



<p><b><i>Montenegro: Letting GO of the Past</i></b>  May 2004</p> <p>Part 04, Ch. 27 CRF Media Chronicles</p>	<p><b>Final:</b> 06/05/13  <b>Time:</b> 20:34</p> <p>© 2013 Carl and Arline Ryan</p>
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**Arline:** In May 2004, we felt like tourists in the small country known as “Crna Gora” {TSERN-ah GORE-ah} meaning “Black Mountain” in the Serbian language. It is truly a country of mountains, but also a land of cities, towns, and small farms each with their own charm and beauty.

**Overlays:**

- Zeta River
- Ostrog Monastery

More commonly known as **Montenegro**, {MAHN-teh- nee-gro} this country is also a place of fast flowing rivers and streams punctuated with an occasional monastery high on a mountainside.

Montenegro is about the size of the State of Connecticut but with a population of less than 700,000. The Adriatic Sea separates this small country from Italy.

**INSERT MAP**

Neighboring countries are Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Albania.

We stayed in **Herceg Novi** {HAIR-seeg NO-vee} and visited the key cities of **Kotor**{KOH-tor}, **Budva** {BOOD-vah}, **Cetinje** { SET-eeen-yah} , **Podgorica**{POHD-gore-eet-sa}, **Niksic** {NEEK-sheech} and, in Croatia, the city of **Dubrovnik**{DEW-brove-neek} .

The centuries of war and bloodshed are over now and, in 2006, Montenegro became an independent country. It has also become a tourist destination for Europeans and Americans.

The tranquil waters of Kotor Bay ... flanked by steeply rising hills and mountains ... contrasts the beauty and history of this land.

Viewed from the Spanish fort located high on a hill overlooking the bay, **Herceg Novi** {HAIR-seeg NO-vee} personifies both the old and the new. Typical of the entire country are the new buildings, next to fortresses that are hundreds of years old.

Herceg Novi is a city of about 20,000 inhabitants; all of whom claim that they have the most beautiful bay in the world. The bay is not only beautiful, but the surrounding hills provide protection from stormy seas. The narrow inlet helps calm the waters but, ... in the past, ... it was the large fort that served as a deterrent to invaders from the sea.

A short distance from Herceg Novi is the town of **Bijela {BEE-yellah}** with its dockyards for the repair and maintenance of both foreign and domestic ships. Another mile further down the highway is **Kamenari {KA-men-are-ee}** where one can take the ferry for the five-minute ride across the bay. This will save about an hour of driving time for those who plan to continue on down the Adriatic Highway toward **Budva {BOOD-vah}**. For the tourist, this is not an option since several additional historic, ... as well as modern, cities are located along the Kotor Bay highway.

Near the town of **Risan {REE-san}** a giant flow of fresh water rushes down the mountain, under the road, and into the Bay. Nearby, shellfish farmers have developed a thriving business. Risan is one of the oldest settlements and predates Roman times when the people known as the **Illyrians {ILL-ear-ee-ans}** resided here. The remains of a 2,000-year-old Roman villa are visible in a small park.

The road turns south at Risan toward **Perast {PEAR-ast}** and the **Banja {BAHN-ya}** Monastery. The Monastery was originally built in the Middle Ages but rebuilt in 1720 after destruction by the Turks.

Near the south end of the sixteen-mile long Bay is the city of Kotor. It, along with Risan, was founded some 2,500 years ago. Many relics of the past remain. Perhaps one of the more interesting features is the rock wall built high on the hillsides to protect from invaders that could possibly come down the mountain. A church is located near the top of the wall. At one time, Kotor was an independent city-republic. At other times, various foreign invaders have ruled it.

Continuing on around the tip of the Bay and then up a mountainside Kotor Bay is behind us. Before us is the Adriatic Sea and the large seaside resort city of Budva. Budva is a thoroughly modern metropolis with major tourist accommodations.

**Carl:** The route to the capital city of **Podgorica {POHD-gore-eet-sa}** leaves the Adriatic Highway a few miles past **Budva {BOOD-vah}** and makes a sharp turn to the east and upward in a winding set of switchbacks necessary to scale the mountainside.

Once in the mountains, a new vista unfolds. There are small farms that seem to have more rock than earth for growing crops. The people follow a simple lifestyle based on working the land as a time-honored way of survival. A quick visit to one of the many cemeteries is a reminder of the generations of people who have lived, worked, and died in this land. Their names are all that is left of the memories of their past struggles.

The first large city is **Cetinje, {SET-eeen-yah}** once the capital of the country. It held this position for 500 stormy and war torn years. Reminders of its glory days are all around. The former embassies of several countries can be seen in the center of the city. Statues of legendary heroes are here as well as a large Orthodox monastery and many churches.

About 35 miles further on even higher in the mountains and across a valley is the city of Podgorica, the administrative capital of Montenegro. Podgorica, with a population of about 170,000, has a character much different than the coastal cities. One is quickly reminded that this was once a place long dominated by a totalitarian Communist government. Greeting the visitor are drab concrete block buildings and endless wash line balconies. There is also a large settlement of gypsies and refugees whose only view is the burning city garbage dump. The city has some industry, ... most notably, the bauxite refinery along the river.

The central part of the city is a place where family and friends can spend an enjoyable afternoon sharing time together in a relaxed atmosphere. Podgorica is building for the future as many new and shiny office and apartment buildings are replacing the old, drab, and unused structures of the past.

