



IRM Annual Report 2013

Ueli Berger, IRM President

The International Railway Mission (IRM) is an umbrella organisation which connects railway personnel far beyond any country's borders. Because of new members coming from India and New Zealand (to name a few) the IRM has set a new, more global course!

The IRM Conference and Recreational week, held in Balatonszárszó in August of this year, was undoubtedly a highlight to remember. 180 participants from 11 different countries attended!!

Challenges and surprises

A very warm welcome to Norway and India; two new members of the association. For the first time, New Zealand was represented at the IRM conference through Mr and Mrs David and Indira Balla attendance. The Hungarian association (KVE) organised excursions bringing the country's historical and cultural diversity closer. For example we viewed Lake Balaton from Tihany, in Budapest we marvelled at the buildings and their architecture and in Balatonfenyves we danced with the locals. The realisation, during the planning of the conference, that the hotel "Soli Deo Gloria" in Balatonszárszó was overbooked brought its challenges. Many thanks to all who graciously came along side in this awkward situation and also gave their support when unexpected surprises in the conference schedule called for "team players".

Many thanks also to all who contributed untiringly to the success of the conference. For me all in all the best IRM conference yet! "Soli Deo Gloria" (to God be the glory).

Global thinking and regional acting

Global changes require functional structures in order to allow for healthy future growth. At the IRM's annual general meeting in Balatonszárszó new Statutes and specific job descriptions were passed. The IRM is now legally capable of acting on conclusion of a contract and no liability for individuals remains. In future, the IRM General Meeting will take place annually and be comprised of IRM board members and IRM representatives. Like many other organisations or churches, the IRM does

not live from documents and traditions, but most of all from people who are willing to live out their Christian faith in the workplace and in everyday life. Some associations of the IRM, have a substantial number of ageing members and only a few working railwaymen in their ranks. During the IRM conference week in Hungary, calendars were distributed in maintenance depots, railway control centres and railway stations, proving that a good product meets with thankful takers. We need to go to the people. During the "Fit & Fun Week 2013" in French-speaking Switzerland (Romandie) we distributed, specifically to railway personnel, approximately 250 RailHope calendars and tracts. This opened up the possibility to bring Christians or interested people together resulting in a regional RailHope meeting place in the city of Biel. The principle "**go - give - connect**" stands the test of time. Even the apostle Paul lived out the principle of teamwork:

"I planted the seed, Apollo watered it, but God made it grow" (1.Cor. 3:6).

Team work that follows God`s principles functions!! There is no room for a one-man show.

We need each other in order to focus on what unifies us and is the centre of our faith "**Jesus Christ**". That is why the IRM has an interdenominational character.

Besides the Apostles` Creed which sums up the most important beliefs of our faith, the following rule applies in our cross-border IRM "family":

In the essentials - **unity**

In the non-essentials - **freedom**

In all things - **love**

For more information visit our website **www.railway-mission.eu** or contact your nearest IRM representative.

All the best and God`s blessing for 2014!

Veli Bay