



## Dear Faithful supporters of Mission Without Borders,

Welcome to 2009! I trust you enjoyed celebrating the Christmas season with family and friends – the perfect time for us to stop and give thanks for the precious gift of Jesus, born to earth as a helpless babe, and yet He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – who has given us the gift of salvation!

As you enjoy the warmth of our hot Australian summer, I would like to bring you some news and stories about our Community Centre ministry. Currently the days are very short and bitterly cold in Eastern Europe, and therefore our Community Centres become life-saving hubs of blessing! Why are they so important and such a blessing? Let me share some stories about lives transformed and I am sure you will praise God with us for this wonderful ministry and understand why we need your continued support!

In the Community of Lapardha in Berat, Albania, there are many who must survive with no income at all. These poverty-stricken families lack almost everything and find it increasingly difficult to survive. Despite their complete lack of material possessions, their greatest lack and need is for warmth and human love. Just over a year ago, the new Community Centre operated by the local church and Mission Without Borders started functioning in this remote community, offering Christian love, care, compassion and a hot meal for the elderly members of the community, desperate for assistance.

The beneficiaries come from different villages around Lapardha and they have found both food and companionship, thereby slowly forgetting the loneliness and sadness that has characterised their lives. Offering spiritual support to these dear elderly citizens has been and remains the number one goal of Mission Without Border's staff and volunteers from the local church. Although the Community Centre and its ministry are still relatively new, the changes in the hearts and souls of the beneficiaries is clearly evident to everyone!

The chief of Community Services for the local government recently wrote a letter expressing their thanks, "We as a community in cooperation with the Free Evangelical Church of Berat selected the neediest persons to regularly attend the Community Centre-the lonely, abandoned elderly, orphans and invalids. Overcome by problems and devastated by poverty, most of them honestly could not believe that this help was for real, and for them – it was too good to be true!

Through the dedicated care and support offered to them by Mission Without Borders and the volunteers from the local church, they became regulars of the Centre, enjoying not only the hot meals, but also the sense of compassion and service lovingly provided for them. The change in the participants is evident to everyone, thank you on behalf of the local government and community". What an amazing testimony not only of the ministry, but also of the thanks from the Albanian government, a government who two decades ago persecuted the church so horrendously and was determined to uphold their famous banner as the first country in history to declare themselves an atheist nation! What an amazing transformation – praise God!



*Celebrating Christmas is new – and with a feast!*

Stories of suffering abound with all who come to the Centre and this is Agim's story: Agim Boni and his son are both invalids and have attended the Community Center for some time now. They receive no financial support from the government. Agim's wife works all day long but cannot even provide the daily bread for her family. A good part of the income she brings home goes towards purchasing medications for Agim. "Life became so unexpectedly difficult for us just when we thought it was improving. My only son suffered a terrible accident during his military service, is now completely paralysed on his right side and is physically incapable of working", Agim lamented. Agim and his wife hoped their grown son would be able to be a provider for their family, but the accident in the military dashed their hopes. The whole family fell deep into depression. The fact that both father and son were invalids created an unbearable and painful situation for their family.

Even though they were overcome by misfortune, they bore it bravely, and have regained hope to live since they began attending the Community Centre. "In the beginning we felt ashamed to attend the Centre. They openly accepted our weakness, helplessness and incapacity. We took such a small courageous step and then Our Lord helped us realise that this Centre has been the only one with its door wide open to us. All of the other poor people who attend, wiped our tears and thought of us when others have forgotten. We desperately need the support we receive everyday", Agim shared, expressing his thankfulness.

The shame they felt when they began to attend the Community Centre is now a thing of the past for Agim and all the other attendees. There they feel like members of a real family that is dedicated to caring for and loving one another.

