Lessons Learned from Evangelism in the Balkans

Religious freedom in the Balkans over the last 30 years has provided an unprecedented window of opportunity for evangelism after 600 years of opposition to the Gospel. Generally speaking, evangelistic efforts in the Balkans have been chaotic at best and culturally offensive at worst. God has blessed the proclamation of His Word in spite of less than effective and or appropriate evangelistic methods. What are the lessons learned?

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1. The Balkans Presents a Complex Context
   1. A Glorious and Gloomy History
      1. The Cradle of Western Civilization
      2. A Powder Keg
         1. *“The Balkans produces more history than it can consume.”* (Winston Churchill)
   2. A Difficult and Diverse Reality
      1. The Extremist and Economic Challenges
      2. The Cultural and Religious Collisions
2. The Balkans Presents a Compelling Case
   1. A Window of Opportunity
      1. The Miracle of Freedom
      2. The Feeling of Brokenness
   2. A Time of Reflection
      1. The Mistakes Made
         1. The Disregard for Culture
         2. The Attitude of Superiority
         3. The Lack of Training
         4. The Absence of Follow-up
         5. The Focus on Methods
      2. The Lessons Learned
         1. Be Biblically Humble and Bold: Proclaim the Truth in Love!
         2. Be Prepared and Intentional: Plan, Pray, Proclaim!
         3. Find a Cultural Entry Point: Listen Before You Speak!
         4. Be Creative: Use All Moral, Ethical and Legal Means!

* + - 1. Train Believers to Witness: Personal and Public Evangelism!
      2. Be Relational: Take a Process Approach!
      3. Create Synergy and Provide Follow-up: Work in Teams!

1. Conclusion
   1. The Gospel Is the Only True Hope for the Balkans
   2. The Balkan Church Needs Effective Partnerships
   3. Questions and Comments
   4. Small Group Discussion

***Suggested Readings:***

*“The Burden of the Balkans”* by Edith Durham

*“Meeting Miss Irby”* by Joshua T. Irby

*“Cross on a Hill”* by Slavko Hadzic and Joshua Irby

*“Captured by Brigands”* by Gerasim Kyrias

*“A Sacred Task”* by John Quanrud

*“Exclusion & Embrace”* by Miroslav Volf