a sent leader. Later, one person may be needed for spiritual and family care, another for practical matters, and another for training or shared reflection on mission direction. This is not bureaucracy around a pioneer. It is a refusal to leave pioneers alone beneath their burden.

In a healthy relationship, local leaders have genuine decision-making room. They live there, know the people, and carry the consequences. At the same time, they remain teachable, transparent in their use of money and power, willing to ask for help when danger appears, and ready to receive biblical correction. They remain both free and connected, responsible for themselves and for the wider body.

Blessing Flows in Both Directions

Another Antioch scene is easily overlooked. When a famine was foretold, the disciples decided to send help, each according to ability, to believers in Judea. The younger church, born on a cultural frontier, gave to the community from which it had received Barnabas.

This is covenant: blessing does not flow in only one direction. Jerusalem sent a mature leader. Antioch sent financial help in return. One community was not the permanent donor and the other the permanent recipient. Each had received something from God that the other needed.

Roma mission has too often been told as a one-way story: majority churches possess knowledge, money, leadership, and spiritual strength, while Roma communities bring need and problems. Even when motivated by kindness, this outlook creates dependence. The person receiving help rarely becomes a brother or sister who can speak as a partner and give in return.

Yet God often preserves treasures in communities pushed to the margins—treasures the whole Church needs: faith in deprivation, persevering prayer, courage for simple testimony, an open home, an understanding of the weight of relationship, and joy not determined by circumstances.

We must never romanticize these qualities or project them onto every Roma person. Where they are genuinely present, however, we should recognize more than cultural color. We should recognize grace given to the body of Christ.

Partnership rests on mutual respect, not pity. Money cannot purchase authority over people. Receiving support does not remove responsibility or transparency. Those who bring training must come ready to learn. Those who bring local experience must remain open to correction. We all give and receive. None of us owns the Source.

The Order Cannot Be Reversed

When building a movement, it is tempting to start with what can be seen. We organize a training program, open an office, write policies, design a funding system, and then search for people to operate it. These may become useful tools. If they are built ahead of life, however, the structure begins searching for a reason to exist.

Antioch followed another order. People met Christ, and a life of discipleship grew among them. A shared vision toward the nations formed in that environment. Leaders emerged from among the disciples. They received teaching, character formation, and practical preparation. Then they were sent, while relationship, reporting, prayer, and care continued around their work.

The order is discipleship, vision, leaders, preparation, sending, and care. These are not separate departments. They are movements of the same life.

Without discipleship, training transfers information without forming people. Without shared vision, leaders defend their own small territory. If we send without care, we leave weary and isolated workers behind.

Structure exists to serve this life. It should be simple, transparent, and flexible enough to fit local reality. Anything once created for the mission must later be examined again: Does it still open a road, or has it begun protecting itself? Yesterday's good wineskin can become hard. Our loyalty belongs not to the form but to Christ and to the mission for which the form was created.

Covenant Is Not a Family Without Wounds

Antioch did not remain free from conflict. Paul and Barnabas, who had received and accomplished so much together, had a sharp disagreement over Mark and continued on separate roads. Scripture does not beautify the scene or pretend that mature leaders never suffer painful rupture.

The closeness of Antioch made people vulnerable. Different gifts, pace, and decisions inevitably created tension. Within covenant, each of us must ask in both directions: What do I still carry from what was done to me? What have I caused in the other person? Where did I defend my position, fail to listen, or leave an apology unpaid?

Healing can take a long time. Boundaries, a mediator, or even separate paths may be needed. A separate path still gives no one permission to turn yesterday's co-worker into an enemy, rewrite shared history, or claim shared fruit as private property.

The gospel continued after Paul and Barnabas separated, but that does not make division desirable. It makes us humble. God's grace is greater than our fractures, and we remain responsible to do everything we can for truth, peace, and healing. The credibility of mission is tested in our relationships too.

What This Means for Roma Mission

Hungary does not need another center that binds every local church to itself. It needs many sending places that carry the spirit of Antioch. They may be larger congregations, training centers, regional ministry points, or simple house churches. Size does not make them centers. Their service to other people's life and mission does.

Their first movement is **recognition**: seeing grace in a village, family, or still-unknown worker. We do not immediately place it beneath our structure. We come close, listen, discern, and encourage.

The second is **connection**: bringing together people who see and carry less by themselves. A pastor with a teacher. A pioneer with a caregiver. A local Roma leader with needed expertise. An elder with someone younger. One church with believers in a neighboring community. The purpose is not to make every relational thread run

through one hand. It is to help gifts reach the places where they are needed.

The third is **preparation**: biblical foundations, Christlike character, order in family and finances, readiness to serve, safeguarding of children and vulnerable people, teamwork, and real practice. Leadership cannot be learned only in a classroom. People must travel with us, receive genuine responsibility, and then receive honest and loving feedback.

The fourth is **sending**: preparing a place in the next village, the next home, or among another people. We do not wait until we have someone to spare. Sending is costly, and precisely for that reason it protects the community from revolving around itself.

The fifth is **care**: prayer, relationship, transparent accountability, practical and financial help, rest, correction, and the safety to say early, “I am tired,” or “I am stuck.” We do not own those we send, and we do not abandon them.

These five movements—recognize, connect, prepare, send, and care—already sketch a national network. It is not a chart imposed from above but a living covenant. Organizational order will matter, but it will remain healthy only if it serves these relationships.

A Network of Doorways

In the end, Antioch is not the image of one enormous center. It is a doorway through which people enter the fellowship of Christ and then leave as those who are sent. It is a table where different people learn to recognize each other’s gifts; a workshop where ordinary believers receive Scripture and real responsibility; a home to which a weary worker can return and tell what God has done.

We need such doorways across the country—not one distant Antioch, but sending places joined in covenant. They do not compete over where more people remain. They rejoice together when Christ becomes visible in a new place.

A center fulfills its calling when it stops making itself indispensable. It recognizes local grace, adds what is missing, releases what has matured, and remains faithful in relationship.

It becomes a doorway instead of a magnet.

The question is no longer whether we need covenant. It is what relational and organizational order can carry this life for the long term—giving common direction, protection, and responsibility without creating another dependence.

Scattered fires become a movement only when they are not controlled by one hand, but are lit by the same Christ and joined by the same love.

12. From Covenant to Movement

Order should protect relationship and connect gifts without taking the place of Christ

> *"The whole body grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work."*
> *— after Ephesians 4:16*

On June 15, 1996, I received an assignment that was both clear and impossible to comprehend fully. I was asked to organize and coordinate a national Roma mission in Hungary. On paper, the first tasks sounded simple: identify Roma churches, bring them into relationship, strengthen ministry among them, and lead a shared mission.

In reality, those few lines meant people and thousands of kilometers of travel. They meant mistrust, old wounds, strong callings, and barely visible beginnings.

Roma fellowships already existed in different parts of the country. Some were connected to established denominations; others functioned independently. Certain leaders were known by a central office, while others were known only within their village. The assignment did not arrive in an empty field. God was already at work in many places.

At first, I could have thought that my task was to draw a map. I soon learned that God wanted to draw relationships.

A map gives us points. Covenant gives us faces. Lines between points can be drawn with a ruler. Trust is formed by going to people, sitting down, hearing their stories, praying together, and sometimes lifting the same burden.

The national mission did not begin by summoning everyone into one organization. It began by searching for one another.

The First Journey: Kántorjánosi

My first journey in the national assignment took me to Kántorjánosi in 1996. I did not go because nothing had yet happened there, but because God was already at work. A Roma congregation connected with the denomination was serving under the leadership of Mihály Rézműves, whom everyone knew and addressed as Pastor Feri. In Roma communities, it is not unusual for a person to become widely known by a name other than the one recorded at birth. To us he was Pastor Feri then, and that is still how we know him.

When I arrived, a large evangelistic gathering was under way on the village football field. Hundreds had come. Roma believers from different denominational backgrounds brought relatives and friends who did not yet know Christ, and many church leaders and pastors served at the event. The national commission that I could barely imagine suddenly acquired faces, voices, and a community.

Before the meeting ended, I asked to speak. I explained the commission I had received, the vision I carried, and how God had led me to that point. The brothers and sisters received me warmly. Then I knelt on the platform and asked the Roma leaders and pastors present to lay hands on me and bless me for the ministry. They gathered around me, received me, and blessed me.

I had received the national commission within denominational structures, but something indispensable happened on that football field: Roma leaders received me among them and confirmed the calling. I did not arrive above them, but among them. I did not bring them a finished system. I knelt before them and asked for their blessing. For me, the national Roma mission truly began there.

Pastor Feri was a great help from the beginning. He knew the people, the relationships, and the path of trust, but he did more than open doors for me: he stood beside me. We still serve together. The movement's first foundation stone was therefore not

a programme or an organisational chart, but welcome, blessing, and brotherly covenant.

The first meeting led to further conferences, shared ministry, and training. Men from different regions studied and prayed together in Bible school classrooms. Journeys opened new doors. A local Roma worker knew the people, the language, and the path of trust. Someone else could teach. Another drove the car, raised a tent, prepared food, or found money for the journey. The work was never one person's achievement, even when only one name was visible from the outside.

There I began to understand the difference between an organization and a movement. An organization can define a task, appoint responsibility, handle money, and maintain order. All of that is needed. A movement is born when mission is no longer the program of one center but the shared obedience of many people—when relationship becomes trust, trust becomes shared responsibility, and shared responsibility leads to further sending.

Covenant is not decoration around a movement. It is the environment that carries it.

National Does Not Mean Centralized

When I accepted the national work in 1996, we moved from Paks back to Békés, and I chose to lead from there rather than from Budapest. I had nothing against the capital. I simply knew that I must not become separated from the world to which God had sent me. I wanted to remain close to communities where ministry was not a target on a strategy map but the daily life of families.

We received more than a national commission. The church in Békés also prepared a home for us: it offered the ministry residence and undertook to pay all its utility costs. The minutes from that time specifically note that fifty-five per cent of the membership was Roma and that the church wanted to support the Roma mission through this decision.

This matters because the national work did not begin as the heroic story of a solitary man. A local church placed a roof over our family and said, 'Go; we will carry you.' In this way the national calling received an address, a table, and a home in Békés.

Sending often becomes real through such ordinary things. Someone prays. Someone hands over a key. Someone pays the electricity bill. Someone gives up personal comfort so that the gospel can travel farther. The spirit of Antioch begins where a community is willing to give what it has.

I did not yet understand every consequence. Leading national work from a provincial town meant more travel, more difficult access, and many practical burdens. Even so, the decision carried an important message: national is not the same as centralized.

In national ministry, the question is not how every thread can run through us. It is how every gift can reach the place where it is needed. We should not collect decisions; we should distribute responsibility. We have reason to rejoice when work continues faithfully without us.

A national ministry needs common direction, representation, administration, and responsible leadership. Distance, money, training, legal questions, and moral safeguards cannot be managed by goodwill alone. Shared order, however, must not attempt to live in place of local communities. It should help them remain alive, become clean and strong, and pass on what they have received.

A healthy national network has no single human center that decides everything. Christ is the head, and his life pulses in many places. A network may have a center that serves, but not one that owns. It may speak with a common voice without silencing local voices. It may share a name without replacing the identity God has given people.

I would say it more clearly today: a center serves well when it brings people close to one another rather than binding everyone to itself.

The Shared Table Comes Before the Shared Name

Roma churches have never formed one uniform world. Ministries began within Pentecostal, Baptist, Free Christian, and other evangelical communities. Independent fellowships emerged in many places and searched for relationship with a wider church family. Music differed, along with vocabulary, worship order, leadership education, and local history.

We can view this diversity in two ways. We may see disorder that must quickly be standardized. Or we may see many vessels making room for the same oil.

Not every difference is valuable, and no local custom is beyond examination. Everything must be tested in the light of Scripture. Unity, however, does not require identical vessels.

When leaders first sit around one table, the first question should not be what common name will be placed above them. First we need to know whom we believe, what gospel we proclaim, and what repentance, discipleship, holiness, the work of the Holy Spirit, and mission mean to us. We need to hear one another's stories and recognize grace in one another. We learn to ask questions in order to understand, not to examine the other person as though they were sitting for a test.

Around the table we discover what each person actually carries. From a distance, another leader may appear impressive or dangerous. Close by, we see wounds, faithfulness, limits, and gifts. The person we considered a rival may be weeping for the same people. Someone we feared may carry the very gift we lack. The apparently strong leader may have carried a burden alone for years.

A signed declaration cannot create covenant. It may record what has already grown in hearts and relationships, but covenant also accepts difficult conversation, correction, waiting, cost, and faithfulness in crisis.

The shared table comes first. A shared name may come later. Perhaps it never will. The body of Christ remains real even when it cannot be arranged beneath one emblem.

"It Seemed Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us"

Antioch became an open doorway, and its openness soon produced a serious question. Large numbers of Gentiles were turning to Christ. Under what conditions could they belong to God's people? Would they have to adopt the complete Jewish religious and cultural order before they could be accepted as full brothers and sisters?

This was not a secondary debate. The heart of the gospel and people's future were at stake.

The council in Jerusalem described in Acts 15 was more than a leadership meeting. It shows how a diverse community can seek a shared answer without allowing the loudest voice, an old custom, or immediate interest to become master.

They did not allow the question to poison the fellowship through whispers and parallel messages. Those involved went to one another. They spoke and listened. Peter told what he had experienced. Barnabas and Paul reported the signs and conversions among the nations. James placed the events in the light of Scripture. Experience did not overrule the Word, and interpretation of the Word did not deny what God was visibly doing.

Apostolic authority, the responsibility of leaders, and the participation of the whole church were present in the decision. Not everyone said the same thing, and probably not everyone went

home with the same feelings. Yet they arrived at a common sentence: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.”

This was not a religious seal placed on a plan already decided. It contained humility. The Holy Spirit leads, yet we must listen, speak, weigh, and accept responsibility. We cannot hide behind God’s name to avoid explaining a decision. Nor can we pretend that a correct organizational procedure gives life by itself. Prayer, Scripture, experience, listening, and shared responsibility meet.

The believers in Jerusalem refused to place unnecessary burdens on Gentile believers. They named what was necessary for the purity of shared life but did not demand a cultural copy.

This matters deeply in Roma mission. The gospel judges and renews every culture; no human culture *is* the gospel. When we make our denominational or social customs a condition of salvation, we place on others a yoke Christ did not give.

The council communicated its decision through a letter and trustworthy people. Deciding well is not enough. A decision must be communicated clearly and personally. The letter recorded the shared position. Judas and Silas brought relationship alongside the words.

A clean process protects a community from manipulation and confusion. People can know what was said, who accepted responsibility, on what basis the decision was made, and how questions can be raised.

This is one of covenant leadership’s great tests: Can truth remain truth without becoming a weapon? Can love remain love without becoming vague? Can authority remain real without becoming unaccountable?