Pastor Petrit of the Free Evangelical Church in Berat shared about the beneficiaries, his love for them and the changes he has seen, "The feeling of shame for attending the Centre is a thing of the past for the elderly who attend. This is a very significant cultural shift. I remember elderly Sherif Jaupi, Stavri Xhando, Tomor Jaho and many others who didn't join with the others at first. They didn't talk and wore the same clothes for months, as they only owned one solitary outfit. Shyly they took their seats, started eating with their heads down and hurriedly finished their hot meal and left the Centre immediately. According to the mentality of Albanians, and especially those who live in remote villages, it is difficult to accept the fact that you cannot afford to look after yourself, and are forced to shamefully go and have a meal at a Community Centre Soup Kitchen. One by one we began to show them how we can support them, and they slowly thawed and began to see we were offering more than a hot meal, we were offering fellowship and friendship. They

now happily come to the Centre and actively participate in the discussions. The change in each person is remarkable! Their feelings of loneliness are dissipating and they are no longer so weighed down by their grief and suffering".

Hand in hand with this emotional support; the nutritious meals, clothes and shoes we have offered have improved their standard of living considerably! The Community Centre became a shelter of Hope in a time where they had become crippled by poverty and despair.

After establishing warm friendships, the Mission Without Border's staff, in partnership with the local church, offered spiritual support to the beneficiaries. They read the Bible and encourage lively discussion. They are regular readers of the "Si Jeni", the Christian newspaper. As they strengthen and grow, they are more courageous about dealing with the poverty that can still overwhelm them, and are learning to put their trust in the Lord, regardless of what their harsh lives throw at them. This Community Centre is their shelter of help and hope, a place to hide from misery and forget their sadness and worries. This ministry is growing from strength to strength and meeting a vital need in a community trapped in a vice of overwhelming poverty. Each of the Community Centres we operate incorporate hot nutritious meals with love, care, spiritual and emotional encouragement and the delivery of much needed food, clothing, shoes, hygiene items and medicine – real Communities of Grace!



*The Christian Newspaper and Bibles are read enthusiastically*



*The comprehensive help to the poor who come is wonderful*



*Hot meals provide sustenance*



*Disabilities and poverty have crippled Agim's family*



*The happy Community Centre beneficiaries feel like a family*

**I know that you are often touched by the stories we share and therefore I would love to give you an update on a gentlemen that touched many of your hearts.....**

Many of you were touched by the story of Jelyazko in last year's Overcomer's magazine. In his seventies, blind in one eye and only 4% remaining sight in his good eye, Jelyazko was found living in deplorable living conditions, and trying to survive on one can of beans per week. When invited to the Community Centre in his town in Bulgaria, he took his place and lapped up the love and care on offer. He was always clean shaven and dressed in a suit and tie, walking the few kilometers to the Centre in a well learned route despite the weather and his extremely limited sight. He listened intently to the daily Bible reading and teaching and those involved continued to pray for His salvation. It is now with great joy that I am able to share the story of his conversion and recent baptism, proof that we serve an awesome God!

"I was eagerly expecting the day of my baptism. When the Saturday came, I was a bit nervous and tense. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep during the night. As a child I used to go to the nearby Orthodox temple regularly. I believed in God and I had always tried to abide by God's law. I was hoping that God would take into account my good deeds and welcome me into Heaven. When I started to attend the Soup kitchen at the Community Centre I listened to the daily sermon and realised I was a sinner and if I didn't repent, I would go to hell instead of heaven. I took the decision to repent and then participated in the baptism course led by Pastor Ivelin. The day of my special baptism was warm and bright, even though it was October 11th. Eight of us were to be baptised, but I only knew Stanka from our group at the Community Centre. The rest were from our youth group and a nearby congregation. Even though the others did not know me, they all expressed their gladness about my repentance and decision, and this was deeply touching to me. Everyone greeted us,

pastors prayed for us and we had Communion together. We were each given a Bible as a present and hymns were sung to greet us. I will never forget that day! As Ruska (The MWB Coordinator at the Community Centre) had explained before, after accepting Jesus and going through the symbol of baptism, I do feel I have changed. I feel so much calmer and I am assured of my salvation – what a wonderful gift! I do not know how many more years God has prepared for me on earth, but I am sure I want to walk with Him. Even though some of my neighbours do not understand or appreciate this momentous change in my life, I am very glad because I now have peace in my heart!"