There are many new luxury homes in this city such as the beautiful home with a lovely view where we spent the night. It was a relaxing time when we were able to review some of the video and pictures taken thus far. It is always a pleasure to be welcomed into the home of kind strangers who provide us with good food and comfortable accommodations.

About 30 miles northeast of Podgorica is the large city of **Niksic. (NEEK-sheech)** The shoebox style apartment buildings and general drab surroundings are much the same as parts of Podgorica.

**Jelena {YELL-a-nuh}** lives in a very small older house with her mother and sisters. Her grandmother joined us for a meal and a time of visiting. Jelena desires to attend a Bible College in America so she can better communicate the Gospel to those in her homeland.

**Overlay:** Our friend, Jelena

In the middle of the city, ... dominating the square ... is a giant monument to the failure of past government projects. This building, ... intended to be office space for the government bureaucracy, ... was never completed. Even the homeless do not want to spend time in its vacant rooms. A prince once lived here in this city; however, there is little to attract a visitor. The surrounding mountains beckon to the more adventurous.

Heading toward the mountain peaks, the landscape changes quickly. Our objective is the mausoleum high on Mount **Loveen {LAHV-chen}**. Unfortunately, snow on the road blocked our way. It was a nice try anyway.

**Overlays:**

Returning to Kotor Bay  
Njegusi, birthplace of Peter II  
Weasel skins  
Back through the tunnel and ...  
Kotor Bay again.

**Overlay:** Dubrovnik, Croatia

**Dubrovnik** {DEW-brove-neek} is another interesting tourist destination which is located at the southeastern tip of **Croatia** {CROW-a-sha} and only a short distance from Montenegro. Dubrovnik is similar to many Mediterranean seacoast cities with the hills in the background, the red tile roofs of the buildings in the foreground, and the islands offshore. Shops, restaurants, and craftsmen are now plentiful. This alone is enough to lure the visitor back again and again but there is much more to this crown jewel of the Mediterranean.

Visitors can walk on top of the thick walls surrounding the city. The history of Dubrovnik begins in the 7<sup>th</sup> century when barbarians wiped out nearby Roman cities and the residents fled to the rocky inlet that they called **Laus** (LAW-ous) ... Greek for "rock." A fortress was built to deter the attackers and the settlement increased in importance.

In 1991 and 1992, ... as civil war ravaged Yugoslavia, ... Dubrovnik was hit hard. Damaged tile on the roofs was replaced with new and brighter colored material leaving a patchwork appearance of the old and the new.

The Catholic Church is prominent here inside the walls of the old city. Worship services are still held in this large church but, for the most part, it is just an important tourist attraction. Still, the large ornately decorated churches tell all that Dubrovnik remains a symbol of the Catholic religion.

Montenegro has many places which portray the country's past as well as its future. For example, in the high mountains where two rivers meet, an ancient bridge crosses one while a modern structure spans the other. At the junction of these two rivers is a graveyard. It is very old and visited by few.

This graveyard is different than others ... bodies of the past are broken ... but not decaying. All around are the remnants of a time long past. The **Illyrians** {ILL-ear-ee-ans} settled much of this area 2,700 years ago. Other graveyards sprung up as time moved on. High up on the hills people once lived here but the crumbling walls of their homes are now useless.

**Arline:** Churches abound throughout the country. Most are Eastern Orthodox but a few are Catholic. Some are on hills and others along busy streets. In Kotor Bay, Saint George Catholic Church is on one island and near by Our Lady of the Rock Orthodox Church is on another. Regardless of their location all are old.

The bells can be heard but the people of this country rarely attend. Often a monk is nearby meditating on scripture. Occasionally, the Bishop will show you around.

In the Orthodox Church, the well-organized and intricately crafted depictions of saints of long ago are an essential part of worship. The faithful followers believe that these paintings are a window to heaven. Prayers offered up by the devotees are conveyed to the heavenly father through a chosen portal ... normally their favorite saint. There is no praying in their homes since God is only considered present in the church.

Inside some of the churches are impressive displays of ancient artifacts, treasured items that depict a proud and grand history.

The Catholic Church differs from the Orthodox Church since the windows to heaven are not present and pews are provided. Still, there are many common characteristics between the two groups such as the elevated position of Mary. In addition, they share similar doctrinal values.

While the Catholic Churches and Orthodox Churches are old, the Muslim mosques are new. Near **Podgorica** {POHD-gore-eet-sa} the mosque was recently completed for the growing Muslim population.

Evangelical Christian Churches are few. As of 2005, there were only three small congregations in all of Montenegro representing a total of about 120 Believers.

Montenegro became a free country in 2006 and began a new life. It is a place welcoming visitors from much of the western world but it remains to be seen how the people will direct their spiritual life. Will they let go of the past and some day say they are a follower of Jesus?

During our time in the country, we met many people, discovered a beautiful and historic land and obtained sufficient video material and information for eight chapters of the DVD, *Montenegro: Letting Go of the Past*. 1,000 copies of the DVD were distributed.

CRF Media Chronicles © Filmed in 2004



## *Visit Montenegro!*

Ch. 28 (11:37) Filmed May 2004

**Montenegro** ... a word derived from the Italian language ... means “Black Mountain”; a descriptive name for this small country of rugged and densely forested mountains, hills and valleys. Those living here call their country “**Crna Gora**” which also means black mountain in the Serbian language.

But the black mountains are only an illusion from the distance. Instead, it is a land decorated with cities, towns, and small farms – each with their own charm and picturesque beauty. It is a country of fast flowing rivers and streams, punctuated by an occasional fort high on a hill. The centuries of wars and bloodshed are over now, the outlook is

bright; it is a country beginning to make the transition to a modern Western tourist attraction.

