

# Building Up Believers on a Firm Foundation

Vajta, Hungary: New Calvary Chapel Bible College and Conference Center, Europe

Story and photos by Tom Price



“The overall vision is still the same—to disciple believers in their walk with Jesus Christ by teaching the Word,” said Paul Lange, director of the new Bible College in Vajta, Hungary. “Our desire is to plant churches and raise up and equip missionaries and national leaders for the church planting efforts in Europe.”

Paul, his wife, Jeanette, and their family left behind a life they had grown to love in Millstatt, Austria. At the Bible College there, he and fellow sojourner, Rod Thompson, had gone from Castle plumbers to missionaries to leaders of Calvary Chapel’s primary efforts in Europe.

“We want to be a support for the churches,” continued Paul. “We had been out of touch, in a way. We want the new Bible College to be a rallying point and a resource to help reach out and support those missionaries that have been isolated in the past.”

### Clarity of Vision

Rod Thompson, overseer of the Bible College and Conference Center, felt that the Lord recently gave him clarity on their ministry at the new property in Hungary.

“We need to serve the Calvary Chapel churches in Hungary as well as in Romania, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slovakia, and the Ukraine,” said Rod. “We want to help them

in any way we can, while assisting the establishment of Christian foundations in all the Eastern European countries.”

“At the same time we also want to continue to be a resource for the Calvary Chapels in Western Europe. In some ways, we feel that their foundations are stronger than the churches here in Eastern Europe.”

The new college plans to be a pivotal location for all the conferences in Europe. While the Austrian Castle can only accommodate 125 guests, the new location will easily hold over 300, even while the Bible College is in session. To be able to hold conferences simultaneously with the school in progress will overcome a major obstacle in the Conference Center’s future.



*Last minute work before ceremony.*



*Finishing touches are completed.*

### Death of a Missionary

“The death of Luke Snow has opened our eyes to the dangers on the mission field,” said Paul Lange. Luke graduated this past spring from the Bible College in Austria and felt called to assist some of the Calvary Chapel work already in progress in Bucharest, Romania. Young men with whom he had been sharing the Gospel allegedly murdered Luke in his apartment last summer.

“We want to be more of a support, to offer guidance. Maybe Luke shouldn’t have been living alone. Maybe the Bible College needs to make sure their graduates understand dangerous warning signs.”

*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

2 Timothy 2:2

“The Bible College does assist some students who don’t really have a home church that supports them. Frankly, some churches back in the States do not have a vision for missions, so the Bible College becomes the students’ home church,” Paul continued.



*Pastor Chuck Smith chats with Janos Hajdok before the dedication ceremony.*



*Students worship in the sanctuary.*



*Bible College students are a curiosity to the Hungarians in Vajta. Several Americans walk through the village on the way to a community Bible study.*

***Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.***

Isaiah 58:12

**Raising up the Foundations**

Two Englishmen, Mark Walsh and Robin Turner, had been part of the staff in Austria, teaching classes and helping in many areas where there was a need. They have now moved with their families to Vajta. Mark sees the Hungarian facility as a place to reach the nations that used to have strong Christian foundations that have wasted away through the years. He sees church planting growing at a faster pace than ever before and the vision of the Bible College facilitating that.

The new college has a program specifically for the Hungarians. This allows nationals from churches already in progress to be trained in their own language. The college offers a curriculum in English and in Hungarian. Some courses will be translated into both languages.

Phil Metzger teaches and oversees the Hungarian side of the Bible College. He leads community outreaches and directs four classes. Phil and his wife, Joy, had planted a church in Kaposvár and recently have begun a new church in nearby Székesfehérvár.

**Dedicated to Restoring Young Lives**

August 28, 2002—Missionary Phil Metzger labored in the early fall humidity to finish laying sod in the circle. It would be the first impression that visitors would get as they arrived onto the property. A dedication ceremony was to begin in less than an hour for the Zichy-Kastely that would house the new Calvary Chapel Bible College, Europe. The water was already pouring out of the fountain. Shrubs lay in pots where they would be planted. Phil's body ached, and he longed to



*The front of the Zichy-Kastely gives intern Viki Vámos a place to study.*



*(l-r) Rod Thompson, Paul Lange, and Robin Turner examine plans Gémes Tamas drafted.*



*Women in leadership introduce themselves at the first women's study.*



*Spacious rooms afford Paul Lange a place to teach. He directs the college.*

pause for a drink of water, a shower, and time to compose himself before the ceremony began.