Complementary Gifts and Shared Responsibility

Many ministries remain small because the leader carries everything. The same person preaches, decides, reconciles, handles money, maintains relationships, selects people, organizes programs, and resolves every crisis. At first this can look like faithfulness. New work often does begin on one person's shoulders. If everything remains there, faithfulness becomes a bottleneck.

Jethro told Moses plainly that his way of working was not good. Both he and the people would be exhausted. Moses' calling was real, but that did not mean every question had to reach him. He had to recognize trustworthy people, give them responsibility, and distinguish ordinary matters from questions of greater weight.

Dividing tasks does not automatically create a team. A team is not a group of assistants executing one leader's personal plan. It is a relationship among people with different gifts who carry shared responsibility.

One sees far. Another notices the person close at hand. One teaches. Another creates systems, handles finances, asks hard questions, provides pastoral care, or enters new territory. Gifts are not rank insignia. They are capacities given for service.

Hearing another person is not enough. Their words must be allowed to matter. When a leader listens to every opinion and then always decides alone, lonely power remains beneath the appearance of community. A healthy leadership circle agrees in advance who decides which questions, what requires shared consent, who can represent the fellowship, and when outside help must be sought.

Years later, in an international Roma network, one principle became especially important to us: leadership belongs to the whole governing team. No one acts alone in the name of the network. This may seem slower than allowing one strong person to decide quickly. Shared decision is more than a brake. It offers protection,

wisdom, and ownership carried together. What we carry together does not have to be sold to others afterward.

Shared responsibility also means that a leader gives authority along with a task. We cannot hold someone responsible for an area and then overrule every decision. At the same time, delegated leaders must not create private kingdoms. They report, remain teachable, and remember that their gift exists for the body.

Leadership begins to multiply when we stop asking, “Who can perform what I have designed?” and begin asking, “What has God begun in this person, and how can we release it responsibly together?”

The Region: Close Enough to Know One Another

A local church carries the presence of Christ, but it was not called to live in isolation. A small church may have strong faith and genuine mission while lacking some necessary gifts. It may have no teacher, experienced safeguarding leader, financial professional, or person who has guided a community through serious conflict.

The national level can easily become too distant. A central office cannot know every family story or arrive in every crisis. No single location can fully sense the realities of all the country’s regions. What is natural in a village in Szabolcs may require another form in Békés or in western Hungary. The gospel is the same; the doors, wounds, and paths of trust may differ.

Between the local and national levels, the region has a crucial role. I do not mean primarily an administrative boundary. A region is a distance within which we still know one another’s names while seeing several communities together. It is close enough to arrive when needed and wide enough to place other people’s experience beside our local view.

Regional relationships can grow from simple practices:

- leaders praying regularly together;

- studying Scripture together;
- honest conversation about family, money, and the burdens of ministry;
- shared preparation of emerging workers;
- visiting one another's churches; and
- mission journeys in which a team arrives rather than one person carrying everything.

Not every meeting should become a conference. Sometimes a kitchen table is more valuable because we can say there what does not belong on a stage. Every region need not follow an identical order. It does need known people, committed relationships, and a rhythm that moves before a crisis comes.

Regional workers are not meant to rule churches as smaller centers. They should travel in pairs or teams, asking, listening, connecting people, helping recognize danger, and carrying good practice from one community to another. They should not replace the local pastor but strengthen that leader in work only a local person can do.

When a church enters crisis, gossip should not arrive first. There should be someone to call. When a new worker rises, that person should not learn everything alone. There should be someone to ask. When a door opens in a village, one exhausted worker should not set out alone. There should be companions.

Regional circles can become a national network—not by centralizing every relationship, but by connecting local nodes with one another. A network is strong because it holds in many directions. If the breaking of one thread causes everything to collapse, we do not yet have a true network.

An Open Bible, an Open Heart, Open Books

Covenant needs trust. Trust needs more than a good impression. It needs transparency.

This is not because we assume the worst about one another. We are human, and ministry places real authority, money, influence, and vulnerable lives in our hands.

I consider three forms of openness essential.

Let the Bible remain open. Teaching, decisions, and ministry practice must be open to questions from Scripture. “The Lord told me” cannot close every conversation. What we believe comes from God should be examined with humility. We need not fear questions from mature brothers and sisters.

Let the heart remain open. Leaders need relationships in which they do not have to appear strong. They must be able to say, “I am tired. I am facing temptation. There is trouble at home. I am carrying anger. I cannot see clearly.” Accountability is not police supervision. It is love close enough to notice danger in time.

Let the books remain open. The path of money should be visible to more than one person. It should be clear where funds came from, what they were given for, who decided how they would be used, what was paid, and who checked the account. Support must not purchase control. Need does not exempt us from order. Transparent finances are not a lack of faith. They protect trust.

The same principle governs the safety of children and other vulnerable people. Reputation cannot be more important than truth. When abuse, exploitation, or serious boundary violations are suspected, we must not hide them by saying, “We will handle it inside the family.” Clear policies, responsible procedures, and professional or public authorities may be necessary. Grace does not cover sin in darkness. It brings sin into the light so that repentance, protection, and justice can follow.

Authority is not credible because no one may question it. Authority becomes credible when it is not afraid of light.

In a healthy covenant, local communities have real responsibility and decision-making room. At the same time, no one may say, "This is my church, my money, and my people, so it is no one else's concern." We do not build private property within Christ's body. Local freedom and mutual accountability are not enemies. Together they protect freedom.

This is what I mean by responsible interdependence. A local leader does not seek permission for every step, but neither does that leader appear only when money is needed or crisis has arrived. The relationship gives freedom without abandonment. It asks questions without possessing. It corrects without humiliating.

The Healing of Rivalry

Organizational uncertainty is not the only threat to covenant. Rivalry lives in our hearts. When attention, money, trained workers, and open doors seem scarce, another person's growth can feel like our loss. We compare attendance, buildings, invitations, support, and whose name is mentioned more often.

No policy can remove this temptation by itself. Its root lies deeper: we fear that if we are not at the center, we will disappear.

Christ does not diminish when he uses someone else. In his kingdom, another person's fruit does not make me smaller. If people turn to Christ in a neighboring church, families are healed, and new workers arise, that is not someone else's success. It is the King's victory.

I have had to guard my own heart repeatedly. Speaking of unity is easier than rejoicing when God raises another person into a more visible place. Saying that everyone matters is easier than transferring the microphone, the decision, the relationship, or the opportunity.

Rivalry begins to heal when we do more than tolerate another person's gift and begin helping it flourish.

This healing has practical signs. We do not attract members away from one another by promising larger opportunities. We do not build our ministry by intentionally weakening another church. When a leader wants to move, we speak to one another and refuse to use that person's pain for our growth. When we hear a serious report about someone, we do not repeat it without verification. We go directly and honestly to those involved.

Covenant is not a pact of silence. For the sake of peace, we cannot call falsehood true or protect behavior that wounds people. Necessary truth does not need to be spoken with humiliation. The goal is not to defeat the other person. It is to protect relationship, people, and mission.

A platform must not become a hiding place for unresolved conflict. If I cannot sit at a table with someone, I do not prove the movement's unity by preaching at the same conference. A stage arrangement cannot heal what private truth-telling and apology were allowed to leave wounded.

A movement cannot be stronger on its platforms than it is in its relationships.

Rivalry loses power when we learn to bless one another by name. We pray for another church and say what we have received from it. We send a person to the leader who can help them better. We invite that leader not as decoration but because we need the gift God gave them. When God begins something new there, we do not ask how to attach our name. We ask how to stand beside it with integrity.

A Trellis Does Not Bear Grapes

A growing vine needs support. Without it, branches fall to the ground, become tangled, and are damaged. A trellis gives direction, relieves weight, and makes fruit accessible. Yet there is no life in the trellis. It cannot root, carry sap, or bear grapes.

An organization is like that. It is needed when people, money, training, journeys, and institutions connect. Without it, goodwill may disintegrate, responsibility blur, resources leak away, and vulnerable people remain unprotected. Order itself can be an expression of love.

Danger begins when the trellis imagines it is the vine: when organizational survival becomes identified with the growth of God's kingdom; when more energy is spent defending boundaries than searching for the lost; when loyalty is measured by protection of the system rather than obedience to Christ.

Jesus did not say, "Remain in the organization." He said, "Remain in me." He is the vine. A form is useful only while it serves the life that flows from him.

I learned that in a large organization yesterday's answer can become tomorrow's obstacle to obedience. This does not mean every institution is wrong or that we should proceed without order. It does mean that we must not rebuild the same rigidity in a smaller form under a new name. If the only change is that we now sit in the center, we have learned nothing.

A structure that serves covenant should be simple. People should understand how decisions are made, who carries which responsibility, where questions or complaints can be taken, and how something no longer serving the mission can be changed.

It should be transparent, not governed by hidden bargains among personal relationships. It should also be reviewable. What one season created to serve the mission must not become untouchable.

Good structure equips people instead of chaining them to itself. It distributes ministry and prepares a road for others to begin responsibly. One sign of its maturity is that life eventually continues without it.

What We Promise One Another

If covenant is neither absorption, occasional cooperation, nor a warm feeling, we should say what we promise one another. We do this not to create a new law, but to give love a visible form.

We promise that **Christ will remain the head**. We will not gather around one leader, denomination, supporter, or ministry brand. The gospel is our common foundation, the mission of Jesus our common direction, and every human authority serves beneath him.

We promise to **recognize and honor local calling**. We will not claim as our property what God began in a village, family, or leader. We will add the help we can give without asking for ownership of people in return.

We promise to **speak with one another, not about one another**. We will carry questions to the place where an answer can be found. We will not build community on partial information or turn confidential conversation into a weapon. When we sin, we will apologize. When we are wounded, we will seek truth in love.

We promise **openness and light**. Our decisions, finances, and use of power may be questioned. We will protect children and vulnerable people. We will not hide wrong for the sake of reputation, nor use correction to shame.

We promise to **share our gifts**. As God enables us, we will contribute teachers, pioneers, experience, relationships, time, and financial resources. Those who can give more are not more important. Those who need to receive more for a season are not less.

We promise to **care as well as send**. We will pray for those who go, remain in relationship, listen to their reports, and stand beside them in weariness. We will give freedom without leaving them alone.

We promise to **release with blessing what has matured**. We will not hold a leader, community, or initiative captive merely because it began with us. If God calls someone into a new place, we will speak clearly, bring order to the relationship, and release them with joy. Covenant is a doorway, not a chain.

These promises matter only if we remember them under pressure—when money is scarce, when a brother or sister decides differently, when a powerful person fails, or when we must choose between apparent peace and truth spoken in love.

Covenant shows its value not at a ceremonial signing, but under strain.

When the Network Begins to Move

How do we know that covenant has become a movement? More events, staff, and institutions are not enough. They may indicate growth, but machinery can also grow without multiplying life.

Movement becomes visible when an ordinary believer understands that he or she has a mission; when a convert becomes a disciple, the disciple becomes a servant, and the servant prepares others; when a local community stops waiting only for help and begins moving toward another family or village; and when a leader measures success not by how many depend on him, but by how many have become capable of responsible obedience.

The same movement appears when relationships cross familiar borders. Roma and non-Roma leaders stop making plans about one another and begin planning together. Different denominations retain their convictions while recognizing a shared gospel and

calling. Elders give roots to young people, and the young carry forward the treasure of those before them in new language.

In a mature movement, failure does not disappear from reports. It becomes learning. We can say that an attempt bore no fruit, a decision was wrong, a leader became exhausted, or a relationship was wounded. Honesty does not weaken mission. It cleanses the mission of what would later cause greater harm.

The network must reach Roma settlements and recognize there not passive beneficiaries but people addressed by God. A local woman's prayer, a young person's testimony, a family's open home, or a man fearfully preaching for the first time must not go unnoticed. The network connects in order to recognize, prepare, and send them.

Finally, we can speak of movement when the network no longer waits for one person to act. One region prays and sets out; another sends a teacher. One church receives a leader in training. Someone removes a financial burden from a pioneer. Mature believers help resolve a conflict. In time, the new community itself becomes a sending place.

The scattered fires do not melt into one enormous flame. They remain where God lit them and strengthen one another. The same Christ gives them life. The same gospel gives direction. Covenant protects the way of love and responsibility between them.

We need institutions that know their place, leadership that releases, local freedom that accepts responsibility, and unity that does not demand sameness. In this way, freedom and relationship can be protected together.

Covenant may hold the direction. What is passed on depends on our everyday culture: What do we celebrate? What do we reward? To whom do we give room? What do we call success?

A network becomes a movement when every point within it develops the readiness to say: *What we received, we will pass on.*

13. A Culture of Multiplication

The future does not arrive when we can go no farther. It arrives when, in good time, we entrust to others what God has placed in our hands.

> *"What you have heard from me … entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others also."*
> *— after 2 Timothy 2:2*

In 2018, while I was preaching in Kecskemét, a sentence rose within me with unusual force: **The future is calling.**

By then we had built a great deal. There were churches, training programs, ministries, institutions, and an expanding network of relationships. Yet I sensed that none of these, by itself, could secure the future. The future would not be born merely because the present generation of leaders worked even harder. It would come when a new generation received the missionary burden, the vision, our trust—and eventually the leadership itself.

I said it this way: *We will not do most of the work. They will.*

Who are *they*?

They are the people we may barely notice today: the young person who keeps asking questions; the woman who opens her home; the man whose prayers are still hesitant but who never fails to come; the child who disrupts every lesson today and may lead a church tomorrow.

Multiplication begins when we see not only the person standing before us, but also the person Christ may form them to become.

Growth and multiplication are not the same. Growth means that one community becomes larger. Multiplication means that new communities are born from it. Growth means that a leader gains more followers. Multiplication means that followers become

leaders, and leaders become spiritual fathers and mothers who prepare still more leaders. Growth can be added up. Multiplication travels through generations.

This has changed the way I measure the joy of leadership. I no longer measure it chiefly by the number of people who remain around me. I see it in those who have stood up, moved forward, and reached places I could never reach. Few things bring me more joy than hearing someone speak with clarity and spiritual strength after we once encouraged them through their first uncertain steps.

Culture Is Always Teaching

Every community has a culture, whether or not it has ever written one down. Culture is revealed less by a statement on the wall than by what we repeatedly tell, celebrate, reward, tolerate, and pass on. It is the quiet sentence, “This is how we do things here.” Often it forms people more powerfully than a Sunday sermon.

We may preach about mission, but if all our time, money, and attention are directed toward those already inside, people learn that staying matters more than going. If, however, we pray by name for people who do not yet know Christ, listen to the testimonies of ordinary believers, make room for emerging leaders, and rejoice when a new community is born, mission gradually becomes a shared expectation.