It is hard to comprehend the life of an invalid who does not receive any support from the government or such minimal support that survival is impossible... Our Community Centres will provide over 200,000 meals this year, as well as meet the spiritual, material and emotional needs of every beneficiary. The elderly are not the only beneficiaries, many families, and disabled number the many thankful and willing beneficiaries.

Thank you for your support of this ministry so far. If you can, please prayerfully consider making a financial contribution toward this great ministry. I have always loved reading the stories of Communist Eastern Europe and lives



*Jelyazko's baptism*

changed by the Gospel. Now in this era of Post-Communism, we have our Community Centre ministry, always in partnership with local churches, where we are regularly witnessing citizens, many who are now well on in years, now declaring, "Forgive me Lord for telling people for decades that you did not exist... Take my life, as long as you give me breath, to share of your great love and offer of salvation!" What a wonderful testimony and a wonderful ministry that deserves our support.

Please also take the time to pray for this wonderful ministry. Those who care for, and minister to, the lonely, lost and downtrodden, are volunteers, play a strategic role and do so generously and humbly.

And finally, pray for soft hearts ready to accept the Gospel, recognise their need for Jesus, the humility to ask for forgiveness and for trust, trust for today with its troubles and trust for eternity!

**Thanks so much for your support!  
It is always appreciated and never taken for granted!**

God bless,

*Michelle Dorey*

Michelle Dorey  
National Director

Would you like to join us on a Sponsor Tour to our field countries in October 2009? We are currently taking Expressions of Interest. We will be visiting Moldova and one other field country. Please visit our website: [www.mwb.org.au](http://www.mwb.org.au) or contact our office for more details!

**Please note our office is closed for Christmas holidays and will reopen on January 12, 2009!**

# 'Gift in Kind' - including Operation Cover-Up

2008 was an incredibly successful year, and 2009 promises to be bigger and better- ultimately a greater blessing to our field countries!

**Watch this space for big changes in the next few months. Our plan is to have a new combined office and warehouse space. This will enable us to grow and be able to not only handle the greater quantity of Gift in Kind we are receiving, but also become a great new hub where we can meet together to learn about what Mission Without Borders is doing, and discover how you can be involved.**



For now we would love your continued involvement in our Gift in Kind – Operation Cover-Up ministry, and the list of what we can accept is still the same (explained below). The Collection Points also remain the same. The regular packing in Sydney and the Melbourne 'Workshop' at Birch Avenue Dandenong will resume once school goes back (end of January), so hold onto your items until then.

**By the start of February contact Jenny Grainger in Melbourne if you live in Melbourne or Victoria and would like to deliver items or arrange a visit to this wonderful new meeting place, or our office in Sydney for details for packing and collecting in Sydney and beyond.**

## The items we are now able to accept are the following:

### All knitted items:

- **Blankets – large and small.** The ideal blanket is made with Size 8 needles, 8-ply yarn, and 40 stitch x 80 rows to make 56 squares, for a blanket 1.6m x 1.4m.
- **Jumpers** – Crew neck patterns are best for the harsh climate. All sizes are great, but teenagers & adults are most in need.
- **Scarves, beanies, bed socks**
- If you would like some guidance, knitting patterns are now available on request - contact Jenny Grainger (details below), our office or visit our Website: ([www.mwb.org.au](http://www.mwb.org.au)) for patterns now!

**All items for knitting, sewing and embroidery: material, wool, needles etc.**

## COORDINATORS AND COLLECTION POINTS

**For details on collection points, you are welcome to contact our office.** Alternatively listed below are coordinators and collection points we have organised (we are always looking for other volunteers!). We have a more comprehensive list of collection points available in our office. We can't guarantee an inexpensive collection point for you, but if you would like to find out your closet collection point, please contact our office or contact the closest contact from the list below:

### Sheryl Rumball is the Australia-wide Coordinator of our 'Gift in Kind':

71 Hastings Road  
WARRAWEE NSW 2074  
Phone: 0432 952 762  
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### Jenny Grainger is our Victorian Coordinator based in Melbourne:

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DANDENONG VIC 3175  
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### Leila Lydeamore in South Australia:

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### Debbi Wilson in Western Australia

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