



“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), we see how Jesus once again challenged the religious leaders and law experts of his time. Centuries later, Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe challenged those of his time that ‘Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.’ And these challenges still stand before us today... Jesus called us to be doers of God’s Word and urges us to practically show love to our neighbours. Mission Without Border’s coordinators and volunteers in Bulgaria strive to respond in the most relevant ways to the poor of their communities. Community Centres open their doors to the poor, the elderly, disabled, street children and poorest of the families, all suffering from social exclusion. To all weary and burdened, we offer the hope of the Gospel and the warmth of Christian fellowship. By His grace, God does the rest. We have been continually blessed to witness the transforming action of the Holy Spirit in people’s hearts.



Coordinator Ruska Petrova at Burgas Community Centre recently shared the story of 56-year old Todor Zlatarov. He joined the group of beneficiaries of the Community Centre a year ago. In the beginning he came poorly dressed, with little regard to good hygiene and often inebriated. The main problem was evident to all – Todor was an alcoholic. We welcomed him in, when so many closed the door... He attended the meetings, listened to the Bible messages and slowly began to ask questions. We slowly saw great change in his life! It was a wonderful day when he stood to confess faith in Christ! His thirst for the Lord was so evident to everyone! He was determined to make a public confession of his faith through baptism, but the pastor of the Burgas Evangelical Church wanted to make sure he was ready, ready to lay down his life for Christ and let Christ work on his character and show how his new faith was influencing every area of his life, like turning his back on his old sinful ways. Rather than being discouraged when he was told he

could not get baptized straight away but rather the elders of the church wanted to disciple him, watching every area of his life for proof he really had turned his back on his old ways, they saw the opposite! Todor’s dedication and willingness to serve, willingness to change his old ways, seek counsel from mature Christians on what it means to live a godly life has been inspirational to those around him.

Not only that, the changes taking place in Todor’s heart began to show in his appearance. Now he is always well dressed. But most significantly he has stopped drinking, a feat most would have considered impossible a year ago, but we serve an amazing God! Unfortunately, the consequence of alcohol abuse has now left Todor in poor health. Without health insurance he is unable to access any public health care in Bulgaria. Any private health care is exorbitantly expensive. The church has now covered his health insurance costs.



**His life transformed,
Todor wanted to
share his gratitude:**

"I have believed in God since childhood but for many reasons and circumstances, I just didn't seek Him. I attributed all good things in my life to coincidence and good luck. I lived like that for half a century until one sunny day in 2008, I

“ The atmosphere created in the church and Community Centre was so unlike anything I was used to... ”

found myself in the Evangelical Church. I felt so welcomed. I soon met Ruska Petrova, the Mission without Border's Coordinator of the Community Centre run in partnership with the church. I was impressed by her goodness and openness – so different from the attitude of people you meet in the streets, which is so often arrogant; with bad language colouring their speech. The atmosphere created in the church and Community Centre was so unlike anything I was used to. Suddenly I felt

I wanted to be like them. On hearing the first Bible lesson Ruska taught, I knew I was in the right place. I had read the Bible before, but had never taken the time to reflect on its meaning. Her interpretation was extraordinary. This coupled with Pastor Ivelin's sermons soon showed me I was not living the life God intended for me. Probably the most profound lesson was the fact that life without God is devoid of any real purpose... , but life with God, who is the love, the life and the strength of every human being, was so very different! On top of this wonderful spiritual and emotional support, the good deeds of Mission without Borders have made a great impact on my life. The food and clothing were always accompanied by wonderfully warm encouragement from Ruska. Soon I honestly felt that I had discovered heaven on earth! It amazes me to see what God is doing through Mission Without Borders. It is obvious that it is God's ministry; that He has called godly people to organise this ministry that is transforming our lives; transforming the lives of people who many have discounted as unworthy of care. It is clear that He called godly people to establish Mission Without Borders so they could show the right way to people such as me...