Kingdom culture cannot be laid over a community as a foreign pattern. It must begin with Christ and take flesh in the local language of life. A Roma church does not need to imitate every outward form of a majority-culture church in order to be biblical. Its music, speech, relationships, and history may carry the gospel faithfully. At the same time, no culture is beyond the transforming work of Christ. He cleanses what is destructive, corrects what is false, and draws every culture toward himself.

Multiplication, therefore, is not one more program. It is an atmosphere in which certain things become natural:

- a disciple helps another person follow Jesus;
- a leader prepares another leader; and
- a church prays not only for its own strength but for the birth of another community.

Programs can serve this culture, but they cannot replace it. Culture carries forward what we truly value after a program has ended.

Gather, Fill, Send

A culture of multiplication requires us to recover three movements.

First, **gather** what God has prepared. Find the people whom grace is already awakening. Welcome the hungry, the overlooked, the uncertain, and the gifted.

Second, **fill the vessels**—with Scripture, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, tested character, relationships of trust, and practical preparation.

Third, **send**.

If we only gather, we may produce a crowd. If we only teach, we may produce a school. When we gather, prepare, and send, a movement can be born.

The house church is one of the simplest and strongest places for this to happen. It requires no impressive building or special technology. It needs an open home, two or three obedient people, Scripture, prayer, love, and a willingness to pass on what has been received. A house church is not merely a reduced version of a large congregation. It can be a seedbed, a vessel, and a sending place.

The leader's task cannot end with preaching well or organizing effectively. A multiplying leader keeps asking:

Who is next?

Whom can I trust with a small responsibility today?

Whom can I take with me?

Whom can I allow to try, make a mistake, learn, and rise again?

If we keep every important task in our own hands, the ministry may appear orderly, but it will remain without successors.

Passing leadership on does not mean pushing onto someone else a burden we no longer want to carry. Before we transfer responsibility, we must share our lives. The next generation needs to see our faith, but also our struggles. They need to hear what God has shown us and hear us apologize when we are wrong. They must receive genuine opportunities to lead, not merely tasks to execute.

A vision has truly been passed on when it can live without us—when it continues to be refined, grows, and reaches new people even when our hands are no longer directing it.

The Older Generation Must Also Empty Its Hands

For that to happen, those of us who have led for many years must also be willing to empty ourselves.

We must surrender the fear that if another person can do what we do, we will become less important. We must release the desire to have every thread return to our hands. The oil is not given to validate our authority. It flows in order to give life. If a younger vessel carries it farther than we could, our response should not be offense but gratitude.

This is one of the hidden tests of spiritual parenthood. Do I merely want sons and daughters who honor what I have done, or do I want them to go farther? Can I bless work that I did not design? Can I remain joyful when someone I prepared no longer needs my presence at every decision?

The kingdom of God does not ask us to make ourselves unnecessary as people. Relationship remains precious. It does ask us to stop making ourselves indispensable as controllers.

In 2018, I also said that **325,000 was not the finish; it was only the beginning**. I was not trying to announce a larger and more impressive number. The figure was never meant as a campaign slogan, an ownership claim, or a prediction that we could engineer. It expressed a horizon of faith and responsibility: the conviction that God's work must not stop where our own line of sight ends.

The rain can spread across the nation. Springs can become rivers. Roma communities can receive grace not only for their own restoration, but also to carry Christ to the peoples of Europe and beyond.

That is why we must send people. We must push beyond familiar boundaries and move toward towns, nations, and human situations we have not yet considered. We do this not recklessly, but obediently; not to appear larger, but because the debt of love always carries us beyond ourselves.

The future is calling.

The next leader may already be sitting in the room. The next church may be waiting inside a home whose door is about to open.

There is oil. There are vessels. There is work for us to do.

Let us go.

14. From 3,250 to 325,000

A statistic became a promise, and the promise became a responsibility

> *"Other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop—a hundred times what was sown."*
> *— after Matthew 13:8*

We cannot hand the next generation a large number and expect them to understand it. They need to know where it came from, what it means, and what it does not mean.

Over the years, I have spoken many times about **325,000**. The number has set some people's hearts on fire. It has frightened others. Some immediately began doing the math.

I have never intended it as a statistical target to be placed above Roma ministry. It is not the growth plan of an organization, and I do not imagine a day when 325,000 names will appear on our membership list. I carry it as a promise: that a great many Roma people in Hungary will turn to Christ, receive new life, become disciples, and find a home in living churches.

The promise has a history. It was not invented on a conference platform or at a leadership strategy meeting. We did not choose a larger number because an earlier goal no longer sounded inspiring. It began in the ordinary work of preparing a grant application—with papers, reports, church contacts, and stories of people whose lives had been touched.

At the end of that survey, one number stood before me: **3,250**.

I looked at it for a long time. Not because it seemed so large, but because I knew it had faces.

Someone had put down the bottle. Someone had asked his family for forgiveness for the first time in years. Someone had walked through the door of a church after being taught all her life that there would be no place for her inside. A mother had begun praying for her children. A man had opened the Bible with the thought that God might speak to him personally. A young person had discovered that his heritage was not a source of shame, his life was not unnecessary, and Christ had a purpose for him.

The number looked back at me. It refused to remain a box in a report.

The Number That Looked Back at Me

In 2006, an application for American grant support required us to summarize how many Roma people the mission had reached. We drew information from tent evangelistic campaigns, personal ministry, Bible school relationships, local churches, and response cards. Our records at the time identified 3,250 people as having turned to Christ, received new life, or entered into some form of ongoing relationship with the mission or a local church.

I describe this carefully because a large vision must never be afraid of the truth.

That total was not a national census. It was not a longitudinal study following every individual for years. Reports from different places did not always use exactly the same definitions. A response card, a decision to follow Christ, new birth, and enduring participation in a church are not interchangeable. At that stage, our reporting did not always distinguish among them with the precision I now believe is necessary.

That does not erase what God had done. Behind the 3,250 stood real missionary work, real encounters, and many genuinely transformed lives. It was not a perfect measurement. It was an honest picture of one historical moment—a handful of seed we had been given the privilege of sowing.

Ten years earlier, the national mission had begun through relationships with a few churches and roughly 150 people. We had not entered an empty field. God had been at work in Roma communities long before our arrival, and many faithful servants had already sown seed. Still, we could see scattered beginnings becoming relationships, new churches, training, and new workers. The first class of our Bible school began in January 1997. Over the years, more than 450 people took part in its training.

The 3,250 were not one person's achievement. They were the shared fruit of many acts of obedience.

As I studied the number, a sentence became clear within me:

This is the beginning. This is seed. These seeds will produce a hundredfold harvest.

I did not receive a detailed plan for the coming decades. What settled in my heart was the conviction that God was showing me the 3,250 not as an endpoint, but as a sowing. The biblical image of a hundredfold harvest opened before me the horizon of 325,000.

I am not presenting this as a scientific forecast. The language of faith and the language of statistics serve different purposes. The survey gave us a partial picture of the past. The 325,000 became a hope and a calling directed toward the future. If we confuse the two, we will either manufacture false certainty or surrender the courage of faith. I want neither.

The facts of the past must be examined. We must tell the truth about present results. The promise of the future must be carried humbly and persistently before God.

"This Is the Beginning"

In Jesus' parable of the sower, not every seed produces the same result. Some falls along the path. Some lands on rocky ground. Some is choked by thorns. But seed that enters good soil may produce thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times what was sown.

For me, the hundredfold harvest is not a formula for quick success. It is an image of God's power to give life.

A seed is small. For a long time, it is invisible. Once buried, it can look as though it has been lost. Those who see only the surface may say, "There is nothing here." Those who understand the order of life know that something has already begun beneath the ground.

That is what I saw in the 3,250: not a finished movement, flawless churches, or completed lives of discipleship. I saw beginnings. I saw people in whom the life of Christ had taken root and who could themselves reach others. I saw workers who were still learning but might one day train others. I saw churches that still needed help but could, in time, become birthplaces for new churches.

The hundredfold harvest is not a mechanical equation in which every person leads exactly one hundred others to Christ. One woman may raise a single child in faith, and that child may serve generations. Another person may preach to crowds, while quiet disciples preserve the fruit through daily care. One person prays; another goes; another opens a home; another teaches. Someone else simply holds a brother's hand when he is close to giving up.

God gives the harvest. Our part is to sow, water, tend, and obey.

For this reason, the vision of 325,000 has never given me permission to announce results on God's behalf. I cannot call a future promise fulfilled simply because many people attended an event. I cannot name every interested person a convert, every decision a new birth, or every gathering a mature church.

Vision is not given to inflate our reports. It is given to enlarge our hearts and deepen our responsibility.

If God speaks of a hundredfold harvest, we must care for every individual seed with a hundredfold faithfulness.

The Largest Vision in the Narrowest Season

It is strange that the vision grew stronger in me during a period when little around us looked like growth.

I have already written about the collapse of the Zsinóros Community Center and the *There Is Hope After All Association*. After many worthwhile beginnings, we lost what we had built piece by piece. In November 2008, we had to leave the building itself. From a human point of view, those days were about survival, not an awakening among hundreds of thousands.

Yet the vision did not fade. In the loss, it was purified of a dangerous assumption: that a successful institution would produce the awakening.

God can use an organization, a building, a grant, or an institution. Life does not originate in any of them. When every human support begins to shake, we discover what we were trusting.

During this season, I told Fábián Márk Tamás about the 325,000. He did not accept it merely because I had said it. He could see my faith, but he could also see the ruins. He told me honestly that he needed personal confirmation from God. He did not want to serve on the strength of borrowed conviction.

I did not see that as rebellion. I saw it as integrity.

In covenant, the faithful person is not the one who agrees thoughtlessly with every great declaration. A faithful person examines before God what he or she is being asked to carry. Then, after understanding a personal assignment within the common cause, that person remains faithful to it.

Tamás later explained that he had not received the same promise I had received. What had become clear to him was that he should help the person who carried it. The distinction matters. People on a team do not all need to hear in the same way, possess the same gift,

or repeat the same sentence. Each person does need to know clearly what God has called them to do within the shared work.

Faith does not abolish questions. It teaches us where and how to ask them.

During the collapse of Zsinóros, 325,000 looked even more impossible than it had in 2006. Yet I came to understand more deeply that the size of a God-given vision is not determined by the resources currently available to us. If we undertake only what our present budget, building, and staff can accomplish, faith is unnecessary. If the calling is truly from God, we will not be its source. Our part is obedience, integrity, and preparation.

Not long afterward, another door opened. The national network of the Helping Service created relationships and opportunities for ministry that we could not have foreseen amid the loss. This was not the fulfillment of the 325,000. It did show us that after one form closes, God can open another way. What we had seen as an ending became a passage.

The vision did not teach me to deny the ruins. It taught me to look for the seed beneath them.

Saying It Out Loud in Kecskemét

A vision may live for years in one person's heart. If it is to become a shared mission, however, it must come into the light. Other people must hear it. It must survive questions. It must be tested in prayer, Scripture, relationship, and obedience.

In 2011, a new leadership circle began to form around the Roma mission. Berki András, Fábián Márk Tamás, Rézműves Mihály, Surman László, and Szentesi Zoltán came with different histories, gifts, and perspectives. I did not need copies of myself. I needed brothers who knew the realities of Roma communities, dared to ask questions, could carry weight, and were willing to learn with me.

We withdrew together to Mátraszentlászló, a small mountain village in northern Hungary, to put into words why we existed, what God had called us to do, and what mission we would undertake together. We had no strategy covering every detail. We had a gospel, real people before us, an inheritance containing both fruit and lessons, and a promise pulling us toward the future.

In September 2011, I spoke publicly in Kecskemét about the vision of 325,000. We invited people who had studied since 1997 through the Christian Roma Folk College and its later training program. The moment carried deep symbolism. Before me sat many of the people we had once gathered as empty vessels and in whom God had since formed ministry, experience, and responsibility.

Not everyone in the room responded to the number in the same way. They did not need to.

Rézműves Mihály later told me that he initially thought I might have misspoken. Did I mean 3,250? Or perhaps 32,500? When I repeated 325,000, he understood that I really was speaking about a horizon that large.

I treasure his memory because it preserves the humanity of the moment. A great number did not produce one identical feeling in everyone. Some rejoiced. Others calculated or doubted. Still others began to pray quietly. A common journey does not grow from identical first reactions. It grows as we seek obedience together before Christ.

Speaking the vision publicly did not fulfill the promise. It made us accountable.

From that day forward, people could rightly ask:

- If we truly believe that hundreds of thousands may turn to Christ, where are the prepared leaders?
- Where are the healthy churches?
- Where is the order that protects children and families?

- Where are the relationships that cross denominational boundaries?
- Where are the pathways of discipleship through which a decision can become a mature life of service?

Faith spoken before a large audience becomes credible when it turns into small, precise obedience on Monday morning.

325,000 Faces

A large number carries danger. It is easy to love a multitude from a distance. Up close, loving one person requires patience.

A crowd does not ask a difficult question. A person does. A crowd is not late again. A person may be. A crowd has no family wounds, debts, relapses, or misunderstandings. People do. If 325,000 exists only as a crowd in our imagination, we may turn those we claim to serve into instruments of our own ministry.

God does not see a crowd without faces. He sees names.

He knows the woman who cries in secret. He knows the man who is ashamed that he cannot read well. He knows the young person who feels fully accepted in neither of the two worlds between which she lives. He knows the child whom everyone now calls a troublemaker, while hidden within that child is the possibility of a future pastor, teacher, entrepreneur, mother, or missionary.

For me, then, 325,000 does not mean 325,000 anonymous units. It means 325,000 stories. It means 325,000 possibilities of relationship with God. It means families in which the inheritance of violence, addiction, and hopelessness can be broken. It means children who may receive another kind of inheritance. It means communities no longer waiting only for help from outside, but becoming a blessing to others.

The magnitude of the number must never diminish the value of one person. It should multiply our willingness to bend down beside one.

When Jesus saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion because the people were harassed and scattered. Then he told his disciples to pray for workers. On another occasion, he described a shepherd leaving ninety-nine sheep to search for one. These are not opposing pictures. Those who truly see the multitude will have a heart for the individual. Those who faithfully care for one may be tending, in God's hands, the seed of an entire generation.

When I say 325,000, I am also saying this:

Not one of them is data. Not one exists to prove the success of our ministry. Not one belongs to us. Christ seeks them, Christ redeems them, and Christ calls them into his body.

What Are We Actually Counting?

We should not despise numbers. Acts records how many received the word, how many were baptized, and how the number of disciples increased. A good shepherd wants to know who belongs to the flock. A responsible leader wants to see where fruit is growing, where strength is failing, and where more workers are needed.

We should count, but we must be clear about what we are counting, how we are counting it, and what we intend to do with the result.

Reach means that someone encountered the message of the gospel or a ministry that bore witness to Christ. This matters, but it is not yet a personal response.