### **Map on screen as following paragraph is narrated:**

**Crna Gora** is about the size of the State of Connecticut but with a population of less than 700,000. To the West, the Adriatic Sea separates this small country from Italy. The other neighboring countries are Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, and Albania.

The tranquil waters of the Bay of **Kotor** ... flanked by steeply rising hills and mountains ... is illustrative of contrasts in the beauty and the history of this land – a land that is part of the Balkans – and a place ravaged by centuries of wars and conquest as well as religious and ethnic struggles and persecution. The remains of these past conflicts are all around.

Viewed from the Spanish fort located high on a hill overlooking the bay, **Herceg Novi** personifies both the old and the new. Typical of the entire country are the new buildings, flanked by fortresses that are hundreds of years old. An ATM machine allows one to extract money and then to walk up steps that have been in place for centuries. Here the ancient and the modern complement each other.

**Herceg Novi** is a city of about 20,000 inhabitants. All of these will agree that they have the most beautiful bay in the world. The bay is not only beautiful, but the surrounding hills provide protection from stormy seas. The narrow inlet to the bay helps calm the waters but, ... in the past, ... it was the large fort with an array of gun emplacements that served as a deterrent to invaders from the sea.

A short distance from **Herceg Novi** is the town of **Bijela** with its dockyards for the repair and maintenance of both foreign and domestic ships. Another mile further down the highway is **Kamenari** where one can take the ferry for the five-minute ride across the bay. This will save about an hour of driving time for those who plan to continue on down the Adriatic Highway toward **Budva**. For the tourist, this is not an option since several additional historic, ... as well as modern, ... cities are located along the **Kotor** Bay highway.

A short distance before the town of **Risan** a giant flow of fresh water rushes down the mountain, under the road, and into the Bay. The source of the water is from a cave in the towering mountains above. Nearby shellfish farmers, ... relying on the nutrients provided by the bay water, ... have developed a thriving business. **Risan** is one of the oldest settlements and predates Roman times when the people known as the Illyrians resided here. The remains of a 2,000-year-old Roman villa are visible in a small park.

The road turns south at **Risan** toward **Perast** and the **Banja** Monastery. The Monastery was originally built in the Middle Ages but rebuilt in 1720 after destruction by the Turks.

Churches abound here as they do throughout the country. Most are Eastern Orthodox but a few are Catholic. Some are on hills and others are along busy streets. In Kotor Bay, Saint George Catholic Church is on one island and near by Our Lady of the Rock Orthodox Church is on another. Regardless of their location all are old. The churches, government buildings, and apartments have seen generations come and go but still this is a place where many people live, work, and play.

Near the south end of the sixteen-mile long Bay is the city of **Kotor**. It, ... along with **Risan**, ... was founded some 2,500 years ago. Many relics of the past remain. Perhaps one of the more interesting features is the rock wall built high on the hillsides to protect from invaders that could possibly come down the mountain. A church is located near the top of the wall. At one time, **Kotor** was an independent city-republic. At other times, various foreign invaders have ruled it. The Germans

occupied the area during WW II. Marshal Tito claimed credit for liberating the city in November 1944.

Continuing on around the tip of the Bay and then up and over a pass, one again returns to a view of the Adriatic Sea and on to the large seaside resort city of **Budva**. **Budva** is a thoroughly modern metropolis with wide boulevards, cheerful flowerbeds, and a generally sunny disposition with its sandy beaches stretching in both directions.

The route to the capital city of **Podgorica** leaves the Adriatic Highway a few miles past **Budva** and makes a sharp turn to the east as it heads upward in a winding set of switchbacks necessary to scale the mountainside. A view back down toward **Budva** is a quick goodbye to the seashore.

Once in the mountains, a new vista unfolds. There are small farms that seem to have more rock than earth for growing crops. The people follow a simple lifestyle based on working the land as a time-honored way of survival. A quick visit to one of the many cemeteries is a reminder of the generations of people who have lived, worked, and died in this land. Their names are all that is left of the memories of their past struggles.

Even higher in the mountains and across a valley is the city of **Podgorica**, the administrative capital of **Crna Gora**. **Podgorica**, with a population of about 170,000, has a character much different than that of the coastal cities. The historic city was nearly obliterated by bombing in World War II. One is quickly reminded that this was once a place long dominated by a totalitarian Communist government. Greeting the visitor are drab concrete block buildings and endless wash line balconies. Yet, here too one can find luxury homes with views of the surrounding mountains. There is also a large settlement of gypsies and refugees whose only view is the burning city garbage dump. The city has some industry ... most notably, the bauxite refinery along the river.

The central part of the city is much different and more inviting to the visitor as well as the residents. Loudspeakers feature local music for all to hear. Restaurants and sidewalk cafes provide a variety of food. This is a place where family and friends can spend an enjoyable afternoon sharing time together in a relaxed atmosphere. **Podgorica** is building for the future as many new and shiny office and apartment buildings are replacing the old, drab, and unused buildings of the past.

**Cetinje**, ... only about 35 miles from **Podgorica**, ... was once the capital of the country. It held this position for 500 stormy and war torn years. Reminders of its glory days are all around. The former embassies of several countries can be seen in the center of the city. Statues of legendary heroes are all around as well as a large Orthodox monastery and many churches.

