

# Unprecedented Opportunities in Today's Europe

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As Max Chismon shared in his article, “We cannot exaggerate the importance of all God’s people being mobilized into mission with God...”

God has a bigger and greater purpose, and invites us to join with Him in bringing His kingdom here on earth, to participate with God’s mission to all peoples (Matthew 28:20) and to every person (Mark 16:15).

**What are the opportunities in Europe** to see all God’s people mobilized to take the good news of Jesus to unreached peoples, i.e. those of different cultures and faiths who have never heard of Jesus, but also to extend Christ’s kingdom among those who are already “reached”?

Ezekiel 37 tells the story of the valley of dry bones, and in this story, Ezekiel questions: “Can these bones live?” God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones, and as he did, something remarkable happened. The valley of dry lifeless bones transformed into a vast army.

I look at Europe and I see that Romanian believers and churches have the potential to be that army.

Over many years I have spent in Europe – including Romania – I have had the privilege of seeing the Kairos, as a tool, breathe life and transformation into the hearts of many believers. They have begun to understand God’s global purpose. They have caught a vision for the Church and for the world and have discovered the significance of their part in seeing God’s Kingdom extended to all peoples and to all people.

They see that we are all children of Abraham and called with his call (Galatians 3:29), joint heirs of this promise and therefore blessed to be a blessing to all people – not just blessed to be blessed!

I’ve seen hundreds of believers find renewed passion for following Jesus as they see that their lives are part of God’s big story.

Mobilization is one key to unlocking the huge potential in today’s generation to live selflessly for Jesus and to see His Kingdom come on earth.

I believe God has His hand on the Romanian church, both in Romania and in the towns and cities of Europe. Jesus encourages us to pray for workers for the harvest (Luke 10:2). I see that the harvest fields in Europe are here; there are workers in every city ready to be mobilized! I long to see every believer and every church in Romania and among Romanian diaspora mobilized to engage in God’s mission wherever they are.

**We live in amazing days in Europe, times of uncertainty and political turbulence, but what is God saying and doing?**

Europe is changing. There are many new opportunities for mobilization and mission. No longer do we see mission-receiving and mission-sending countries. Romania is also changing.

Once having been a mission-receiving nation, Romania now has some of the most vibrant and resourceful churches in Europe and is already sending missionaries out across the world. The countries that once sent missionaries to Romania are now too in need of mission. The Romanian church is being mobilized to engage on mission with God. There have never been such accessible opportunities to engage on mission among unreached peoples – within Romania, in near-neighbour countries, and countries where the Romanian diaspora churches are already planted and growing.

I believe there are unprecedented opportunities today in Europe. There is a much bigger picture which involves every believer, not just those who receive a specific call to go.

I see Romanians as having a significant contribution in this “world Christian movement.” Romanians are naturally gifted cross-culturally and have so much to give. In the words of Paul, “We carry a sweet fragrance full of life, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation” (2 Cor 2: 15). On my visits to Romania, I have been inspired to meet some passionate young mobilizers with a vision to mobilize their generation – in Romania and among Diaspora Romanians in Europe.

I love to encourage that passion and I pray to see Romanians in every town and village, not only become followers of Jesus, but engaging with God on mission wherever they are, in their neighbourhoods, their schools, offices, sports clubs, shopping malls and coffee bars, etc!

## **Migrants and Refugees**

A paraphrase of Acts 17:26-27 reads “God determines the times and the seasons where men should live so they might seek and find him.”

Who are the peoples that God is bringing to Romania in 2017– as migrants, refugees or international students?

In Budapest alone, I understand there are three times as many Muslims as Christians. Some estimates say there are 50,000 Muslims in Romania. Many of these come from countries that have closed their doors to missionaries, and where it is forbidden to speak about Jesus.

Maybe God has a purpose in them coming to Romania? Mission is now on the doorstep of many church communities. Yes, some cross-cultural training is needed to understand how to share Jesus in a culturally meaningful way, but no visas or big sums of money are needed to be raised, just a willingness to be mobilized, and a heart to engage in welcoming them.

They then discover what following Jesus might look like in their culture as they may not feel comfortable in a Romanian-culture church! Some of them may, in the future, become

missionaries themselves, returning back into their unreached homelands if God opens that door, and Romanian churches can be involved in sending them.

For example, one time I was in Timisoara helping with a Kairos course, and we heard of the arrival of many refugees from Uzbekistan into the neighbourhood. "What can we do?" asked the Kairos students. "Let's start with their present needs." And so some of the Kairos participants went to deliver food and blankets as an immediate response to be a blessing, sharing good news in acts of kindness and generosity, and communicating "You are welcome here!"