A decision means that a person responded to an invitation—perhaps by asking for prayer, coming forward, completing a response card, or saying that they wanted to turn toward Christ. We receive this with joy. A response card can mark an important moment, but it is not a finished disciple.

Conversion is a change of direction: repentance and a turning to God. **New birth** is God's gracious work within a person. We cannot manufacture or certify it with a check mark. Jesus said that the wind blows where it wills. We cannot see to the bottom of a heart, but over time we may see the fruit of new life.

Baptism is a public confession of faith and an act of obedience. It is a great joy, but it is not a diploma awarded at the end of discipleship. It is better understood as a visible beginning along the road of new life.

Belonging to a church means more than appearing occasionally at a worship service. People know the person's name. They notice when he is absent. She receives and contributes. A person is teachable, connected, increasingly responsible, and knows where to turn in joy or crisis. This is not an audience member at a religious event, but a member of the body.

A disciple learns day after day to obey Jesus. Scripture reshapes the disciple's thinking. Christ brings order to relationships and to a person's use of money, work, sexuality, and power—and even to the way that person responds to enemies. A disciple may fall, but learns to rise, apologize, make restitution, and receive help.

Multiplication begins when a disciple no longer wants only to receive, but stands beside someone else. That person bears witness, prays, teaches, welcomes, leads, or helps a new community come to birth. Not every disciple will preach from a pulpit, but every disciple can carry the life of Christ toward others.

These stages belong together, but they must not be collapsed into one another.

If 500 people hear the gospel at an evangelistic event, we cannot automatically report 500 new disciples. If 100 people respond to an invitation, a responsibility toward 100 people has begun. They need to be contacted, sought, taught, and connected to a church. If ten continue faithfully on that road, the transformation of those ten

lives is not a lesser miracle because the report contains a smaller number.

God sees the heart. We can follow the visible signs of faithfulness.

Do Not Minimize God's Work—or Inflate Our Reports

A ministry report is also a spiritual matter. It can be used to give thanks, learn, and plan responsibly. It can also be used to create an impression, raise money, build influence, or conceal reality. The same spreadsheet can serve truth or vanity.

I have had to learn that good news does not need exaggeration.

If one person has truly been set free, that is glorious in itself. If a house group is still finding its order, calling it a church will not make it more valuable. If someone once made a decision but has since drifted away, continuing to count that person as an active disciple is not an act of love. We should go and look for them.

The mission of the future needs honest records—not in order to construct a machine of surveillance over people, but so that no person disappears among the numbers. We need to know:

- who has been reached;
- who asked for further contact;
- who has a disciple-maker walking beside them;
- who has become part of a local fellowship; and
- where contact has been broken.

We should distinguish a one-time event from a present, living relationship. We should avoid counting the same person more than once, review our information periodically, and state openly what we do not know with certainty.

Honest acknowledgment of uncertainty is not unbelief. It is respect for truth.

Nor is attendance the only thing worth measuring. We must also ask about fruit.

Are marriages becoming stronger? Are children safe? Are addiction and violence losing their hold? Are people learning to work, give, forgive, and accept responsibility? Are new workers emerging? Are new communities being born? Can the church serve people in poverty without making them dependent? Are finances transparent and leaders walking in integrity?

No questionnaire will answer every one of these questions quickly. Fruit takes time. But if we ask only how many people attended, we may celebrate what is visible and fail to see what endures.

We must not diminish the work of God through cynicism. A genuinely transformed life is not "nothing." Neither may we enlarge our own report out of religious enthusiasm. Precise speech does not take glory from God. It protects that glory from being mixed with our vanity.

The vision of 325,000 should make us more transparent, not less.

A Great Catch Needs Many Boats

Two biblical stories became especially vivid to me as I carried the conviction of 325,000.

The first is the miraculous catch of fish. Peter had worked through the night and caught nothing. At Jesus' word, he lowered the nets again. When so many fish entered that the nets began to break, he signaled to his partners in the other boat to come and help.

From the beginning, this image made one truth plain: 325,000 cannot belong to one denomination, mission, or leader. If a great harvest comes, many boats will be needed.

We will need Pentecostal, Baptist, Free Christian, charismatic, and other Christ-following churches. We will need Roma and non-Roma congregations, long-established ministries and

initiatives that have not yet been born. We will need local pastors, teachers, evangelists, intercessors, families, and ordinary believers who open their homes.

The other boat is not a competitor. It is help in our common obedience.

When someone connects with a church, our first question should not be how to bring that person under our name. We should ask where he or she can grow in a healthy way. When awakening begins in another fellowship, we have not lost people; Christ has gained brothers and sisters. If we try to lift everything into one boat, the boat will sink and the net will tear.

Cooperation does not require us to deny differences. We must speak clearly about theological convictions. A large goal must never be used to hide abuse, manipulation, or false teaching. But wherever we proclaim the same Christ, confess the same gospel, and are willing to walk in the light, we must learn to signal to one another and work together.

In the story, the partners do not stand on the shore arguing about who owns the lake. They row.

The vision of 325,000 is therefore interdenominational by nature. It does not call for the expansion of one religious empire, but for the movement of Christ's body. Our part may be significant, but it can never be exclusive. If God uses us, that is grace, not ownership.

The Responsibility of Empty Vessels

We have already considered the widow and her oil. God brought abundance from the little that remained in her house as she gathered empty vessels. In light of 325,000, one question stays with me:

Are we preparing enough room for what God desires to pour out?

The vessels represent people and communities: teachable hearts, future leaders, open homes, churches ready to welcome, and workers being formed in Scripture, character, and practical responsibility. Emptiness here does not mean worthlessness. It means room for God's work.

We do not produce the oil. We are responsible for gathering the vessels.

If tens of thousands turned to Christ today, would someone visit them tomorrow? Would someone explain the foundations of the gospel in language they could understand? Would there be a safe community in which they could ask questions? Would there be enough pastors, teachers, and disciple-makers? Would there be children's ministry that did more than occupy children—ministry that protected and formed them? Would there be a pathway for people who do not yet read confidently? Would there be help for those leaving addiction, facing marital crisis, seeking employment, or preparing to lead?

These questions do not cool our expectation of awakening. They make it serious.

This is why the vision has always been connected in my mind with leadership development. In 1996, one of our first priorities was to establish a Bible school. We knew that Roma believers needed to be prepared to proclaim Scripture and shepherd people within their own communities.

Over the years, our understanding widened. We do not need preachers alone. We need faithful married couples, children's workers, musicians, administrators, people of integrity in finance, peacemakers who can navigate conflict, social-service professionals, entrepreneurs, teachers, and praying mothers.

A great harvest is not waiting for one great person. It is waiting for many prepared vessels.

The Order of Hundredfold Fruit

Vision is not a strategy. It gives direction, but we must take the next obedient step.

Through the years, a simple rhythm has become increasingly clear:

pray; proclaim the gospel; remain connected to those who respond; make disciples; prepare leaders; build healthy local communities; and send again.

When one of these is persistently missing, the process is wounded.

Without prayer, mission easily becomes a human campaign. Without the gospel, it remains a social program. Without relationship, the person who responds is left alone. Without discipleship, enthusiasm never takes root. Without leaders, everything circles around one exhausted person. Without a local church, the new believer has no home. Without sending, the community closes in upon itself.

We sometimes illustrate multiplication with simple numbers. If thirty mature and trustworthy leaders each prepare ten people, three hundred workers can enter service. If each of them, in turn, prepares ten others, three thousand people may become able to carry others.

This is not prophecy and it is not a guaranteed equation. It reminds us that personal transmission can travel much farther than the endless expansion of one center.

The decisive word is not *ten*. It is *faithfulness*.

Jesus walked with twelve disciples, but he was not running a production line. He shared life with them. He taught, corrected, sent, and welcomed them back. They saw him pray, grow tired, respond with compassion, and confront hypocrisy. Discipleship is not the transfer of a curriculum. It is the sharing of life under the lordship of Christ.

Faith may count, but it does not control God. Strategy may plan, but it cannot manufacture new birth.

This frees us from the anxiety of having to prove ourselves, while leaving no room for passivity. We cannot say, "If God promised it, he will do it without us." The sower must go out. The vessels must be gathered. The nets must be repaired. The partners must be called. The disciples must be prepared.

Grace does not make work unnecessary. It gives work its meaning.

How the Vision Is Tested

Every vision must also be tested by its fruit. The test of 325,000 is not how loudly we can say it. The test is what it does to us.

Does it make us humbler? If it makes our own name seem increasingly important, we have misunderstood it. If it brings us to our knees because we know a work this large cannot be accomplished by human strength, it is leading us in the right direction.

Does it bring us closer to one person? If we step over a wounded individual for the sake of the multitude, we have left the way of Jesus. If the vision gives us more patience for the person who falls again and again, it is becoming love.

Does it make us seek partners? If it produces possession, jealousy, and denominational rivalry, we are not carrying the spirit of the great catch. If it teaches us to rejoice in what God is doing in another boat, the net is growing stronger.

Does it make our speech more truthful? If the number causes us to embellish results, the goal has become an idol. If it urges us to see reality clearly, recognize what is missing, and care for people more faithfully, hope is producing responsibility.

Does it equip others? If every decision remains in the hands of a few people, we are not preparing for a great harvest. If we trust,

teach, correct, send, and then gladly step back when others mature, we are gathering vessels.

Does it point to Christ? This is the greatest test. The number is not a brand, a fundraising slogan, or a test by which we measure the faith of other Christians. If 325,000 becomes more important to us than Jesus, we have lost its meaning. The vision serves only while it directs people's eyes to Christ.

The number 325,000 cannot save anyone. Jesus saves. The Son of God gave himself for us on the cross, and the Holy Spirit is poured out by God's grace—not by a movement.

That is precisely why we can be bold. We are not proclaiming ourselves.

I Was Not Given a Date—I Was Given Today's Obedience

People may ask, "By when will there be 325,000?"

I was not given a date, and I do not want to say what God has not said.

A promise without a date requires patience. It does not allow us to relabel reality in order to meet a deadline. Nor does it allow us to bury the seed because the fulfillment appears delayed. We must walk between two temptations: we cannot announce as completed what still lies ahead, and we cannot call impossible what we have not yet seen in full.

I have received an answer for today: **Be faithful.**

Today there is someone to call.

Today there is a young person who can be given responsibility.

Today a leader needs to apologize.

Today one church can reach across a denominational boundary to another.

Today a ministry report needs to be corrected.

Today a small discipleship group can begin.

Today we can pray for a town where there is not yet a living Christian community.

The 3,250 say: **God has already given seed.**

The 325,000 say: **Do not keep it to yourself.**

I cannot prove the fulfillment of a future promise on the pages of one book. I can tell where it began, how it formed us, which tests it has passed through, and what obedience it asks of us today. That honest testimony is worth more than loud insistence.

Faith is not secure because it can see every detail in advance. It holds fast because it knows the One who spoke.

Only the Beginning

In 2018, I said in Kecskemét that 325,000 would be only the beginning. It would be easy to hear those words as an attempt to place an even larger number above the one before it. That was not what I meant.

The 325,000 will become real fruit only if they are not 325,000 consumers occupying 325,000 seats, but a multitude of born-again, committed disciples following Christ. They will pray, serve, work, give, forgive, build community, and pass on the gospel. Those once described as a mission target will themselves become messengers.

That is why it is only the beginning.

When a Roma child discovers that God may call her too, a beginning is born. The same is true when faithfulness is restored in a broken family or a local church sets out toward the neighboring town. And when a Roma leader feels responsibility not only for his own people but for other nations, a beginning becomes a mission.

The awakening among Hungary's Roma people is not an end in itself. God desires to heal individuals and families, but he also sends those he heals. Those who yesterday felt they were among the last may tomorrow be among the first to carry good news where others cannot go. Those who have experienced rejection may turn toward other excluded people with uncommon mercy. Those who know what it is to receive hope from nothing can speak of hope with credibility.

The 3,250 began as the number in a survey. The 325,000 became a future embraced by faith. Between them lies everything we are asked to do each day: tell the truth, love one person, make a disciple, prepare a leader, build a community, call to the partners in the other boat, and lower the nets again at the word of Jesus.

I do not know which of us will see the whole harvest. I know that the seed is not ours, the field is not ours, the rain is not ours, and the glory is not ours.

The task, however, is in our hands today.

Let us not fear the magnitude of the number. Let us fear turning even one person into anonymous data.

Let us not be ashamed of small beginnings. Let us not call finished what is still growing. Let us not try to gather all of God's work into one boat.

Let us prepare vessels. Strengthen nets. Call partners. And when the oil flows and the fish fill the boats, let us remember: it happened by grace.

The 325,000 are not a finish line at which we stop.

They are a doorway through which a people of messengers may set out toward Europe.

15. Europe's Spiritual Renewal

A spiritually homeless continent—and a people being formed as messengers

> *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses…"*
> *— after Acts 1:8*

The 325,000 are not a finish line. They are a doorway.

When I look through that doorway, I do not first see countries, flags, or conference halls. I see people.

I see an elderly woman alone in an apartment building in a Western European city. I see a young man who has work, a phone, and entertainment, yet does not know why he is alive. I see an immigrant family trying to find its place as strangers. I see a Roma child in a segregated settlement in Eastern Europe, not yet aware of how narrow a place the world has already assigned her. I see a pastor in an almost empty church and another pastor in an overcrowded little house where people can barely fit, yet everyone is praying.

Europe, to me, is not an idea. It has faces, just as Roma mission has faces.

When I speak about Europe's spiritual renewal, I am not dreaming of a Christian empire or a political takeover. Religious symbols mean little if hearts remain unchanged. I am speaking about people meeting Jesus Christ personally: repentance, new birth, lives of discipleship filled with the Holy Spirit, relationships being healed, and living communities growing around them.

The vision is larger than Hungary, larger than the Roma people, and larger than any ministry. Yet it begins small: in one heart, one

family, one open home, or among two or three people where Christ is present.

I believe with all my heart that Roma people may have a distinct place in this renewal. I do not derive that calling from any natural ethnic advantage, nor from suffering or exclusion as though pain itself made anyone holy. It is the grace of God that can transform a wound into mercy, scattering into connection, and life on the margins into mission.

Those who searched for a home for many years may help others find a home in Christ.

A Continent That Remembers Jesus

Europe's history cannot be understood apart from Christianity. Churches, cathedrals, monasteries, universities, hospitals, works of art, legal traditions, and entire languages carry the Bible's influence. Bells ring in cities where fewer and fewer people know whom they are calling. In many places, the cross remains a cultural memory while the crucified and risen Christ is no longer a personal reality.

A major survey across fifteen Western European countries found that many who still identify as Christian seldom attend worship and may no longer believe in God as Scripture presents him. This is no reason to speak about Europe with superiority. Who gave us the right to despise those to whom we feel sent?