Kneeling beside him and laying sod was Pastor Chuck Smith who, at 75 years of age, was working hard and enjoying himself immensely. Phil continued working until Pastor Chuck cut the last piece of grass and put it in place.

Twenty minutes later, showered and refreshed, Pastor Chuck began welcoming guests as they entered the sparkling facility. News teams from around Hungary began arriving, seeking interviews and filming the restoration of this historical property for their countrymen. This was the first time that foreigners had restored a historical facility, and the nation's curiosity was piqued.

Leaders from across the country marveled at the extensive restoration that faithfully represented the original look of the Castle. The college staff had worked at a feverish pitch for weeks.

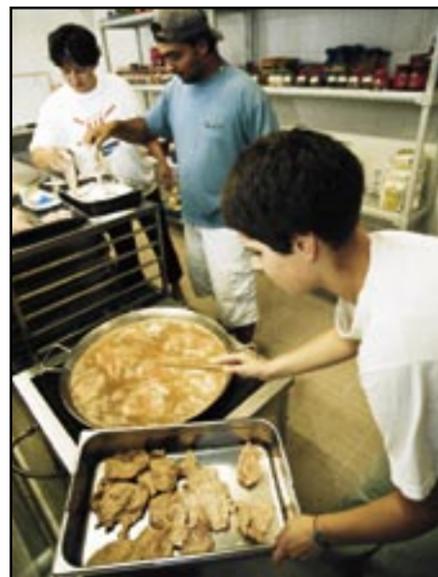
"The restoration of this magnificent building is complete," Pastor Chuck told the

audience gathered upstairs in the sanctuary. Attic support beams displayed their natural wood. Plush carpeting covered the three-tiered seating area. "Through this facility, guests from Hungary and abroad will deepen their faith in Jesus Christ."

"The most important thing," Pastor Chuck continued, "is that now that the property is restored, the task of restoring and building young lives will get under way."

### **The Zichy-Kastely Home of Calvary Chapel Bible College, Europe**

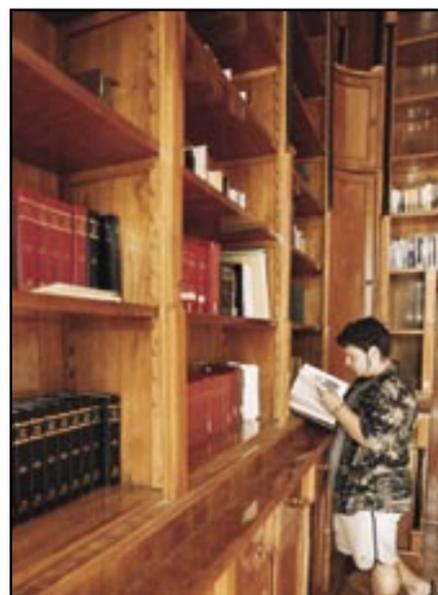
Count Aladar Zichy, from an aristocratic Hungarian family, built the mansion in 1923 from plans his grandfather had made 100 years before. It was originally used for summer parties, hunting, and harvesting of the local vineyards. The Zichy family fled to Sweden after World War II when the communists took over. For seven years, communist leaders and their families occupied the building. The property was later converted into a retreat for handicapped children. After the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, it sat vacant and deteriorated quickly.



*Stringent dietary restrictions govern cooking procedures.*



*Four to ten students share sleeping quarters.*



*The Zichy library is now filled with Christian books.*



*Mark Walsh leads worship.*

CC Costa Mesa and Hungarian Calvary Chapels bought the property and began to renovate it in the fall of 2000. The goal, now realized, was to have a Christian conference center amid the 42 acres of natural habitat in central Hungary. 📍



*Calvary Chapels in Hungary.*

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**...Now that the property is restored, the task of restoring and building young lives will get under way.**

—Pastor Chuck Smith



*The Rotunda is used for fellowship, prayer, and study.*