I remember one person saying to me, "I came on Kairos because I thought God might call me to leave Romania to go to another nation, but now I see I can engage in cross-cultural mission, even among 'unreached peoples' in my own town. God has brought the nations here, and even if one day I might go, I can be on mission here and now."

### **International students**

I know that many come as international students to universities in Romania. Those coming from Asia have a perception that "Europe is Christian" and so they often have an openness to learn about this "European" religion. How to start? A great way is to offer some genuine Romanian hospitality (something I have enjoyed many times myself), an invitation into your home to taste Romanian food, or meet them at a coffee shop.

I recently met a Burmese student in my home city, who had been living in the UK for three years and had never been invited into a British home. I was so sad, and recalled the Biblical mandate to "offer hospitality to strangers and welcome foreigners" (Dt 10:18-19). May your wonderful gift of Romanian hospitality be used for God's mission!

I remember one occasion, when Kairos was run with Indian medical students involved in postgraduate study in Romania. God opened their eyes to the opportunities to engage with God's mission on return to their home country, in their work as doctors and also reaching out to unreached peoples in India. They came to Romania to study and were mobilized for mission!

### **Diaspora churches in Europe**

I thank God for the growth of Romanian churches among Diaspora in many towns and cities in Europe. These can bring blessing to many Romanians, who have moved for economic reasons but who have potential to be mobilised!

Understandably Romanians love to meet for worship and prayer with other Romanians, but these churches are often in areas where there are few vibrant local churches for the indigenous people. If Romanian believers are mobilised, they catch the vision that God has placed them in their neighbourhood and places of work to be on mission with God. In their everyday lives, they can be involved in cross-cultural mission with God, every day and in every place, among the indigenous European peoples, as well as among many other migrant peoples who are everywhere

in Europe. Many of these cities have significant populations of unreached peoples, and there are massive opportunities for the mobilization of Romanian believers to engage in mission among these peoples. Preferably this will involve partnership with other local churches, whether they are diaspora groups or ethnic nationals.

Many countries of Europe have declining church attendance and disinterest in Christianity, and a growing sense of secularism. Passionate Romanian followers of Jesus are living among indigenous Spanish, Italian, British, French, Czech and many other nationals. Maybe God has HIS purpose for the mass migration of Romanians around Europe?

### **Migrant churches**

Another more recent factor in Romania is migrant churches – a new kind of missionary – from the global South. Many of these missionaries from Brazil, Korea, and Africa have come with a desire to reach unreached peoples, as well as to see new churches planted. How can Romanian churches receive these missionaries and partner together to see all believers in Romania mobilized to reach all peoples.

Yes, some cross cultural understanding is needed to equip believers in all these situations – in similar ways to when a missionary goes to different continents – but effective mobilization contributes to this.

### **Missionaries as mobilizers**

I have recently had the joy of meeting missionaries going out from Romania, as mobilisers, to partner with and serve existing churches in the nations of Central and Southeast Asia and in Africa. This is today's mission in a changing world.

### **Endorsing Mobilization**

Max in his article wrote that “The potential exists in this generation to reap the greatest harvest ever, but this will happen if, and only if, all God's people are mobilized to engage with God on mission.”

How will we respond to Max's challenge to see all God's people mobilized? We need many more mobilizers.

Mobilization is a ministry ordained by God. It is essentially prophetic in nature. It explains the purpose of God to His people and calls God's people to live for that purpose. The task of a mobilizer is to challenge people to gain a truly Biblical worldview, to understand that every believer is designed and called to be on mission with God. Mobilizers have a passion to see all God's people fulfill their God-given calling to be a blessing to all nations.

The Simply Mobilizing movement in Europe seeks to see the ministry of mobilization recognized and accepted in all expressions of the Body of Christ. I pray that in and from Romania, this ministry of mobilization will grow and that many mobilizers will be affirmed in their calling and encouraged and equipped with tools to use in churches.

Mobilization is a journey, and one course on its own, like Kairos, won't achieve this. But Kairos is a powerful tool that is awakening believers and churches in Romania. It is awakening the Church to unprecedented opportunities among the Romanian diaspora across Europe, and to the unprecedented opportunities for the growth of Christ's kingdom in this generation.

In this article I have shared how I see mobilization as broader than recruiting people to go to the nations in other parts of the world. One new "Simply Mobilizing" tool called

"Empowered To Influence", developed by a businessman in Singapore, aims to encourage every believer to understand they are called to be 'salt and light' in the work place where God has placed them. I hope all Romanian churches and believers can see the many opportunities to engage in mission where-ever they are.

May the grace of God cause this movement to grow, and I believe we will see kingdom transformation in Europe.