Behind people's distance from the church lies more than indifference. There are disappointments, scandals, unanswered questions, and spiritual wounds. Whole generations have encountered Christianity first as an institution, a prohibition, or hypocrisy rather than as the person of Jesus.

The continent does not need more religious noise. It needs the gospel in its purity.

Europe is wealthy in many respects, yet growing numbers of people live with an inner homelessness. We know how to lengthen life, but not how to explain why life is worth living. We connect the world while many belong deeply to no one. We can reach oceans of information, yet often lack the wisdom to forgive, remain faithful, raise children, or face death with hope.

I do not believe that everything in the past was good and everything today is bad. The history of "Christian Europe" also contains warfare, persecution, colonialism, antisemitism, enslavement, and brutal exclusion of Roma people. The presence of church buildings never guaranteed the character of Christ.

Renewal, therefore, is not a return to an idealized past. It is a return to Jesus.

And it begins with us.

We cannot stand before Europe as people who have everything in order. Our churches, too, may contain pride, rivalry, financial dishonesty, family disorder, unforgiveness, and the desire for power. We may worship loudly while failing to hear the person weeping beside us. We may exercise spiritual gifts without love. We may carry a vision for Europe while refusing to apologize to our own brother or sister.

The first sentence of spiritual renewal is not, "Lord, make *them* repent."

It is this:

Lord, search me.

Not Against Europe, but for Europe

As a Roma man, I cannot speak of Europe as though the historical wounds of my people did not exist. Exclusion is not only an old story. A European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey conducted in 2024 and published in 2025, covering Roma and Traveller communities in thirteen countries, reported that nearly one-third of respondents had experienced discrimination based on ethnic origin and that seven in ten were living in poverty.

These are not cold figures. They are children beginning life with worse odds. Families forced to prove again and again that their humanity is equal. Young people judged by their name, address, or skin before they have spoken a sentence.

We cannot proclaim true renewal while remaining silent about injustice. Repentance also has a social face. Those who follow Christ cannot make peace with humiliation, segregation, hatred, or the declaration that whole communities are beyond hope.

Yet recognizing injustice does not give us the right to take revenge.

I have often reflected that Roma people have never received true restitution for all they endured over the centuries. What was taken cannot simply be returned: lost years, humiliated generations, unacknowledged victims, and suppressed possibilities remain behind us. But being lifted up does not authorize us to return humiliation for humiliation. God desires to heal the order of things, not cast us in another performance of the same cruelty.

When Paul writes that God chose what the world regarded as foolish, weak, and insignificant, he is not announcing a contest in which one human group may shame another. He is bringing every form of boasting beneath the cross. God also desires to save the educated. He calls the powerful to be delivered from the worship of power. He calls the wealthy to stop trusting in wealth. And poverty itself does not make the poor person new; the grace of Christ does.

Europe's renewal will not be Europe's defeat.

It will be Europe finding its way home.

If God uses Roma women and men in this renewal, we must arrive as witnesses—with truth and mercy, without passing our woundedness on to others. Our message is not, "Now it is our turn to rule." Our message is that Jesus has drawn near to everyone.

God must make our wounds into doors, not weapons.

A Road That Began with Healing

The modern Roma Pentecostal awakening began this way—not with a strategy, but with human suffering met by the mercy of God.

In France in the early 1950s, Christians prayed for a gravely ill young Roma man. Historical accounts preserve some details differently, but they agree on the center of the story: news of the healing of a young man called Zino spread quickly among traveling families. People began turning to Christ. Zino's brother, Mandz, began proclaiming that Jesus was alive and healed.

The French Pentecostal pastor Clément Le Cossec encountered these families. He did more than listen from a distance. He went among them. He helped couples bring order to their marriages, baptized those who came to faith, and made room for the work of the Holy Spirit. In Brest, people gathered in homes, simple rooms, and one cellar that became part of the movement's remembered story. They had no developed institution, but life was among them.

When the new believers said they needed someone to guide them, Le Cossec first thought about the pastors who were available. Then something became increasingly clear: it would not be enough to send shepherds from outside. Roma believers themselves had to be prepared for ministry.

Mandz became one of the first preachers. Others learned to read Scripture, tell what Christ had done, pray, lead a fellowship, and pass on what they had received.

This became one of the secrets of growth.

One extraordinary person did not carry the fire everywhere. People who had been set alight carried it onward.

Families traveled, stopped for the evening, made a fire, sang, and prayed. If someone could read, that person read aloud from the Bible. News moved along lines of kinship and friendship. From different regions of France, the movement reached Spain and then other European countries. What later became widely known as *Vie et Lumière*—Life and Light—grew into an international Roma movement spanning generations.

What matters most to me is not the movement's eventual size, but the way it began.

Someone took the cry of a desperate family seriously. People prayed for a sick person. Christ became real. New believers were not left alone. They were baptized, taught, and released into ministry. When leaders were needed, no one said that Roma believers were inherently unfit. Space was made for those whom God was already calling.

Signs and wonders accompanied the gospel, but the miracle was not a performance. It was mercy—a sign pointing toward Jesus. Healing opened a door; the Word called people into a new life.

We need this today. We do not need a collection of dramatic stories. We need compassionate courage: courage to pray for the sick, believe for deliverance, and remain beside a person even when the road toward healing is long. We must celebrate the extraordinary moment while also building the community that can carry the new life the following morning.

What I Saw in Spain

Years ago, at a global Pentecostal conference in Spain, I met leaders of the Roma movement there. I had heard large numbers before. It is one thing to read a report and another to speak with people for whom Roma church life has been a reality across several generations.

The roots of Spain's *Iglesia Evangélica Filadelfia* are closely connected with the French awakening. Spanish Roma seasonal workers heard the gospel in France. Roma workers were trained, returned home, and proclaimed Christ among their own people. What began among a few families grew into a nationwide network.

Published membership estimates from different periods do not always agree, so I do not want to repeat one estimate as though it were a verified description of the present. The historical reality is clear enough: the Roma Pentecostal movement in Spain did not remain a small mission project maintained from outside. It became a Roma-led church movement connecting many local communities.

That is what touched me.

I did not see Roma people skillfully fitted into a system foreign to them. I saw the gospel finding a home in family relationships, music, testimony, communal responsibility, and the ministry of Roma leaders. Of course, no church is without failure. Large-scale growth also creates new problems, training needs, and dangers in leadership. But the question was no longer whether a Roma believer could become a pastor. The question was how to prepare more healthy pastors.

Spain did not give me a model to copy. It gave me confirmation.

God can root the gospel of Christ so deeply within a Roma community that it ceases to be a program maintained from outside and becomes life passed on from within. The Roma believer is not only a listener, but a witness; not only someone receiving care, but

a shepherd; not only a guest who has been welcomed, but a messenger who is sent.

On the way home, I did not ask how Hungary could reproduce Spain. I asked what we must do so that the Word planted among us could bear fruit just as freely in our own soil.

One Sentence in Vienna

In 2018, a few days before I was due to minister in Kecskemét, we met European Pentecostal leaders in Vienna. For a full day, we spoke about what was happening in Roma communities and how churches were responding.

One sentence burned itself into me:

“A Roma awakening has begun in Europe.”

They did not say that it might begin one day. They were not describing a distant future. They recognized that in different countries—in communities far apart and often unaware of one another—the same signs were appearing. Roma people were meeting Christ. Families were changing. Homes were opening. New workers were standing up. Churches were being born.

This mattered to me, though not because international leaders had authorized my faith. The Word of God is not authenticated by international opinion. It was encouraging, however, to discover that the same hope was not living in one person’s heart alone. What we saw as first drops in Hungary, others were also recognizing in France, Spain, the Balkans, Romania, Slovakia, and elsewhere.

In Kecskemét, therefore, I spoke of more than a plan for Hungary. I spoke about the early rain—the rain that softens earth trampled hard so that seed can take root. I spoke of a people who had traveled through the Valley of Weeping becoming a spring.

I still believe the awakening has begun.

I also know that what has begun is not complete. The first drop is not the harvest. One new church is not a renewed continent. Recognition does not excuse us from preparation. It makes us responsible.

If rain is approaching, we must cultivate the ground.

Ten to Twelve Million People, Many Different Stories

The Council of Europe estimates that between ten and twelve million Roma and Travellers live across Europe, in almost every European country.

The word *Roma* embraces diverse communities: Roma, Sinti, Manush, Calé, Romanichal, and others, with different languages, histories, and ways of life. It is a serious mistake to speak as though all Roma people everywhere were the same. What is fruitful among a Vlax Roma community in Hungary cannot simply be transferred unchanged into a French Manush, Spanish Calé, or Balkan Roma setting.

Shared origins do not erase cultural differences. The gospel, however, leads people in every language to the same Christ.

For centuries, our scattering was often experienced as a curse. We had no country that protected us wherever we went. We were called foreigners in places where our families had lived for generations. Borders changed around us while we often remained at the edge of society.

In God's hands, the same scattering can become connection.

Roma family and kinship networks cross national borders. People move between Eastern and Western Europe. One family may speak several languages, understand several cultures, and maintain relationships in several countries. A route that yesterday carried vulnerability can tomorrow become a road for the gospel.

Geographic presence, however, is not yet mission. Moving easily among countries does not by itself make a person a witness to Christ. Family networks can carry good news, but they can also carry offense, gossip, dependence, and old conflict. A bridge can be crossed in either direction.

I do not expect Europe's renewal from Roma blood.

I expect it from the Holy Spirit, who gives Roma women and men new birth, cleanses them, teaches them, anoints them, and sends them.

When this happens, a people present in many countries can truly become a bridge. In Christ, they can connect different people without erasing their differences. They can carry good news rather than their own glory and proclaim, in place of ethnic superiority, that everyone beneath the cross stands in need of grace.

A Network That Does Not Want to Become the Center

For many years, I sensed that Roma ministries across Europe needed one another. They did not need another denomination or another center seeking to direct everyone. They needed relationship—a table where people from different nations, cultures, and church backgrounds could sit, listen, and recognize what God was doing among others.

In 2014, the *Roma for the Nations* conference was held in Budapest. About 160 participants came from sixteen countries, including approximately one hundred Roma leaders. At the end of the gathering, six representatives from six countries were asked to carry the relationship-building forward. Roma Networks grew from that beginning.

Within the six-member international leadership team, I began learning the same lesson that I had repeatedly needed to learn at home: the strength of a network does not come from every thread

ending in one person's hand. Its strength comes from multiplying points of connection.

A leader from Serbia understands realities in the Balkans. A Romanian pastor carries the stories of villages I do not know. A Croatian worker may build a different kind of bridge between Roma and non-Roma churches. French and Spanish brothers and sisters bring the wisdom and warnings of several generations. Remove any of these gifts, and something is missing from the common picture.

After the next European conference in 2016, a circle of representatives connected with forty-four countries began to form. This did not mean that every question in forty-four countries had been answered. It meant that in more places there was someone we could ask:

What are you seeing? What do you need? What have you learned? How can we stand beside you?

I still consider this more important than building an impressive center.

A network listens, connects, and learns. It should not analyze Roma communities from a distance, but search with them for answers that fit reality. It can connect a need in one country with an approach or gift that has already emerged in another.

Not every gift of grace in God's kingdom appears among us. Wisdom includes recognizing what God has entrusted to someone else.

East and West Need One Another

Roma movements in France and Spain carry a longer history. They have several generations of experience in seeing an evangelistic beginning become self-sustaining, Roma-led church life.

In many parts of Central and Eastern Europe, opportunities opened later, especially after the fall of Communist regimes. Here the road must be found amid other historical wounds, social realities, and church structures.

During the 2000s, we organized biblical training in Senta and Subotica, both in Serbia. Those gatherings revealed both the power and the weakness of borders. A national border is an administrative reality. The gospel, family relationships, and shared responsibility do not stop at a barrier. We also learned that we could not take a ready-made Hungarian solution everywhere. Local workers, local language, local trust, and long-term presence are essential.

Today, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, and Transcarpathia in western Ukraine are especially close to my heart. This does not mean the rest of Europe is less important. The next obedient step must always take place through real relationships. We cannot be deeply present everywhere at once. We can prepare and connect leaders who take root in their own regions, lift others, and establish new communities.

Western Europe does not possess a ready answer for every eastern need. Nor does the East hold a special spiritual superiority over the West. One place may have more organizational experience; another may carry greater spiritual hunger. One may have greater financial resources; another deeper local knowledge and more flexible community life. Even these are not permanent rules. Every country has living springs and cracked wells.

We need to stop using one another and begin serving one another.

A supporter from the West should not arrive with a finished program and then search for local people to implement it. The supporter should listen to what God has already begun in that place. In the same way, an eastern leader should not see a western brother or sister only as a source of money. Questions, experience, professional knowledge, and correction are also gifts to be received.

Partnership is not the movement of money. It is mutual self-giving within a shared mission.

If Europe's renewal truly lies ahead, East and West alike must repent of self-sufficiency.

What Do I Mean by Awakening?

The word *awakening* is easy to use. We may apply it to a successful conference or to a meeting where many people sang, wept, or came forward in response to an invitation. These may be precious moments of God's work, but they do not by themselves prove that a community has awakened.

When I look at Pentecost, I see two movements.

First, disciples who already belong to Jesus respond to the Holy Spirit. They receive power. What they learned from Jesus is activated within them, and they step out of fear.

Second, people who stand outside hear the gospel of Christ. The Word pierces their hearts. They repent, are baptized, and become part of the community.

Awakening, then, is not simply intense emotion. It is a change of direction.

Repentance appears—not temporary regret, but recognition, confession, and abandonment of sin. Truth appears. Hidden things come into the light. Reconciliation appears. Husbands and wives learn faithfulness again. Parents accept responsibility for their children. Former enemies extend a hand to one another. Hunger for Scripture appears. A person who could barely read yesterday begins sounding out the words of the Bible with help today because he wants to hear the Lord.

And the power of God appears.

We pray for the sick. We believe that Jesus still heals. We proclaim freedom to those held captive. We refuse to accept that addiction,

violence, fear, or spiritual darkness must rule families. We expect signs and wonders, not to build a human reputation, but so that the Father may bear witness to the Son and people may recognize that God's kingdom has drawn near.

Signs do not replace the cross. A supernatural experience does not make discipleship unnecessary. The person who has been healed must still learn to forgive. The person who has been delivered must build new habits and relationships. The person who prophesies must handle money with integrity. The person who ministers before a multitude must be faithful at home.

The fruit of awakening is not visible only in a worship service.

It is visible on Monday morning: in work done faithfully; in a child sent to school on time; in an honest account; in a reconciled family; in clean leadership; in care for the poor; and in the person who once needed help now helping another.

It is also visible in sending. A community that seeks only its own spiritual experience will eventually close in upon itself. The Holy Spirit gives power so that we may be witnesses.