About 30 miles northeast of **Podgorica** is the large city of **Niksic**. The shoebox style apartment buildings and general drab surroundings are much the same as parts of **Podgorica**. In the middle of the city, ... dominating the square ... is a giant monument to the failure of past government projects. This building ... intended to be office space for the government bureaucracy ... was never completed. Even the homeless do not want to spend time in its vacant rooms. A prince once lived here. However, there is little to attract a visitor to this city. The surrounding mountains beckon to the more adventurous.

In this country, ... affectionately called **Crna Gora** by its citizens, ... the scenery is spectacular, the history enlightening, and the culture representative of a proud and independent people; ... a people who have endured much hardship, discouragement and struggles in the past, but with a bright future before them. Perhaps this future is in one of the many tour busses with its load of tourists.

This short tour provides only a snapshot of the country we call **Montenegro**. Make plans now to visit this beautiful place with its rugged mountains and coastline. Meet the people of the country. Learn about their history and culture. Come and experience life in this forgotten land of the Balkans in an unforgettable corner of Europe!

**Pronunciation guide:**

Banja	BAHN-yah
Bijela	BEE-yellah
Budva	BOOD-vah
Cetinje	TSET-een-yah (usually pronounced SET-een-yah)
Crna Gora	TSERN-ah GORE-ah
Herceg Novi	HAIR-seeg NO-vee
Kamenari	KA-men-are-ee
Kotor	KO-tor (long O sound)
Montenegro	MAHN-teh- nee-gro
Niksic	NEEK-sheech
Perast	PEAR-ast
Podgorica	POD-gore-eet-sa (long O sound)
<b>Risan</b>	<b>REE-san</b>



## Who are We?

Ch. 29 (6:12) Filmed May 2004

Ask a resident of **Montenegro** who they are and they will say we are Montenegrins and our language is Montenegrin. The people are proud of who they are and where they live. The rugged mountains, the deep valleys, the miles of seashore, and the pleasant Mediterranean climate are only the surface features of this country and, likewise, its people.

The people of **Montenegro** are made up of a complex mix of forces from outside their borders. First, the people known as the **Illyrians** lived here some 2,700 years ago. Then the Celts from the North moved in closely followed by the Romans from the West. The Romans built bridges, roads, aqueducts and forts. Eventually they constructed churches

and established the Catholic Church that replaced the pagan gods with a new God. The power of the Catholic Church lasted only a few hundred years before the Orthodox Church from the East replaced it. After a few centuries, the Ottoman Turks gained control of much of the surrounding region and brought Islam to the people. Little **Montenegro** and some of the independent city-states were able to successfully defend against the Islamic onslaught. This addition resulted in three religious systems each of which wanted political domination of the country.

As time went on, more influences were added to the mix. There were the French and the Russians; ... then the Austrians, World War I and the birth of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; ... next Italy, Germany and World War II came to the country; ... then fifty years of communism under Marshall **Tito** and **Slobodan Milosevic**. By 1995, only Serbia and **Montenegro** remained in the once large Federal Republic of Yugoslavia but that federation became very strained. In 2003, a new, looser federation called simply Serbia and **Montenegro** emerged.

Today, the country is at peace with its neighbors; ... at peace with its religious system consisting of Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and Islam. For the most part, this coexistence is possible because the people no longer have an involvement in any faith. They seldom attend the functions of the church and contribute very little to its upkeep. They consider themselves followers of a particular faith based on tradition and that is sufficient to establish their position as a true believer.

The Orthodox Church continues to dominate the skyline of Montenegrin cities and towns. However, most evident in some border areas is a revitalized adherence to the Islamic faith. In many towns, new mosques are rapidly transforming whole neighborhoods. Construction of the mosques and Islamic seminaries is made possible with funding from oil rich Arab countries. The bell towers of the churches are being overtaken by the tall minarets supporting loudspeakers ... loudspeakers that broadcast the 5 times daily call to prayer.

Evangelical Christianity has never been a part of **Montenegro**. As of 2005, there are only three small churches with a combined adult membership of about 120. The task of taking God's Word to the 700,000 Montenegrins is overwhelming. It is truly a God sized task. In **Montenegro**, the constitution guarantees freedom of religion. However, Montenegrins are very slow to change their ways. Since most are steeped in traditional Christianity, they feel no need to adopt a form of religion that would make them an outcast in their family and society. Even though they have no real hope for the future, they cannot see the need to turn to the only real source of hope and peace, Jesus Christ. The failure of the traditional church to meet their spiritual needs has hardened their hearts to the gospel message.

How will these elementary school kids hear the Good News of Jesus? What about these high school students? Will they grow up as their parents not knowing Jesus? Will they succumb to the wail of the loudspeakers mounted on the minarets or will their lives continue to reflect indifference and apathy to all forms of religion? For these young people, religion is not even a status symbol. The cell phone, prominently displayed, has become symbolic of their new religion. The next generation of Montenegrins has an uncertain future ... a future that will be much influenced by forces outside the country. Will you pray that someday ... when Montenegrins are asked, ... "Who are you?", ... they will say, "I am a follower of Jesus". Will you be a part of telling the people about Jesus?

### Pronunciation Guide:

<b>Illyrians</b>	ILL-ear-ee-ans
<b>Montenegro</b>	MAHN-teh- nee-gro
<b>Slobodan Milosevic</b>	SLOW-bow-don MEE-low-say-veech
<b>Tito</b>	TEE-toe



## Graveyards

Ch. 30 (6:37) Filmed May 2004

Two rivers merge high in the mountains of **Montenegro**. An ancient bridge crosses one of these rivers while a modern structure crosses the other. At the junction of these two rivers is a graveyard. It is very old and visited by few. A herd of goats are the caretakers as they browse on the grass and weeds.

