

# Equipping Generations

Story by Debra Smith  
Photos by Vivien Farkas, unless otherwise noted

## Missionary Pam Markey



Pam teaches the Missions Training Program at Calvary Chapel Bible College Europe (CCBCE) in Vajta, Hungary. Pam's years on the mission field in Africa, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan provide her wisdom she now passes on to aspiring missionaries at CCBCE.

**I**N 1956, the world was shaken by the martyrdom of five missionaries seeking to reach the Waodani tribes of Ecuador's rainforest. Pam Markey was just seven, and her family was preparing to move as missionaries to Africa. "I remember thinking those martyrs were so brave and dedicated," said Pam. "I decided then that was the kind of missionaries we were going to be."

Like her heroes, Pam's life has included both the joys and challenges of forsaking her comfort and security to proclaim Christ in unfamiliar places. After growing up in southern Africa, she and her husband George ministered for 35 years in Indiana, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Since his death in 2007, Pam has served at Calvary Chapel Bible College Europe (CCBCE) in Vajta,

Hungary. There she trains future missionaries, equipping them with the practical skills and spiritual maturity needed to thrive—and communicate Christ effectively—in foreign cultures.

Pam and George met in Kentucky at Bible college and were married in 1971, as word of the Jesus Movement was trickling across the nation and the world. The Markeys soon moved to California, where they studied God's Word and attended CC Costa Mesa. After relocating to Indiana in 1979, they planted CC Crawfordsville, which George pastored for 11 years.

By 1992, after the Iron Curtain had fallen in Europe, the Markeys had eight children aged 16 years to 5 months. Pam had long desired to return to the mission field, but with such a large family, she had nearly

relinquished her hope. In May, George and several other pastors visited Russia and Ukraine to explore opportunities for church planting in the former Soviet countries.



On an outreach with CCBCE students, Pam talks with Dijana Bilbija at a Bible study in the nearby nation of Serbia.



George and Pam moved to the Ukraine in 1992—with eight children. George went home to be with the Lord in 2007.

When he returned, George was excited about ministering in Ukraine. All the Markey children old enough to understand gladly agreed to move to Eastern Europe if God opened the doors. Two months later, the family was in Kiev.

Initially planning to plant a church in just one year, the Markeys soon realized that building a spiritual foundation in a nation saturated with seven decades of atheism would require long-term discipleship. For 14 years, they evangelized and trained leaders, adopting a Ukrainian daughter in 1998. By 2006, the church they had begun was thriving and had planted 12 churches. They handed the work over to Ukrainians and moved to Kyrgyzstan, joining two of their grown children and their spouses in this predominantly Muslim nation of Central Asia. George and Pam ministered alongside their kids for only seven months before George became ill and passed away.

### Passing It On

In 1998, Pam met her childhood hero Elisabeth Elliot, widow of one of the five Ecuador martyrs, when Elisabeth spoke at a women's retreat in Ukraine. "Though I only met her once," Pam said, "over the years she has been like a mentor to me." And today, Pam similarly equips younger missionaries.

**And the things that you have heard from me ... commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.** 2 Timothy 2:2

Caryn Huset of Southern California moved to Nice, France, in January 2010. She had spent two years preparing at CCBCE, where Caryn was deeply impacted by Pam's "stories of God's faithfulness. Pam and George had stepped out in faith into situations where there was no one else to rely on; at times they had no food or money, and the Lord miraculously provided," continued

Caryn. "Knowing that has enabled me to go. I could have stayed in the U.S. forever because I didn't have enough money ... but through her example, I realized that God never let her down—and He will never let me down." Pam also imparts practical tips to her students, such as how learning the local language opens people's hearts to the missionaries and their message.

Jeff and Mary Hicks are church-planting missionaries in Kendal, United Kingdom. They trained at CCBCE for one year before moving to England in August 2008. Jeff said that before meeting George and Pam, "I had been following the Markeys for years through the magazine. I felt like I knew them." Jeff and Mary met George in 2007 at the CC Missions Conference, and George unexpectedly passed away just a month afterward. "We were shocked," remembered Mary. Then upon moving to Vajta six months later, the Hicks discovered that their apartment was directly underneath Pam's. "That brought everything together," said Jeff.

In Hungary, Jeff took courses while Mary homeschooled their three children. Both had opportunity to learn from Pam; Jeff in classes and Mary in daily life—particularly as a mother facing the challenges of raising children on the field. "Some of the best advice Pam gave me," said Mary, "was simple: Each year, she evaluated what was best for each child. Sometimes she homeschooled one or two, or them all, or all went to school. She said, 'When you're seeking the Lord, you won't mess up. It's okay to be unsure of what's around the next corner, but know the Lord will take care of it—and your kids.'"

### Looking to the Lord Alone

With George, Pam said, "I was in a supportive role, following his vision for church planting. He was the visionary." Life with George "was never boring; it was challenging at times to keep up. It was natural—ministering beside him was where I felt I should be. He liked to do ministry together."

Now, Pam said, "I have that sense of being on my own. It's more challenging to be secure in the Lord and confident that this is where I'm supposed to be. I believe this is what He wants and has value for the kingdom of God, but I want to be conscientious to be useful—not just to be in a safe place." She explained that simple things have become more complex as a single woman: "I've prayed that I would see the vision here and join it. And that has happened. But it takes more initiative. I have to be intentional to go discuss ministry ideas with pastors or leaders; I can't just talk things through with the one I live with."

Pam said she misses being surrounded by those who have not yet heard the Gospel, but she relishes watching students grow as God prepares them and then places them on the mission field. "When their lives touch others, I realize their influence is wider than the impact I could have made by myself. That is so fulfilling." ☺

### CC Bible College Europe

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Pam with seven of her children and their families in Kyrgyzstan in January 2010. Most of George and Pam's nine children are now missionaries. Photo by Zhenya Kucherov

Pam Markey