Awakening gives birth to mission.

Without the Holy Spirit, It Remains a Plan

I value plans. I believe in clear goals, defined responsibility, budgets, training, and honest measurement. We might have prevented many failures if we had planned more carefully at an earlier stage. Faith is not an excuse for being unprepared.

But the best strategy cannot give new birth to a single person.

Jesus taught the disciples for three years. They saw his miracles, heard his parables, ate and traveled with him. Yet he did not immediately send them into the world on the strength of their own enthusiasm. He told them to wait. They would receive power when

the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they would become his witnesses.

That order has not changed.

A good cause, the suffering of Roma people, knowledge of Europe's need, our experience, and all our methods together cannot make us sufficient. Our sufficiency comes from God.

No one should imagine that they are naturally ready for this mission. I am not. After decades of ministry, I still need the Holy Spirit each day to renew, search, correct, and fill me with fresh strength. The memory of yesterday's anointing cannot carry today's burden.

"Receive the Holy Spirit," Jesus told his disciples.

We do not merely need more energy. We need his presence. We need the character of Christ formed within us. We need to know when to speak and when to remain silent, when to go and when to wait, how to proclaim truth boldly while carrying a broken person gently.

Without the Holy Spirit, vision can become ambition, networking can become politics, leadership can become domination, prophecy can become grandiosity, and a number can become an idol.

With him, the empty vessel becomes a carrier. The fearful disciple becomes a witness. A small house becomes a place of encounter with heaven. A scattered people become a people sent.

Europe's Renewal May Begin in a Home

When we speak of a continent, words can become too large. Europe will not enter one room all at once. People will come—families, neighbors, co-workers, one community at a time.

That is why micro-communities matter so much to me. Two or three people gather in the name of Jesus. They do not need to wait until they have a building, sound equipment, and a complete

ministry team. Christ can already be among them. They can pray, read Scripture, confess sin, invite another person, help a family, and step into the next street.

A small community should not remain isolated. It needs relationship with mature leaders, a wider church family, and a network in which it can learn, remain accountable, and ask for help. The home is a beginning, not the entire world.

This is how the map of Europe appears before me: not a few enormous centers drawing everyone to themselves, but thousands of living points—homes, local churches, places of training, groups of intercessors, and leaders who know one another.

Technology can help connect them, distribute teaching, provide interpretation, and share needs quickly. But a screen cannot hold a person who is weeping. A network's final strength will always be real relationship.

When I speak of a "smart" Roma settlement, I am not thinking primarily about modern devices. I see a local community that understands its own gifts and needs; connects, learns, and shares resources; protects children; creates work; and prepares its own people for ministry. It does not wait for every answer to arrive from outside. It learns to become a spring.

If communities like these are born in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Transcarpathia, and beyond, Europe's spiritual renewal will no longer be an abstract slogan.

It will have an address. It will have a table. It will have names.

Jesus May Have Kept the Best Until Now

At the wedding in Cana, the wine ran out. The guests may not yet have understood the seriousness of the situation, but the servants knew there was nothing left to serve. Stone jars stood nearby, full of religious significance but empty of what the moment required.

Jesus told the servants to fill them with water. They filled them to the brim.

Jesus performed the miracle, but the obedience of the servants mattered. They did not turn water into wine. They did what the Lord said before they could see how it would become an answer.

I often see Europe in this picture. Great stone vessels preserve the past—church buildings, theological libraries, traditions, and historical memories. We should not despise these things. They contain much blessing. But memory alone cannot satisfy today's thirst.

Jesus can do something new within old vessels.

He can also use vessels others would never have brought into the wedding.

When I say that Jesus may have kept the best until now, I am not saying that Roma people are better than other peoples. We are not the best gift. Christ is. The presence of the Holy Spirit is. Grace is, and no one can boast of grace.

I do believe that in a late hour of history, God may have a surprise for Europe. He may carry fresh wine through people who were once denied a place at the table. He may raise worship from small homes known to outsiders only as "problem addresses." He may make servants of women and men about whom others said, "There is no future in them."

Many people in our families have tried to silence pain with alcohol, drugs, noise, or flight. The same search may take more refined forms elsewhere in Europe—consumption, achievement, screens, power, or endless entertainment. We are all searching for something to fill an inner emptiness.

The joy of the Holy Spirit is not an intoxication that helps us forget reality. It is a presence that gives us strength to face reality and begin a new life.

Our part is to fill the jars with water: prayer, obedience, study, healthy relationships, prepared leaders, and open homes. Jesus will do what we cannot.

Toward Europe, in Humility

I am not saying that Roma people will save Europe.

Europe's Savior is Jesus Christ.

I am saying that Jesus chooses witnesses, clothes them with power, and sends them. I believe with all my heart that he is calling great numbers of Roma women and men into this mission.

First, we must become disciples. We must carry more than a conversion experience; we must carry lives obedient to Christ. We must learn to serve, work, study, forgive, lead with integrity, honor other peoples, and seek counsel from those who know more than we do. Being lifted up does not exempt us from character. It increases our responsibility.

To the churches of Europe, I make this appeal: Do not see Roma people only as a mission target. See the future co-worker, pastor, evangelist, teacher, entrepreneur, peacemaker, and missionary. Do not do for Roma believers everything that should be built with them and through them. Offer trust, training, relationship, correction, and real responsibility.

We need one another.

We need intercessors who do more than speak a few words over a distant cause—people who carry the names of leaders and communities. We need professionals who use their expertise to equip rather than control. We need financial partners who strengthen local responsibility rather than build dependence. We need leaders willing to give others room. We need young people prepared to learn languages, build relationships across borders, and use the digital world in service of the gospel.

Above all, we need the Holy Spirit.

The 325,000 are a doorway. Beyond it stands not our larger organization, but the field of the nations. I do not know how quickly the door will open or every road beyond it. I do see the next obedient step: make disciples, prepare leaders, connect communities, and turn our hearts toward Europe.

Not in anger. Not with a need to prove ourselves. Not with superiority.

With love. With power. With clean hands.

I believe the first drops of the early rain have already come. I believe springs are rising in the Valley of Weeping. I believe those long regarded only as a burden may carry blessing to cities and nations.

And when this happens, let no one say that Roma people lifted themselves up.

Let us say together:

Jesus did it.

He found those who were last. He called them near. He gave them a new name. He filled them with the Holy Spirit. He sent them forward to show others the road to him.

This brings us to the next mystery:

What does it mean to become first after living so long among the last?

16. Many Who Are Last Will Be First

To be lifted up is not a rank. It is a call to serve.

> *"Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."*
> *— Matthew 19:30*

An elderly woman receiving help through one of our in-home care services gave us a firm instruction: no Roma caregiver was to cross her threshold. She carried many years of prejudice and believed she would rather remain without help than entrust herself to a Roma woman.

Then her regular caregiver became ill. Someone had to take her place, and that day the only available worker was Roma.

At first, the older woman refused. As the ordinary tasks of life became more difficult, however, she finally opened the door.

The caregiver stepped inside. She had not come to argue or demand an apology. She did not need to prove that she was better than the judgment made about her. She simply did her work. She paid attention. She helped. She served with such love that the woman's opinion slowly changed. In time, she began asking if this caregiver could be the one who always came.

A threshold that had functioned as a wall became a doorway.

I often remember this story when I read the words of Jesus: many who are last will be first, and many who are first will be last. In that room, a human order truly was reversed. The person who had first been considered unworthy to enter became the one most eagerly awaited.

But she did not become first by taking the best chair in the house.

She became first by bending down to serve.

Here is one of the mysteries of God's kingdom. He lifts up those pushed aside, gives a voice to those who have been silenced, and entrusts authority to people once regarded as nothing. He does not do this so that a new cycle of exclusion, shouting down, and domination can begin. He lifts people so that they can serve.

In God's kingdom, being lifted up is not a rank.

It is a ministry.

Jesus Overturns the Order

Jesus spoke about the first and the last after a wealthy young man had gone away from him sorrowfully. The man had kept many commandments, but he could not release the thing in which he found his security. Peter then asked Jesus, in effect, "We have left everything. What will there be for us?"

It was an understandable question, but a dangerous one.

Disciples can begin comparing themselves with others. We can count what we have surrendered, how much we have worked, how many years we have served, and which seat we should receive as a result. Even sacrifice can become a certificate of merit. Service can become a ladder of rank. We can use what we have given up to feel more important than someone else.

Jesus promised a real reward to those who left everything for him. Yet immediately after the promise, he unsettled every human calculation: many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

It is as though he were saying, "Do not imagine that you already know the seating plan in God's kingdom. Do not imagine that yesterday's sacrifice means you no longer need grace today."

In Matthew's Gospel, the parable of the workers in the vineyard follows. Some worked from early morning; others were hired near

the end of the day. The landowner treated the latecomers with the same generosity. Those who arrived first did not rejoice that the others had also received. They began to compare.

Grace always offends the person keeping a payroll for God's kingdom.

We are quick to say:

I have been here longer.

I suffered more.

I have better training.

I built this.

My people lost more.

I have earned the first place.

With one sentence, Jesus removes the ground of boasting from the first and the last alike. The first cannot own a place in the kingdom. The last cannot purchase elevation with the experience of exclusion. Both stand by grace.

The kingdom of God does not merely reverse the line.

It creates a new order.

First Place Belongs to the One Who Washes Feet

When James and John asked for places of glory beside Jesus, the other disciples became angry. Perhaps this was not because they were already free from ambition. Perhaps they wanted the same seats.

Jesus spoke about the rulers of the nations who dominate people and exercise power over them. Then he drew a clear boundary: **It must not be that way among you.** Whoever wanted to become great must serve; whoever wanted to be first must become the

servant of all. The Son of Man himself came not to be served, but to serve and give his life for many.

This was no poetic exaggeration. Jesus knelt before his disciples, poured water into a basin, and washed their feet. He washed the feet of the man who would deny him. He washed the feet of the man who would betray him.

The Lord of heaven and earth took the place of the foot washer.

When God raises someone, then, the first question is not how large a platform they received. It is before whom they can kneel.

If God makes someone a leader, the proof is not the number of people obeying that leader, but the number of people whose growth is being served. If God gives financial opportunity, the sign of blessing is not how far a person has risen above others, but how many needs have met an open hand.

The person who is first in Jesus' kingdom is first in responsibility. First to apologize. First to seek peace. First to notice the person left at the edge. First to accept the difficult task, and last to demand recognition.

We must not confuse this with humiliation.

For centuries, Roma people were often forced into subordinate positions rather than invited into voluntary service. The gospel does not sanctify exploitation. It does not tell an abused person to remain silent and call oppression love.

Jesus served from a secure dignity. He knew that he had come from the Father and was returning to the Father; therefore he was free to bend down.

Healthy service does not grow from believing that I am worth nothing.

It grows from knowing who I am in Christ so deeply that I no longer need to prove I am greater than you.

Exclusion Is Not Grace

I have often said that when I hear the word *Roma*, the first thought that comes to me is rejection. The next is grace.

This can be misunderstood.

Exclusion itself is not grace. The humiliation of a child, segregation, abuse, contempt, and the unjust removal of opportunity are sins. We do not need to beautify them, and no one owes gratitude for them.

Grace becomes visible when God enters the place these things have devastated.

He bends toward the person others have abandoned. He cleanses, heals, and teaches that person to walk. Then he gives an assignment: Rise, follow me, and carry forward what you have received from me.

This is what I mean by grace in the place of rejection.

Grace is not the wound. It is the Healer's presence within it.

Grace is not the last place. It is Christ calling us by name even there.

Grace is not the lack. It is the oil God pours into an empty vessel.

Suffering alone prepares no one to lead. Poverty is not an anointing. Exclusion is no substitute for character, learning, and obedience. But there is no wound, lack, or human judgment that can prevent God from calling a person.

The world often predicts our future from our past.

God speaks from his grace.

When a Wound Matures into Mercy

We receive wounds, and we inflict them. Through many years of ministry, I have learned this painfully in my own life.

I have experienced injustice, misunderstanding, rejection, and loss. As a leader, however, I cannot remain only on that side of the story. I must also turn the question toward myself:

Whom have I wounded?

At times, the urgency of mission made me move faster than a co-worker's heart could follow. At other times I defended myself when I should have listened, or offered an explanation when an honest admission was needed. I cannot avoid these questions.

One of the deepest tests of becoming first is whether I can be first to apologize.

An unbandaged wound easily begins to lead us. It makes us suspicious. We hear attack in every question, rejection in every correction, and competition in every other leader. If authority is then placed in our hands, we may try to compensate for yesterday's powerlessness by controlling everyone today.

In this way, a victim can become another person who wounds.

Jesus does more than lift us out of pain. He desires to heal us within it. The psalm says that God binds up the wounds of the brokenhearted. Binding a wound implies time, closeness, and care. One prayer may bring a breakthrough in some situations. Other wounds require a longer road: Scripture, honest conversation, apology, forgiveness, healthy boundaries, help from brothers and sisters, and sometimes the care of a qualified professional.

Healing does not mean forgetting. The past must be named truthfully, and necessary boundaries must be established. But revenge no longer makes our decisions. The wound slowly loses the right to govern our relationships.

A healed wound can make us attentive. Those who know what it is not to be heard may notice the silent person more quickly. Those who have known shame may handle another's dignity more

carefully. Those who received another opportunity in Christ may be slower to abandon someone who falls again.

The scar may remain, but it is no longer a weapon.

It becomes a doorway to mercy.

Not the Same Cruelty in a New Order

The history of Roma people contains many injustices that must be named. Silence is not peace. Sin swept under a carpet does not heal because we speak religious words over it.

Telling the truth about injustice, however, is not the same as taking revenge.

God does not make the last first so that the same cruelty can continue in a new order. He does not give a voice so that the person once silenced may now silence others. He does not give influence so that yesterday's excluded person can build a wall around himself today.

No people can stand in superiority at the cross. All have sinned, and all need grace. This does not erase historical responsibility, but it removes hatred's right to rule us.

We must arrive not as accusers, but as witnesses.

That does not mean we remain quiet about injustice. We speak precisely because we have seen what lies do to human beings. But we do not speak out of embitterment. We speak truth with mercy—not to force another person to kneel before us, but so that we can kneel together before Christ.

Mercy without truth makes a cheap peace, and the wound continues to spread infection.

Truth without mercy becomes a hammer, inflicting new wounds.

The two meet in Jesus. He does not deny sin; he bears its judgment. He does not dismiss suffering; he enters it. He does not exchange

the roles of oppressor and oppressed. He creates a new person from both.

Those whom the King calls in from the roads and hedges to join the wedding feast are not given a place so that they can close the door against the next arrival.

They are given a place so that they, too, can begin inviting.

Not Tolerated, but Received as a Gift

For a long time, it seemed like a great achievement if a Roma believer was merely tolerated in a church.