This graveyard is different than others ... bodies of the past are broken ... but not decaying. All around are the remnants of a time long past ... a time even before the Romans conquered this land. Here the original inhabitants were known as **Illyrians**, a people who settled much of this area 2,700 years ago. Other graveyards sprung up as time

moved on. Looking high up on the hills, a fortress can be seen. Fortresses once provided protection from invading armies coming in from land or from sea but ... today ... they are useless.

Walls were built to surround homes and cities. The walls are crumbling now and serve only as grave markers for the occasional tourists to briefly explore the past. These markers of the past are also in the midst of many alive and growing cities. Some are even used as an outdoor movie theater.

High on a hill overlooking the Bay of **Kotor** and, ... within the city limits of **Herceg Novi**, ... is a fortress constructed by the Spanish in 1538 when they briefly occupied the country. The Spanish hoped to secure their hold on this land with the edifice. Its massive gun emplacements, its thick walls and its strategic location were considered impenetrable. But, alas, it lasted only a year and was overtaken by the Turks who lived here for another 150 years. It too is a graveyard ... a testimony of the dead dreams of just another force attempting to control the land and the people.

In modern times, graveyards of the past continue to be venerated. In the town of **Njegos**, birthplace of Peter II, reminders of recent world conflicts are displayed for all to see. In some places where people are buried, it would seem that their dead political ideology is more important than individual names.

Other markers of the past are seen in the mountain cities of **Podgorica** and **Niksic** where drab Russian style apartment buildings line the streets. Also in Niksic is a graveyard of past government failures in the form of a huge building that was intended to house government offices but was never completed. Today it is vacant and dead.

In the old capitol of **Cetinje**, embassies of several countries line both sides of a street but they have been closed for many years; long ago the diplomatic personnel moved to the new capitol city of **Podgorica**. Some of these buildings are now used for apartments and businesses. Their original glory is dead.

The monuments to the lives of people abound throughout the land. There is a home that once heard the cry of a newborn baby while close by are the last resting places of the child's parents, grandparents and others. ... In these graveyards, there are many stories of families who were born here, ... who grew up here, ... who fought for their country here, ... and ... who died here.

Perhaps the saddest graveyard of all in this country is that of the churches. Religion was important to these people. In the name of religion, many fought for this land. Like graveyards, monasteries and churches abound throughout the country. Some are easy to get to. Others, however, are isolated monuments such as the **Ostrog** Monastery located high on a mountainside. The road is blocked by snow for much of the year that leads to the massive mausoleum on top of Mount **Lovcen**. This monument was built for church-state leader Peter II. The church bells ring with their clear tone and can be heard for great distances. Yet, ... few people attend the worship services. For the most part, religion is dead in this land.

Like the crumbling artifacts of the past, religion has little influence on daily lives. It is tradition and history that establishes one's position as a true believer ... whether Orthodox, Catholic or Muslim. Most consider that good works is a key to heaven. They recognize a real God but they do not recognize a personal God.

Pray that people will see the joy and hope that walking with Jesus brings in the lives of believers. Pray that many would shed their indifference to the Gospel message and desire to become one of God's children and experience a personal relationship with Jesus. Pray for new life – a life that is eternal and will not crumble and fade away.



## ***Dubrovnik***

Ch. 31 (5:27) Filmed May 2004

**Dubrovnik** ... a city with a history larger than life and a beauty that beckons as a tourist destination ... **Dubrovnik** is located at the southeastern tip of **Croatia** and only a short distance from **Montenegro**. When visiting **Montenegro**, the airport near this unforgettable city will most likely be your first stop.

**Dubrovnik** is like many Mediterranean seacoast cities with the hills in the background, the red tile roofs of the buildings in the foreground, and the islands offshore. This alone is enough to lure the visitor back again and again but there is much more to this crown jewel of the Mediterranean.

The history of **Dubrovnik** begins in the 7<sup>th</sup> century when barbarians wiped out nearby Roman cities and the residents fled to the rocky inlet that they called **Laus** ... Greek for "rock." A fortress was built to deter the attackers and the settlement increased in importance. Eventually, the area became known as **Ragusa**. However, attacks continued and the fort was strengthened. One of the legendary heroes of **Dubrovnik** is **Sveti Vlaho also known as Saint Blais**. His image is prominent in many places throughout the fort and the city. It is said that in the 10<sup>th</sup> century he warned of an impending attack by sea from the powerful city-state of Vienna. Preparations made on the basis of this warning saved the city.

The fort continued to play an important role in the history of the area. An earthquake destroyed it in 1667 but it was quickly rebuilt. And, finally, ... in 1991 and 1992, ... as civil war ravaged Yugoslavia, ... **Dubrovnik** was hit hard. Thousands of shells fell on the city and the fort. A few pock marked buildings still show the scars of shelling, however, the major damage was to the orange tile roofs. The damaged tile was replaced with new and brighter colored material leaving a patchwork appearance of the old and the new. Repair work continues on some of the ancient buildings. The guns are silent now as they look out over the waters. The high walls reaching down to the sea provide a place for boys to explore without fear of invading armies.

Tourist trade is essential for the life of the city and, ... for the most part, ... life has returned to the city and the fort. Shops, restaurants, and craftsmen are now plentiful as are the tourists. Visitors can freely walk on top of the thick walls, stroll along the wide avenue called the **Stradun** or slip into one of the narrow alleys in the old town protected by the walls of the fort. The markets with vendors selling produce and other supplies are always busy. Internet cafes have also sprung up in some of the alleyways allowing the old to connect with the new.

