

Musician trades professional career for overseas ministry

By Rita DeRego

ELLICOTT, Colo. — For decades trumpet player Scott Brookins toured the professional circuit playing for the likes of Glenn Campbell and the Platters. That passion hit a sour note a decade ago, however, when a heart change transformed his view of the musician lifestyle.

As a new Christian, Brookins said his old life was not compatible with his newfound faith. Still, the artist dabbled his musical fingers on the keys by playing at churches as the opportunities arose.

"Faith in God is an amazing thing," Brookins, an Ellicott resident, said. "He will open doors if you are willing to follow."

One such door opened several years ago when Brookins was playing at a Chicago-area church and the pastor there mentioned some missionary opportunities in Eastern Europe.

"I had never even thought of it or

that area of the world in that way," said Brookins, who now is a full-time missionary, primarily in Eastern Europe.

Brookins and his wife, Laura, and their children Ethan and Amelia, entered full-time missionary work in 1995 and, in 1998, he became ordained as a pastor.

Fresh from a yearlong stint in the Czech Republic Brookins said he is anxious to get back to the area of the world that has a hold of his heart and ministry. Although Brookins, a former member of the U.S. Air Force Band, said he loves America, he is drawn by the Czech Republic's magnet.

"There is a huge need, a huge spiritual vacuum there that needs to be filled with the gospel of Jesus Christ," he said.

The level of appreciation in Eastern Europe is fairly high for evangelistic efforts such as his, even though there are areas where evangelism is illegal, Brookins, a member of Woodmen

Valley Chapel, said. Even so, Eastern Europe is not always what Americans perceive it to be.

"People hear Europe and they think, 'Oh Europe, that's OK,'" Brookins said.

Most areas of Eastern Europe that Brookins visits are not OK financially or spiritually, he said. Although many areas are fairly decent, some don't even have running water or toilets. Spiritually, it's not much better with some of his personal polls showing that only 1 percent of the residents claim to be born again.

Brookins—who often visits some of the most discouraging areas such as the "health camps" that sprung out of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident—said his main goal with the music is to evangelize. Refugee camps, orphanages and prisons are also among the places to which Brookins brings his trumpet and his message of hope and love in Jesus Christ.

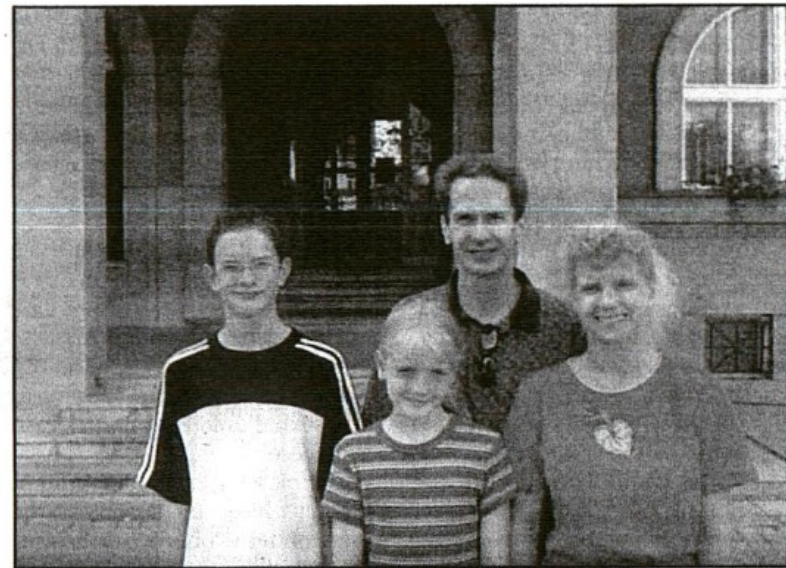
"People are moved just by the fact we would come and share our lives in these kind of places ... People listen," he said. "Part of it is that we are American and part of it is the music that is the draw."

Many of the people often ask Brookins why he would travel to areas filled with sickness, discouragement and, sometimes, poverty.

"God sent me here because He loves you and all of us," he tells them.

Multi-faceted ministry

When not performing or appearing on several European radio stations throughout Europe, Brookins also takes his musical knowledge to schools and colleges where he teaches master classes and occasionally goes to secular jazz clubs to perform and share the gospel.



Scott Brookins, along with his wife, Laura, and their children Ethan and Amelia, ministers in Central and Eastern Europe.

Other ministry has grown out of the Brookins family's missionary work overseas, most notably, The Bible Project.

"God has used us in a small way to get Bibles to people," he said. "Translations cost more than others in some languages and the people are not able to afford them."

In addition to The Bible Project, Brookins and his family have been gratified by the support for their free "power" bracelets, a simple handmade bracelet in different colors which each color explaining or underscoring a biblical principle. They have not only been a blessing to their recipients, but also to people all over America who make and ship the bracelets to Brookins for distribution overseas.

"I believe we had about 2,000 bracelets shipped to us just last year. It's wonderful because it's a con-

nection people can get to us and we to them that is not just financial," Brookins said.

While much of Brookins' work obviously takes place on center stage through music and evangelizing, a good deal of his family's missionary work is behind the scenes, including an alliance with Samaritan's Purse, a Franklin Graham ministry that operates Operation Christmas Child.

Brookins and his family are hoping to return within a year to the Czech Republic, where they are currently basing their missionary efforts to Eastern Europe.

For more information on Brookins' musical recordings, missionary efforts and schedule, log onto scottbrookins.org or call 1-800-255-9455.



Scott Brookins performs a concert at a relocated Chernobyl village in Belarus. Working with Samaritan's Purse, the Brookins gave away Operation Christmas Child Boxes.