He could sit in the back row. She could sing a song. He might tell his testimony on a designated mission Sunday. She appeared in the photograph when the church wanted to demonstrate its openness.

But tolerance is not fellowship.

In the body of Christ, a Roma believer is not a permanent guest who must always feel grateful for being allowed inside. That person is not stage decoration, a target group, or proof that a program succeeded.

That person is a brother or sister. A gift.

The Holy Spirit may place pastoral, teaching, evangelistic, leadership, or mercy gifts in a Roma believer just as he does in anyone else.

The church's task is not to lower the standard. That would not be love. The same biblical integrity, faithfulness, teachability, and responsibility are required of every leader.

But the church must prepare a real path for growth.

To give opportunity without preparation is abandonment. To train a person who is never entrusted with real responsibility is confidence endlessly postponed. The two must travel together:

teach and make room; encourage and correct; entrust and hold accountable; send and remain alongside.

The presence of a Roma song in a service is not the test of an inclusive church. The question is whether the church knows the Roma believer's voice. Will it listen when that person does more than sing—when he asks a question or offers correction? Can the church imagine her teaching, leading, deciding, and sending others? Is it prepared to plan not only *for* Roma people, but *with* them?

We Roma believers must also accept the road of growth. We cannot demand trust while refusing to learn, receive correction, or remain accountable. We cannot dismiss every difficult question as prejudice when there may be something in our lives that genuinely requires change.

Dignity and responsibility belong together.

I am not asking for a privileged place for Roma people. I am asking for their God-given place. I am not asking that someone be made a leader because he is Roma. I am asking that her Roma identity not disqualify her in advance from what God has called her to do.

Let us not merely tolerate one another.

Let us recognize the gift of God in one another.

The Ordinary Face of Transformation

It is easy to speak of being lifted up in large words. Real change becomes visible on Monday morning.

Before national studies were written about this, we had already seen signs of change in everyday life in Békés. The local church history preserves stories of people who stopped going to the pub and fighting, returned to their workplace things they had previously taken without permission, put relationships in order, and formally married.

Faith did not remain within the walls of worship. Small groups also talked about family problems, budgeting, debt, and health. More young people began to desire further education; they completed secondary school, and some later earned degrees.

This must not be told as though every story were the same, or as though a few old problems could define the whole Roma community. The point is this: where the rule of Christ becomes real, a new order can begin in apology, work, money, marriage, and a child's future.

A Hungarian study titled *Roma Mission Movements in Hungary* examined active, baptized Roma members from several denominations. Almost every respondent reported positive changes in the lives of people who had turned to Christ. The two most frequently mentioned areas were changes in lifestyle and habits and freedom from addiction.

The study did not describe Hungary's entire Roma population, so its findings should not be generalized to everyone. It nevertheless held an important mirror before us.

The respondents' stories pointed in the same direction: freedom from addictions, marriages and family relationships coming into order, more responsible work, and a new desire to learn.

These are not minor side effects.

When a child is no longer afraid of the condition in which her father will come home, a generation's future changes.

When a person begins working, repaying debt, and caring for his family, dignity is being built.

When a woman asks for help to leave abuse and the church refuses to send her back into danger, a life may be saved.

When a young person begins to study because he believes there is a future for him, hope takes flesh.

The gospel does not merely make us feel better. It brings a new rule over life.

The study also indicated that a church can become a distinctive shared space between Roma and non-Roma people. A new *we* can be born—one in which Roma believers do not have to deny their heritage in order to belong to Christ's body. A person does not become less Roma by following Jesus. Christ does not erase the differences he created. He cleanses our relationships of sin, fear, and hatred.

Many people who turn to Christ begin to say, "I want to become a good example."

This can be a healthy responsibility if it does not grow from a compulsion to prove one's humanity. I do not live with integrity so that others might finally regard me as a human being. I cannot purchase human dignity through performance. I desire a faithful life because Christ has already received me, and I want what I have received to become visible to others.

Becoming first, then, is not an honor awarded in one moment.

It is a new way of life.

Acceptance Is Not a Reward

Wider society cannot say to Roma people, "We will accept you when every part of your life has changed." Human dignity is not a reward for good behavior. The person whose life is disordered, who is addicted, poor, or difficult to live beside still bears the image of God.

The responsibility for change does not rest only on Roma shoulders.

If a person studies but receives no opportunity because of a name or address, the wall still stands.

If someone is ready to work but is judged unreliable before an interview begins, the wall still stands.

If a family wants to move into healthier conditions but no one will accept them as neighbors, the wall still stands.

If a prepared Roma minister meets an invisible ceiling within the church, the wall still stands.

Conversion is a personal change of direction, but reconciliation requires movement from both sides.

Roma people must leave the captivity of bitterness, fear, and self-excuse. Non-Roma people must leave the security of prejudice, distance, and superiority. Neither can expect the other to travel the entire road alone.

This is why the caregiver's story matters so much to me. The older woman's prejudice was not changed by a lecture. A person crossed her threshold whom she had previously seen only as a member of a rejected group. Through the caregiver's service, the woman at last saw someone with a name, a face, and love to give.

But first, the door had to open.

Encounter alone will not resolve every social problem. We also need just laws and institutions, good schools, decent work, and responsible public policy. The church can still offer something no regulation can manufacture:

genuine relationship between brothers and sisters.

Not beside one another.

With one another.

The Test of Being Lifted Up

Long invisibility is painful. Sudden visibility can also be dangerous.

A platform may convince us that we have arrived. A title may whisper that we no longer need correction. Growth can hide cracks. An old experience of lack may become hunger for money, recognition, power, or the satisfaction of making everyone obey us at last.

Being lifted up is therefore a test.

What do I do with money entrusted to me? How do I speak to a person who has nothing to offer me? What happens in my family when the door closes behind us? Do I receive questions? Is my leadership transparent? Can I rejoice when someone I trained travels farther than I did?

Anointing does not replace character. Talent does not exempt us from accountability. A history of suffering gives no special license to treat others harshly.

We need Scripture, training, relationships with brothers and sisters, and people who love us enough to say no. Someone who celebrates us but never asks a question may not truly help us. Someone who continually corrects but never encourages does not lead as a father or mother either. Truth and love must hold us together.

Not every new believer is ready to lead others immediately. We must not close the door of opportunity, but we must prepare the person. Jesus called his disciples close, shared life with them, taught them, sent them, and then listened when they returned.

Trust is not naivety. It is a risk taken within relationship.

The greatest protection of a leader who has been lifted up is the memory that he, too, was lifted.

He did not raise himself. He does not sustain himself. And the people entrusted to him do not belong to him.

Preparing a Place for the Next Person

During one of the most difficult seasons of my life, I met weekly with a discipleship group of young men. Because the Zsinóros work was collapsing, they did not see only my successes. They watched me trying to hold on to God in the middle of loss.

All ten members of that group later became leaders. Few titles could bring me greater joy.

People learn not only from what we tell them. They also learn from the way we lose, apologize, decide, release, and begin again. Leadership development is not only curriculum. It is shared life.

If those who were last become first, we must prepare a place for them. But new leaders must immediately begin preparing a place for the generation after them. Otherwise, the movement becomes the success story of one generation.

A leader's joy matures when others stand beside that leader and then continue without him. If our disciples go farther than we did, our ministry has not become smaller. It has been passed on.

This matters especially among Roma children and young people. It is not enough to tell them that God has a plan for their lives. We must build a road on which they can actually walk:

- a safe community for children;
- good education;
- a mentor;
- knowledge of Scripture;
- work experience;
- language learning;
- real responsibility; and
- room to make mistakes, learn, and try again.

We should not place a crown on their heads before their shoulders are strong.

We should stand beside them until they can carry what God entrusts to them.

The Other Boat Fills Too

The desire to be first can make us lonely. We begin to believe that we matter only if nothing can happen without us.

At the great catch, Peter and his companions had to signal to their partners in the other boat. I can no longer read this as an incidental detail. Their help did not diminish the miracle. It saved the catch.

If God raises Roma leaders, he is not constructing another exclusive center. He is giving gifts and partners to the whole body of Christ. When a Roma church grows, it does not need to isolate itself. It can learn from older churches and give them something of the life it has received.

Non-Roma churches do not need to fear losing space when Roma leaders move forward. The body of Christ does not become smaller when more of its members begin to function.

Roma leaders must not pretend that we no longer need anyone. We need teachers, professionals, intercessors, financial partners, the experience of other cultures, and honest signals from the other boat.

The question is not which boat's name will be remembered.

The question is whether the people reach the shore.

Among the First to Go

When I say that many who are last will be first, I am not speaking mainly about Roma people rising to the top of a social or religious ranking.

I mean that they may be among the first to go.

Among the first to enter places others avoid. Among the first to open their homes. Among the first to pray for the sick. Among the first to sit beside a person in addiction, a prisoner, someone without a home, a refugee, a lonely older person, or a family from another people.

Those who know the pain of being an outsider may receive, in Christ, a particular attentiveness to other outsiders. This is not automatic. An untreated wound can close us in upon ourselves. But when Jesus heals it, yesterday's stranger can become a bridge-builder.

For centuries, scattering meant vulnerability. Christ can make family, friendship, and language relationships across national borders into roads for the gospel. Offense and hopelessness can travel along the same roads. The question is what we will carry.

Ethnic heritage does not make anyone a messenger.

The call of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, and an obedient life do.

When those three meet, a people once pushed aside may be among the first to carry good news to Europe's spiritually homeless people—not because they know every answer, but because they know where they found a home.

The purpose of being lifted up always lies beyond the person God lifts.

Abraham was blessed so that he might become a blessing. The disciples received power so that they might become witnesses. The widow's oil did not flow so that she could admire it, but so that her family could be rescued and have enough to live.

If a spring truly rises in a Roma settlement, the water must flow beyond the settlement.

Toward cities and nations.

The Child God Already Sees

I was ten years old when God gave my life a direction I could not yet put into words. I did not foresee the towns, churches, training programs, failures, or international relationships. I knew only this: I must prepare, because God had something for me to do.

When I look at a Roma child today, I also see this mystery.

I do not know what the child will become, and I do not want to impose a future God has not given. But I refuse to accept that an address, family poverty, school failure, or another person's prejudice has already closed that child's story.

Today others may see only a noisy boy. God may be forming a shepherd.

A quiet girl may sit before us whom no one thinks to ask. God may see a teacher, physician, entrepreneur, praying mother, artist, or a servant who will connect nations.

Our task is not to speak grand titles over a child.

Our task is to call the child by name. Listen. Protect. Teach. Establish consistent boundaries. Reveal Jesus. And remain long enough for that child to hear God's call personally.

The journey from last to first often begins when someone sees in us what we cannot yet see in ourselves.

But we must not bind the child, disciple, or future leader to ourselves. They are not called to become our copy. They are called to be formed into the likeness of Christ. They may serve differently, with different tools, in another country, and travel farther than we ever did.

If they do, let us not fear losing our place.

This is what we prepared them for.

Jesus Has the First and the Last Word

At the beginning of this book, I wrote that I see God bending down in love and making the last first.

Now I must add this: when God lifts people, he sends them to serve.

He causes grace to rise in the place of rejection. He heals wounds into mercy. He transforms the last place into mission. The person who needed help yesterday stands beside someone else today. The one who was not permitted to cross a threshold suddenly carries the love of Christ through that same door.

This is not the triumphal march of one people.

It is the victory of Jesus over every human ranking.

He is the First and the Last. He alone can be first without crushing anyone beneath him. He who stands above all gave himself on the cross for those who turned against him. Every elevation remains pure only while it points to him.

If you feel you are among the last, do not allow rejection to speak the final word over your life. Go to Christ. Allow him to heal, teach, and prepare you. Do not wait only for someone to offer you a place one day. Open the small door already in your hand for someone else.

If you have been given a place among the first, do not be afraid to bend lower. Listen to the person no one hears. Share your knowledge, relationships, and responsibility. Do not merely invite someone to your table; sit at theirs as well. Do not only support them. Be ready, one day, to follow them into the work to which God has called them.

If you are a leader, look for vessels. Do not see only those who are already prepared. Notice the teachable person who is faithful with little and carries a small jar of oil. Prepare them, entrust them with real work, remain alongside them, and then release them.

If you are a Roma believer, do not be satisfied that you have been welcomed. Turn toward the next person who has been rejected. Do not carry old grievance into Europe. Carry the mercy with which Christ came to find you.

Many who are last will be first.

First to serve. First to forgive. First to go. First to stand beside the next person who is last.

As long as hopeless judgments are spoken over children, as long as churches see a target group where God is raising a messenger, and as long as wounds wait for the Healer, I cannot remain silent.

I have seen God bend down.

I have seen the last stand up.

And I know this: those whom he raises to their feet, he raises so that they may go.

That is why I cannot remain silent.

I Cannot Keep Silent

The book ends. The road does not.

> *"If I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' his word becomes a fire in my heart, shut up in my bones. I grow weary of holding it in. I cannot."*
> *— after Jeremiah 20:9*

When I reached the end of this book, I wrote nothing for a long time.

I thought again about the ten-year-old child who knew none of the large words. He understood nothing of strategy, saw no countries before him, and could not imagine how much joy, pain, victory, and loss could fit inside one calling. He knew only this: God had spoken to him, so he must prepare.

After all these years, I cannot say much more than that.

God spoke to me.

Therefore, I must go.

A book can be finished. A period can be placed at the end of a chapter. A season of ministry may close, an organization may change form, and a title may disappear from beside a person's name.

A calling cannot be filed away.

It cannot be stored like an old photograph that we occasionally take from a drawer, look at with emotion, and then put back.

A calling lives.

Sometimes it lives quietly. Sometimes it burns like fire shut up in the bones. There were seasons when I became tired. After certain

wounds, it would have been simpler to step back and say, “That was enough. I did what I could. Let others continue.”

Yet whenever every human reason seemed to argue for silence, the same call spoke again within me.

I cannot keep silent, not because I am always right.

Not because God’s work cannot continue without me.

I cannot keep silent because I have seen something of what he desires to do, and I have become responsible for what I have seen.

I Am Not Building a Monument

I did not write this book to build a monument to myself or to the work in which I have been allowed to serve for decades.

I am grateful for the churches, schools, training programs, care services, institutions, conferences, and every door God opened. I am grateful for those who stood beside me, corrected me, carried me, and believed in a future when I could barely see beyond the following day.

But none of these was the Source.

They were instruments. Vessels. Channels through which water could flow for a season. If they became a blessing, it was because the life of God appeared in them. Whenever a form became more important than a person, a system more important than relationship, growth more important than character, or our name more important than the name of Christ, we needed to return to the Source.

There is much in this story for which I give thanks. There are also things I would do differently now. Sometimes I should have been bolder, and at other times slower. I should have listened better, asked more questions, and noticed sooner when the person beside me was tired.