The Catholic Church is prominent here inside the walls of the old city of **Dubrovnik**. Worship services are still held in this large church but, for the most part, it is just an important tourist attraction. Its large paintings and statues attest to the skill and imagination of the artisans as well as the devotion to the various saints. The white cross on **Mount Srd** and the large ornately decorated churches tells all that **Dubrovnik** remains a symbol of the Catholic religion that receives special privileges and support from the government of Croatia.

Places for luxury boats ... some private ... some for tour groups ... are safe for now as political stability appears to be settling in through the region of **Croatia**, Bosnia, and **Montenegro**.

When you come to **Montenegro**, be sure to include a visit to **Dubrovnik**. Decide for yourself what draws one back to this awakening jewel. Is it the view? Is it the fort and the old city with its high, thick walls made of stone? Or, is it the rich history and endearing charm that set this place apart from the rest?

### **Pronunciation Guide:**

<b>Dubrovnik</b>	<b>DEW-brove-neek</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	<b>CROW-a-sha</b>
<b>Laus</b>	<b>LAW-oos</b>
<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>MAHN-teh-NAY-grow</b>
<b>Mount Srd</b>	<b>Mount SERD (slight roll on the "r")</b>
<b>Ragusa</b>	<b>RAW-goo-saw</b>
<b>Sveti Vlaho</b>	<b>SVET-ee VLAW-hoe</b>
<b>Stradun</b>	<b>STRAW-dune</b>



## *Why Are the Bells Ringing?*

Ch. 32 (9:35) Filmed May 2004

Listen ... listen ... the church bells are ringing! Will anyone hear? ... Will anyone come? The doors are locked. The people must be somewhere else.

Across this beautiful country that we call **Montenegro** are hundreds of churches. ... Many are centuries old. They are usually located in the center of town where all can see and hear the calling of their bells. Some are on islands or on hillsides while others are high on a mountain. There is a church along a wall used to protect a town from its enemies. Nearly all churches have bells mounted in their lofty towers. Sometimes there is only one bell. Other times there are several. Devoted followers ring the bells. The ringing

sound always comes from the bells ... not from loudspeakers like the wail from the tall minarets of the followers of Islam.

Centuries ago there was one church in **Montenegro**. This was the Roman Catholic Church and it dominated the religious and the political lives of the people. Eventually, the Eastern Orthodox Church came into power and today over 60 % of the people of **Montenegro** claim allegiance to the Eastern Orthodox Church and less than 10% to the Catholic Church. The doctrinal teachings of these two churches are similar though each claims to be the only “true” church. Their major differences are in the leadership and the various icons and religious symbols. Both give Mary, the mother of Jesus, a God-like position in the church. In present day **Montenegro**, they coexist peacefully, but just over ten years ago ethnic and political tensions encouraged by religious leaders resulted in a horrific war. Religious hatred in the Balkans is centuries old and untold millions have died in the region because of differences in beliefs.

In the past, the government provided much of the funding for the church but today this funding is no more, consequently, many church buildings in desperate need of repair. Priests, nuns, and monks must make great sacrifices to continue their devotion to the church. The Montenegrin people, few of whom attend church at all, give only a pittance to support the religion they would fight and die for. On bulletin boards, death notices are posted with a clear statement of the deceased’s religious affiliation.

A visit with a dedicated monk as he explains the important symbols, the legacies and the principals of the Eastern Orthodox Church provides insight into this religious order. The sacred hand-made Bible, the crowns, the tapestries, the paintings and the frescoes are the treasures of the church. These are what the church holds dear. Each Sunday morning the monk preaches to a congregation of about 100 who stand for the entire three-hour liturgy. As they stand and listen, they are able to view images of the saints. It is these images of saints that provide a window to heaven through which their prayers are heard.

They are taught that prayers outside the church will not be heard since God is considered present only in the church and consequently, that is the location for praying to Him. Church tradition has as much authority as the Bible. The priest must sanction all interpretations of the scriptures. No one would dare to be so bold as to assume the knowledge or wisdom to interpret the Bible on one’s own. Lighting candles is another way of demonstrating devotion to particular saints and special events. The Orthodox Church in nearly every town generally has an open door for the faithful to enter for prayer or to place burning candles near the icons.

The Orthodox Church believes that after Jesus was crucified he was buried in a tomb containing the bones of Adam. The skull and cross bones on many grave markers symbolize this belief.

The Catholic Church in **Montenegro** like that of the Orthodox Church is severely under funded. In the city of **Herceg Novi**, there is a large Catholic Church building but only three dedicated and very accomodating nuns run it. This large church building has few worshippers despite the loving care given to the facilities. A priest only comes to this church for marriages, for funerals, and for baptisms.

The people of **Montenegro** have long since stopped attending the churches. To a Montenegrin, regular church attendance is considered to be one or two times a year. Easter and Christmas is when most people attend church. The bells, however, continue to ring but ... they don’t make music that will awaken the hearts of the people.

There are a few in **Montenegro** that hear a different kind of bell ... a bell of Truth. There is music. There is music that

honors and worships Jesus. These faithful ones hear God's Word proclaimed from the Bible. But their numbers are so few. These Montenegrins are called evangelical Christians. As of 2005, there were only three churches in all of Montenegro for evangelical Christians and a total of only about 120 followers out of the nearly 700,000 people in this country. There are no native pastors in these churches. Instead, two of the pastors are missionaries from nearby Serbia and the third is an American who returned to the land of his parents to start a church.

