

Pillars of Strength in Hungary

By McKelle George

Hungarian young adult Krisztian Eszther* says the gospel strengthens her faith—not only in God but also in an optimistic and fulfilling life. “Hungarians tend to think of our dark past instead of our bright future,” she says. The past Eszther refers to is a period of time in Hungary’s history (1949–56) when the words of the national anthem—*Isten, áldd meg a magyart*, which means “God bless the Hungarians”—were never sung.

The Gospel Comes to Hungary

Hungary officially recognized the Church in 1988, one year after Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a dedicatory prayer atop Mt. Gellért, overlooking Budapest. In 1990 a mission was opened in Budapest, in a country emerging from 40 years without religious freedom. Now God’s influence is strong, particularly in the hearts of its Latter-day Saint young adults.

Institute Outreach Centers

Outreach centers are a big part of helping young adults in Central and Eastern Europe. The night before Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Central Europe, he awoke to a powerful revelation. He felt that the strength of the Church in that part of the world would be among the young adults. Now outreach centers are a welcoming place where young adults can find classes, activities, and friends with the same beliefs. “Here we can have fun without worrying about having our standards challenged,” Eszther says.

Eszther met the missionaries in her hometown of Újfehértó and attended their free weekly English class. Soon the missionaries invited her to branch activities. “From the beginning I attended every game night, family home evening, and dance,” she says. “I was baptized three weeks before I turned 18. Now I know I’m a daughter of God, and Heavenly Father would never leave His daughter alone.”

Hungary has been ravaged by war and oppression, but the young single adults of the Church are filled with hope.

Young Adult Activities

Eszther still goes to young adult activities in her branch in Nyíregyháza. There are no young adult wards or branches yet in Hungary, but “we still get together,” Eszther says. “We’ve gone to the Flower Festival, a frog festival, and the zoo.”

As Elder Perry predicted, the young adult members in Hungary offer a source of light to all. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

** In Hungary, family names come before given names.*

MORE ABOUT ESZTHER***What is dating like in Hungary?***

Young adult members create occasions to meet each other, but it's hard because they could live on two different sides of the country.

How often do you go to the temple?

I'm one of the luckiest members because I can visit the Freiberg Germany Temple once a year.

Is education important in Hungary?

Yes, but it was hard to believe because my parents have several diplomas and our family still struggled. Now I see the advantages, and I started college in January 2014.

HUNGARY BY THE NUMBERS

9,877,365 people (as of 2014)

35,919 square miles (93,030 km²)
of land

Known for its thermal springs, Hungary
has 450 public baths

14 vowels in the Hungarian language

THE CHURCH IN HUNGARY

5,050 Latter-day Saints

22 wards and branches

1 stake (formed in 2006)

6 family history centers

1 mission (Budapest)

FACTS ABOUT HUNGARY

Capital: Budapest

Language: Hungarian (*Magyar*)