I received wounds, and I caused wounds.

I do not want to cover them with beautiful sentences. The glory of God does not require us to edit our story until it appears flawless. Grace becomes visible precisely where we tell the truth, apologize, forgive, learn, and obey again.

Uszka still points the way. The national assignment I received in 1996 is not a beginning sealed inside a display case. It reminds me that God is working before we arrive.

The children in the settlement known as “Paris,” Mrs. Horváth’s love, Kati’s faithful presence beside me on the road, the Roma homes that opened, the first training programs, and the first leaders taking uncertain steps all taught me the same things:

Go near.

See the person.

Recognize what God has already hidden within them.

And bind them not to yourself, but to Christ.

Yesterday’s Water Is Not Enough for Today

We need to remember. Those who forget the place from which God raised them may begin to imagine they raised themselves. Those who forget the first small beginnings may despise what is still weak today.

That is why I have spoken about the few churches and roughly 150 people with whom we had relationships at the beginning. That is why the story of the 3,250 matters, along with the first Bible schools, communities born in homes, difficult years, and unexpected new roads.

But we cannot live on yesterday’s water.

The testimony of yesterday’s awakening may encourage us, but it cannot replace meeting God today. Yesterday’s revelation may give

direction, but it cannot excuse us from today's obedience. Yesterday's organization may have carried life, but it cannot demand that God work forever in the same form.

We should honor the past without making camp in it.

I do not want to return to an age that memory has polished smooth. I do not want to stage a reenactment of an earlier season. I want to hear what God is saying now.

At which door is he standing?

Which child is he pointing toward?

In which family's home is he preparing to form a community?

Which young leader must be prepared today for a burden that will not arrive for another ten years?

Toward which people, city, or nation is God opening a road through relationships that seem insignificant now?

I do not carry the vision of 325,000 merely to remain loyal to a sentence I once spoke. I do not need to prove my own words. The number still means faces to me—people who need to hear the gospel, become disciples of Christ, and grow in living communities.

The path of fulfillment may be entirely different from anything I once imagined. Many of those who carry it forward may be people we do not yet know.

My assignment is not to possess the fulfillment.

My assignment is to be faithful in the next step.

Before the Rock

In the wilderness, God told Moses to replace an old action with a new obedience:

> *"Speak to the rock … and it will give water."*
> *— after Numbers 20:8*

Moses had grown weary of the people's resistance, and he struck again. Water came—God remained merciful to the thirsty—but the leader's anger obscured God's holiness.

Dry ground can awaken anger in us too. We become weary of recurring problems, divisions, addiction, and slow change. We may then try to force through shame, volume, or control what only the Holy Spirit can bring to birth.

God still says: **Speak to the Rock.**

Paul gives the Rock a name. The Rock is Christ.

Not our method, organization, or culture. Not a charismatic leader, money, or political influence.

Christ is the Rock.

The springs are in the Roma settlements—but the Source is always Jesus.

The settlement is a place where his living water may surface unexpectedly: in a praying woman, a father who has turned to Christ, a young person abandoned by the school system, or a community of two or three who take the presence of Jesus seriously.

So let us not strike people.

Let us proclaim Christ.

Let us speak the Word.

And let us make room for what the Holy Spirit brings forth.

The Spring Is Pure

The spring is pure. Its channel, however, can become polluted.

The Word of God has not lost its power. The grace of Christ has not become corrupt. The Holy Spirit is still able to expose sin, set

captives free, restore families, form leaders, and create new communities.

But those of us who desire to carry this water must guard our hearts.

We must not mix the spring with ambition. We cannot use the cause of God to enlarge our own name. We cannot turn ministry into compensation for old wounds. We cannot exchange yesterday's exclusion for today's superiority. We cannot speak about awakening while concealing finances, avoiding accountability, silencing those who ask questions, or sacrificing our families for visible results.

Purity does not mean flawlessness. It means walking in the light.

It should be possible to name what we are doing, why we are doing it, where the resources come from, and with whom we share responsibility. When we make a mistake, we do not rewrite it as success. When we sin, we repent. When we have been wounded, we seek healing so that the wound does not take the leader's chair.

Again and again, we must ask:

Does what we are building point toward Christ?

Does it connect people to Jesus or make them dependent on us?

Does it form disciples or collect admirers?

Does it lift others or make one name indispensable?

Does it serve the dignity of a broken person or merely use that person's story?

Does it pass on the water or imprison it inside a system?

I do not fear for the spring. It belongs to God.

I fear for my heart—that one day it might value the vessel more than the One who fills it.

That is why we must return continually to the cross. There is no room there for ethnic pride, denominational arrogance, or the worship of a leader. There we are all people in need of grace.

And there we may become brothers and sisters.

Reservoirs in a Dry Land

Through Isaiah, God gives this promise:

> *"I will open rivers on barren heights and springs in the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water and dry ground into springs."*
> *— after Isaiah 41:18*

For a long time, my attention was fixed on the springs. Recently, I have also begun thinking about reservoirs.

A reservoir does not create water. It receives, preserves, and releases it. It gathers water so that life can still be given during a dry season. If it only receives and never releases, the water does not reach thirsty ground. If its supply is not renewed, it slowly empties.

This is how I see living communities:

a praying family;

a house group;

a local church;

a covenant among leaders;

a true fellowship of Roma and non-Roma brothers and sisters.

These are places where the presence of Christ is not celebrated only in a meeting, but carried through ordinary days—at the table, in parenting, work, the handling of money, the resolution of conflict, visits to the sick, and the preparation of new disciples.

The answer for Europe's dry land is not one enormous reservoir.

We need thousands of living communities.

Some will be small and some large. They will pray in different languages and emerge from different church traditions. They need not absorb one another, but they must be willing to connect, learn, give, and receive. Covenant does not require identical thinking on every detail. Christ's cause can still become more important than our territory, and we can rejoice when the other boat fills.

The scattering of Roma people presents a distinctive opportunity. What meant vulnerability for centuries can become connection in the hands of Christ. Families, friendships, languages, and roads crossing national borders can join these reservoirs—not to build a new empire, but to carry living water into places where only the memory of Christianity remains.

The springs are in the Roma settlements.

But the water must not remain in the Roma settlements.

It must cross borders and flow toward other poor people, other excluded people, other nations, emptied cities, and thirsty generations.

I Am Not Looking for Spectators

At the beginning of this book, I wrote, "I am not looking for spectators. I am looking for fellow travelers."

On these final pages, I say the same.

I am not asking everyone to do the same thing. Not everyone will become a pastor, mission leader, or church planter. Not everyone must travel among nations.

But everyone has something that can be placed in the hands of Christ:

an opening door;

a relationship;

professional knowledge;

an empty chair at the table;

a prayer;

a task accepted faithfully;

an hour spent beside a young person;

a financial opportunity handled with integrity.

If you are reading as a Roma believer, do not allow another person's prejudice to tell you who you are. Do not allow your wounds to become your identity either. In Christ, you are not a target group. You are a son or daughter, a disciple, and a messenger.

Learn. Heal. Accept responsibility. Open your home. Do not ask only when someone will finally make room for you. Ask whom you can make room for.

If you are reading as a church leader, do not be satisfied that Roma people attend your congregation. Know them. Hear their voices. Plan not only for them, but with them. Look for those in whom there may seem to be only a small jar of oil. Teach them, entrust real responsibility to them, remain near when they make mistakes, and prepare yourself for the day when they travel farther than you.

If you are an educator, physician, social worker, lawyer, business owner, artist, communications professional, or expert in another field, your knowledge is not incidental to mission. The kingdom of God touches the whole person. But do not arrive as a savior. Sit down. Ask questions. Learn. Work beside the people about whom you may previously have read only in reports. Expertise becomes a blessing when it serves through relationship.

If you join as an intercessor or financial partner, do not merely keep a distant cause alive. Stand beside people. Ask what is happening in their lives. Carry leaders, their families, their integrity, and the next generation in prayer. Do not demand results

alone; help build a foundation on which people can serve faithfully even when no impressive harvest is yet visible.

None of us has everything.

Within the body of Christ, none of us is unnecessary.

The Next Obedience

Large visions can paralyze us. When we think about 325,000 people, we may say, “I am too small for this.” When we speak about Europe’s spiritual renewal, the task may appear so distant that we do nothing.

Yet God often begins great stories with one name:

Abraham. Moses. Gideon. Mary. Peter.

A woman in Uszka.

A family that opens its home.

Two or three people gathered in the name of Jesus.

Before you close this book, think of one person.

Whose name is God bringing before you now? Whom have you regarded as a problem, a member of a distant group, or a hopeless case when you need to see a person? Who is the young person in whom no one recognizes a leader? Who is the exhausted servant waiting not for more advice, but for a fellow traveler? Who is the neighbor, relative, or colleague to whom you should open a door?

Then think of one place.

A kitchen table. A home. A street. A town. A church that may still consist of only two or three people. A city or nation to which God has already given you some small connection.

Finally, ask:

Lord, what is my next obedience?

You do not need to know the whole plan today. You need the first step.

Perhaps you need to call someone, apologize, or open your home. God may be calling you to study or to stand beside someone who has served for many years. You may need to release an old position so that there is room for the next person. Perhaps you simply need to believe again that God has not finished with you.

Faith is not great because it sees the whole road at once.

Faith is great because it takes the next step at the word of Jesus.

The Work Is Not Mine

For many years, I felt that I had to carry everything God had shown me. I see more clearly now: I must carry the portion entrusted to me, but I cannot hold the entire work in my hands.

This work did not begin with me.

Before me, God called women and men, Roma and non-Roma, well-known and nameless servants. They prayed, traveled, opened homes, sang, taught, gave, wept, and began again. They sowed seed whose fruit I was later allowed to taste.

And the work must not end with me.

My greatest joy would be to see people rise who carry the gospel of Christ more clearly, wisely, courageously, and farther than I have. I want disciples to make new disciples, leaders to prepare places for new leaders, and the child pushed aside today to accept responsibility for others one day.

What I received from God, I want to pass on.

I am not looking for copies of myself. I am looking for people who hear Jesus, love Scripture, are filled with the Holy Spirit, remain teachable, handle what is entrusted to them with integrity, and are willing to go where others will not.

If something in this book truly comes from God, it will live without me.

Whatever came only from me does not need to remain forever.

This brings freedom. I do not have to finish everything. I have to be faithful: sow while I can sow, water while it is entrusted to me, prepare others, and then rejoice as God gives the growth.

As Long as There Is a Road

On the final and greatest day of the festival, Jesus did not offer a quiet explanation. He stood and cried out:

> *"If anyone is thirsty, let that person come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me—rivers of living water will flow from within."*
> *— after John 7:37–38*

This is why there is hope.

There is hope even though much remains unfinished. Roma communities carry grave wounds and unresolved questions. Churches have not everywhere learned to serve together without rivalry. Many of Europe's doors remain closed.

Our hope is not founded on our readiness.

We have hope because Jesus still calls the thirsty.

He still gives living water.

He can still open a spring in a desolate place.

As long as there is a child over whom someone has declared, "Nothing will come of you," there is a reason to go.

As long as there is a family held captive by addiction, poverty, or hopelessness, there is a reason to speak.

As long as there is a Roma believer whom the church sees only as a mission target while God is already preparing that person as a messenger, there is a reason to make room.

As long as there is a church trying to carry alone what can be carried only in covenant, there is a reason to connect.

As long as millions in Europe remember the name of Jesus without knowing his life, there is a reason to cross borders.

I do not know how many years, journeys, or open doors still lie before me.

I know that the fire is still burning.

The spring is still rising.

The vessels must still be gathered.

Those who were last are still standing up.

And the gospel is still the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

This book ends here.

The road continues.

The fire burns in me.

I cannot keep silent.

I must act.

I must go.

Not because the answer is in me.
Because Christ is the Rock.
He is the Source.
He calls.
He sends.
And if you have heard his voice too, let us go together.

Notes on Sources and Language

This book is a work of testimony, spiritual reflection, and missional vision rather than an academic history. Personal recollections are presented as the author's memories; where surviving accounts differ, the narrative says so. The following selected sources support the historical and statistical references in the text.

Language and Scripture

Roma is used throughout as the principal English-language term for the people and communities at the heart of this book. It is an umbrella term, not the name of one uniform culture. Where an institution's research includes communities that identify as Travellers, the official expression **Roma and Travellers** is retained.

The phrase **Roma settlement** is explained at its first substantive use. In the Central and Eastern European context of this book, it often refers to a segregated or severely underserved neighborhood. It does not imply that all Roma people live in such places.

Biblical quotations are concise authorial renderings of the passages named. The wording is intentionally not tied to one published English Bible translation.

Principal Hungarian Sources

Surman, László. *A Magyar Pünkösdi Egyház Országos Cigánymisszió 1996-tól napjainkig* [*The National Roma Mission of the Hungarian Pentecostal Church from 1996 to the Present*]. Thesis, Pentecostal Theological College, 2015. The work includes historical research, archival material, and transcribed oral-history interviews.

Gyetvai, Gellért, and Zoltán Rajki. A cigánymissziós mozgalmak Magyarországon [Roma Mission Movements in Hungary]. Békés:

Cigány Módszertani és Kutató Központ, 2015. The study's survey of active, baptized Roma church members from several denominations informs the discussion of everyday transformation in Chapter 16. Its authors explicitly note the limits of the sample and the absence of a control group.

The author's Kecskemét sermons and later expanded notes supplied the language of early rain, empty vessels, the 325,000 vision, and Europe's spiritual renewal. The reflections on wounds received and caused also draw on the author's pastoral teaching prepared under the title *Sebeket adunk és kapunk* [*We Give and Receive Wounds*].

Selected International Sources

Pew Research Center. "Being Christian in Western Europe." May 29, 2018. The study surveyed 24,599 adults in fifteen Western European countries and provides the religious-practice context summarized in Chapter 15.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European Countries: Perspectives from the Roma Survey 2024*. October 2, 2025. The report records, among other findings, ethnic discrimination experienced by 31 percent of respondents and poverty affecting 70 percent.

Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Focus: Roma and Travellers." The Council of Europe's estimate of ten to twelve million Roma and Travellers and its description of the diversity gathered under these terms inform Chapter 15.

APATZI, Virtual Museum of Protestantism. "Clément Le Cossec (1921–2001)." This historical account describes Le Cossec's early ministry, healings associated with the beginnings of the Roma Pentecostal awakening, Mandz's emergence as its first preacher, the Brest gatherings, and the preparation of Roma ministers.

Cantón Delgado, Manuela. “Gypsy Pentecostalism, Ethnopolitical Uses and Construction of Belonging in the South of Spain.” *Social Compass* 57, no. 2 (2010). This study traces the movement from western France through returning Roma converts into Spain and examines the distinct Roma-led ecclesial life that followed.