A new kind of bell ... a new kind of music ... is beginning to be heard in Montenegro. Will you pray that more people will hear? Will you pray that more people will come? Will you pray that the people of Montenegro will come to believe in the one true savior, Jesus Christ?

#### **Pronunciation Guide:**

**Herceg Novi**  
**Montenegro**

HAIR-seeg NO-vee  
MAHN-teh- nee-gro



### ***Jelena's Testimony***

Ch. 33 (5:11) Filmed May 2004

#### **Jelena's Story**

**Jelena** lives in **Niksic**, the second largest city of **Montenegro**. There are large apartment buildings, small grocery stores, a city park and, ... for some, ... new homes along a quiet street. **Jelena**, however, lives in **very small** older house with her mother and **three** sisters. **An older sister is attending the university in Belgrade**. Her grandmother lives a few miles away. **Jelena** would like to share her story with you.

**(Testimony – on screen – approximately 4 minutes. There will be a few places while she is talking that other illustrative scenes will be shown. However, most of this will be Jelena on screen because her facial expressions and manner are too important to miss.)**

Pray that **Jelena** will be a shining light for Jesus among her friends and peers. **Jelena** desires to attend a Bible College in America so she can better communicate the Gospel to Montenegrins. Will you commit to pray that God will use her as His instrument in **Montenegro**?



### ***Windows to Heaven?***

Ch. 34 (5:47) Filmed May 2004

The Eastern Orthodox Churches of **Montenegro** look much like other old churches. There is the church, the steeple, and inside the people ... but ... the people are paintings and statues of saints who have long since passed into another life.

The well-organized and intricately crafted depictions of these saints are an essential part of worship. The faithful followers believe that these statues and paintings, called icons, are a window to heaven. It is through these windows that communication to God is made possible. Prayers offered up by the devotees are conveyed to the heavenly father through a chosen portal ... normally their favorite

saint. There is no praying in their homes since God is only considered present in church and that is the location for praying to Him. People do not recognize their sin. Jesus is not personal, that is, they cannot expect to really be close to Him except in a church.

Many different saints are available. Paintings or statues of most are in the front of the church. Often, life size images line the

walls of the sanctuary. When coming into the church, the person often stops to light a candle ... or candles ... representing prayer for sick or deceased relatives and friends or to a favorite saint as a way of demonstrating devotion. The lighting of candles is especially important for special events. Many, especially older women, bow or kneel before the icon of their saint, often kissing the picture and crossing themselves numerous times. People always stand as they worship. In some churches, there are a few seats ... but they were not made for the comfort of the worshippers. They are for the old or infirm but are rarely used because standing for the service is such an important part of Orthodox tradition.

Special emphasis is given to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Typically, she is depicted at the top of the painting with others lifting up their hands and their prayers to her. Other times, she is shown with a baby or small child representing Jesus. Again, this illustrates the importance of Mary over that of Jesus. Occasionally Jesus is illustrated as a grown man standing with others but most often he is still hanging on a cross ... blood stained and suffering.

It is the windows to heaven that provide a clear outward difference of the Eastern Orthodox Church and that of its predecessor, the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church dominated the religious beliefs and politics for much of the first millennium after the birth of Christ. About 1,000 years ago, a great schism took place. This split resulted in the two churches going their separate ways.

The Catholic Church differs from the Orthodox Church since the windows to heaven are not present and there are pews to sit on. Still, ... there are many common characteristics between the two groups such as the elevated position of Mary and several of the saints. In addition, they share similar doctrinal values.

In **Montenegro**, there are about fifty old Catholic Churches ... primarily located in the northern coastal cities. The once large Catholic population has dwindled significantly and most churches do not even have a priest. Today, most people claim to be Orthodox but few of either persuasion attend church or contribute to the silent collection containers.

The conspicuous windows to heaven that were so carefully placed are seldom used. The windows are now little more than a tourist attraction.

The people of **Montenegro** have become a people without a true allegiance to the church of any kind.

They need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and to realize that they do not need a special window located in a big church to communicate to Him and that salvation comes only through Him. ... They need to know that God's Word ... as revealed in the Bible ... is for them; ... that the Bible is the authority ... not the priest or tradition; and that the Bible is for them to study, ... to understand and apply to their lives. ... **They need to know Jesus.** ... Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me.*" ... Will you come and share Jesus and God's Word with the people of **Montenegro**?



## *A Time for New Beginnings*

Ch. 35 (10:09) Filmed May 2004

The bride is ready. ... Her family and friends are here to help her along. The groom is ready too ... as are the proud grandparents. It is a time for a new beginning ... for new freedom and for new responsibilities.

The people of **Montenegro** are nearing an historic crossroad in their lives and the life of their country. In the year 2006, they will have an opportunity to take a new direction ... a chance to once again become an independent country. By voting for independence in this referendum, they can break the last link with the old Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1991, Yugoslavia was torn apart as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia declared their

independence. Only little **Montenegro** remained in federation with Serbia as the country called Yugoslavia and war raged throughout the former federation. In 2003, Yugoslavia became just a name on old maps and in history books as the two loosely aligned countries changed their name to simply Serbia and **Montenegro**. What will be the future of this poor little

country if it votes to regain an independence it has not known since World War I?

