

Missionary-turned-author puts roots down in Morganton

By Tracy Farnham

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After spending 21 years of her life in mission work — 10 of those years in Eastern Europe — Taryn Hutchison has found a place to call home in Burke County.

Growing up in Maryland, Hutchison was drawn to the Campus Crusade for Christ ministry that grew into a much larger calling from God to travel overseas. After graduating with a degree in art, she questioned what it was that she could do with her life.

“What I loved doing was sharing my faith with people and helping them grow in their own faith,” said Hutchison.

It was 1980, and for the next 10 years, she held positions on four different campuses through Campus for Christ. During this time, much of her prayer was centered on reaching people worldwide and especially Eastern Europe. “We prayed for the whole world and for people in Russia and Eastern Europe who had never had the opportunity to hear the gospel,” she said.

“You can’t do these things without the needs of those people becoming ingrained in your heart,” she said expressing how missionary work gripped her heart.

Hutchison spent a summer in Yugoslavia. “It was exhilarating living in a foreign culture and I loved seeing people who never heard about Jesus accepting him in their heart,” she described.

Next, she planned a one-year

stint in Romania that became a 10-year journey. “Those were by far the hardest living conditions,” she told.

Hutchison chronicled her experiences in her book, “We Wait You.”

As the revolution ended in Europe and Hutchison arrived there, she found the phrase that greeted her would become the title of her book.

“It has a double meaning because ‘We Wait You’ is what I heard from everyone when I first arrived in Romania and also what I heard in Hungary immediately following the revolution,” she said.

“The book is about Eastern Europe waiting for someone to come and set them free,” Hutchison clarified. They had been waiting 45 years for the Americans to come and set them free, she added.

“Really we didn’t come for their political freedom, but for their spiritual freedom,” she said.

The double meaning was this, “We (missionaries) were waiting on God to provide everything He called us to do.”

“This is not just a book about missions, because not many people would be interested in that, but it is about a universal truth that whatever God has called us to do in life He enables us,” she said.

“He strengthened me to live in a world so vastly different,” Hutchison said as she described living conditions. “We had water one time a day and it was cold and there were five rats to every person,” she added.

Yet, it was a simple life where

people treasured connecting with others. “For me, I felt like I was important to them and I came with a message of hope for them, but they in turn gave one to me.”

Describing her book, Hutchison said it doesn’t paint missionaries to be larger than life. She quipped adding, “I’m just a regular person.”

Arriving home in 2000, she returned to California where she reunited with an old friend, Steve, and found her future husband, a man who had been willing to wait 10 years while she fulfilled a calling on her life.

“He was still single and we got married eight months later.” The two recently moved to Morganton looking for a slower pace of life to call home.

So far, her book has sold 900 copies and it will be translated in Romanian and republished there. Missionaries going on short-term trips, those interested in seeing the world reaching for Christ, as well as those with an interest in travel will find it informative.

“This was a unique time and place in history that doesn’t exist anymore and I wanted to share it,” she told.

Hutchison is available for speaking engagements and may be reached at tarynhutchison@hotmail.com. Her book, “We Wait You,” is published by Pleasant Word (a division of WinePress Group) and may be purchased through her website at www.tarynhutchison.com. She also has a story in the recently released “Chicken Soup for the Soul Christmas Magic.”