For centuries, their country has been pushed and pulled by the religious whims of their political leaders. Throughout the Balkans, millions have died fighting for a religious cause they did not choose. This legacy has left uncertainty and apathy in the hearts and minds of the people. They call themselves Orthodox, Catholic, or Muslim but, ... in reality, ... these religions have become irrelevant to their lives. Few attend the worship services and the religious buildings have become little more than museums ... a place to show off the relics of the past and a place to solicit donations for maintenance of the facilities. They have sought substitutes ... the national sport of soccer, spending a quiet Sunday fishing or, ... perhaps, ... spending time with friends.

Montenegrins are beginning to realize that their future does not depend on the failed political and religious institutions of the past. However, they have yet to discover the new beginning that fellowship with Jesus Christ will provide.

In schools and orphanages, children are taught respect for their country. They eagerly line up to sing their national anthem. They can explain the meaning of their flag ... even with their halting English. Many want to learn English and want to participate in one-on-one ESL classes with visiting Americans. Often times stories from the Bible are used for these lessons.

High school kids are proud and confident. They, too, seek an opportunity to practice their English with visiting Americans. One quickly learns that these students have high motivation and goals but, ... in **Montenegro**, ... the professional employment opportunities are few. Young people look for status symbols and, ... today, ... it is the cell phone. These high school students are willing to discuss almost anything including their spiritual beliefs.

In public schools, the children learn about other countries. On this day, their strong desire to learn was evident as they were discovering new things about Mexico. Discussing religion is not permitted in public schools, but perhaps there is another location where they could hear about the friend that Jesus Christ would be to them.

Some businesses are beginning in the country as political and economic situations improve. In **Montenegro**, ... like many other countries, ... corruption is high, business ethics is low and entrepreneurship is stymied. Opportunities abound to share effective business principles with the people. Who knows? Perhaps the owner of the sidewalk market, the cook at a restaurant, or the vendor of religious paraphernalia may be willing to listen. Perhaps they will hear how Christian principles can be applied to a business.

Physical fitness is important to many and taking time to share healthy lifestyles is a natural venue for sharing a healthy spiritual life ... for sharing Jesus Christ.

In **Montenegro**, the summer time is a time for tourists. It is a time that one can walk around among the people; a time when one can stroll along the sidewalk ... a time that people will pose for the camera. These are the times that prayers come easy. Can you come and walk among the 700,000 Montenegrins as you pray for their salvation?

Today there are only about 120 evangelical Christians in all of **Montenegro**. This small number of believers needs your encouragement. Visit with them and listen to their testimonies. Watch their faces and see the difference that Christ has made in their lives. One young father is **Mirko**. There are no evangelical churches in his city and perhaps only one other Christian couple. **Mirko** says that people are closed to the Gospel message of Jesus, that there is a big wall in reaching Montenegrin's for Christ. Will you come and encourage believers like **Mirko** and his family?

Visiting in the home of a mother and her three daughters is a rare treat. As a widow, she has an especially hard time in supplying the needs of her family. Yet, she was happy to serve us a meal in her home. It was a special time of hearing how God has been the father in this family for the past five years. It touched our hearts to see the smiles and listen to the joy expressed because Jesus lives in this home. Won't you come and get acquainted with families similar to this one?

**Vladimir** is one of the three evangelical pastors in **Montenegro**. He is Serbian and lives with his family in a small home on the outskirts of **Podgorica**. Nearby is a creek where children fish from the small bridge. Family milk cows forage on the roadside vegetation. **Vladimir's** church is a few miles down the road and in rented space formerly used as a grocery store. **Vladimir** says that evangelical Christians are viewed as a sect. Shortly after copies of the Jesus film were being given away, a sign appeared in an Orthodox bookstore that read "Warning! Sect handing out film." The Pastor says that friendship is the best thing and sharing the Gospel of John Chapter 3 is the most effective chapter in reaching people.

Stan and his wife and five children left Los Angeles to return to his family's roots in **Montenegro**. He has a burning desire to see Montenegrins come to Jesus. In a nearby village, his 85-year-old aunt lives in the house where Stan's dad was born. She was delighted to have a visit from her nephew and to greet those he brought to meet her. Again, this was an opportunity to

learn more about the people and their culture. She was a gracious hostess and very happy to show us the garden and surrounding area where she and Stan's dad had been raised. Village life is difficult, work is hard, and jobs are few, but half of the people of **Montenegro** live in villages. There is helplessness among those who cannot find work. One avenue of ministry that Stan is using is to help set up a lumber business with the hope that this will provide a means of support and encouragement for people.

Will you pray that someone will also feel a burning desire to tell these people about Jesus? Perhaps your roots originate in this part of the world. What will you do? Do you have a trade that you could teach someone in a different culture?

Before you come learn all you can about the history, culture, and people of this beautiful land. When you come, show genuine interest in the people and their country. Be a listener, be an encourager, be a teacher, be a friend. Are you willing for God to use you to build bridges with Montenegrins to bring them out of spiritual darkness into the light of Jesus? You may be overwhelmed by the response. Perhaps you too will experience those pressing around you and wanting to hear more.

New beginnings require commitment, encouragement and support, but, ... like the wedding, ... there are those that remain on the sidelines and just watch the proceedings while others see the wedding as an opportunity for personal gain. Still, there are many who contribute with the talents that they have, ... some make music ... some serve as escorts....some carry the family coat of arms.... and others are chauffeurs. So it is with sharing the Good News of Jesus with the people of **Montenegro**. There are many ways that you can be involved.

Will you become an active part of this new beginning for the people of **Montenegro**?