How dumbfounded I was when after a period of illness I needed medication. I am unemployed and overwhelmed with poverty. But Ruska and Mission Without Borders intervened. The next day I had the prescribed medication and I'm feeling so much better. Then a further blessing... I was unable to pay my electricity bill. I prayed. The

deadline was approaching but I believed Jesus wouldn't leave me like this. I had to pay by 7 p.m. the next day. And then... oh, miracle! Ruska again helped on behalf of Mission Without Borders. How can I being to express my thanks to Mission Without Borders..."

Signed: Todor Zlatarov

Twentieth Century Philosopher Simone Weil tells us that the love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means asking, "What are you going through?" However, as Christians we know this is not enough. Christ commanded His disciples to go out and be witnesses for the Gospel with their lives... and with the love for one another expressed in deeds of mercy. Nowadays, it is by the love of God poured into our hearts that we can truly love our neighbors and give ourselves in ministry for those that break God's heart...

Your support of Mission Without Borders, in our Community Centres, enables this ministry to flourish. Your support enables Jesus' hands in feet, whether that is Ruska in Bulgaria or any of the coordinators and volunteers in all six field countries, to come alongside the weary, the heavy laden, those burdened by poverty, trapped in destructive lives to hear the Gospel Message, to confess Christ and continue to walk alongside them as they transform into Christ-likeness – thank you so much!

There are so many more who need to hear the Gospel Message and need the practical support to get their lives on track, please help if you can this month!





SPONSOR TOURS

SPONSOR TOUR TO ALBANIA AND ROMANIA – APRIL 11-28, 2010.

Preparations are underway for the Sponsor Tour to Romania and Albania from April 11-28, 2010. It promises to be a wonderful opportunity to enjoy fellowship with one another, with our field staff and volunteers as well as

witness the ministry taking place in the Children's Homes, the poor families and elderly. It will be wonderful opportunity to meet your sponsored children and families but as the recent participants of the Sponsor Tour testified, it was a profound experience for everyone, regardless of whether they had specific sponsored children and families to meet.

The cost is \$6,000 for a twin share room and \$6,400 for a single room – this is inclusive of all travel costs, accommodation and meals. It is filling up fast, but if you are very keen to join us, please contact us ASAP and we will let you know if we have any more vacancies.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SPONSOR TOUR TO UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2009

As promised here are some reflections and photos on the Sponsor Tour that took place in September-October 09, led by Ruth Holfter from our office.

Ruth shared recently: "I was humbled that God would give me the opportunity to 'lead' the Sponsor Tour, but I was also afraid of my own short comings - I'd never done anything like this before. It's one thing to sit in the office and read the updates of the Mission's work in Eastern Europe, and to pass that information on to you, but it's another thing to actually go there, to visit families in their homes, to be blessed by eating a small simple meal together, to see the 'little' they have in possessions and yet to see the visible joy of a relationship with Jesus Christ on their faces. In some ways the families we serve in Ukraine and Moldova taught me and others on the trip, far more than what we expected.



other and our field staff 'guides and translators', there was a tangible sense of being 'one' in the ministry of Mission Without Borders. You could see the godly integrity of the staff and their love for their fellow countrymen who God has called them to serve. It was a privilege to talk and share, pray and at times to cry with the people I travelled with. I was blessed as many encouraged me personally as I 'led' the group, but I was humbled as I saw my new friends have their eyes and hearts opened to the work that God is doing in individual lives through the work of MWB. This trip has truly changed me and it has also changed areas of my personal ministry focus, as I seek to serve my God in the future. Whatever my short comings were, God definitely supplied 'all my needs'."



When we visited the Children's Homes, and walked down the dimly lit and cool corridors or stood in the classrooms, I was aware of children hungry for love, living from day to day without a clear future. The staff of these Homes gives so much of themselves as they provide for these children, from the Directors, teachers and right down to the elderly lady who lovingly wiped and cleaned each hand sink outside the dining hall of one Home. You can see the difference in the children who have learnt about and experienced the love of Jesus. To see the meetings between child and sponsor was very moving; each was different and very special as well as life impacting for all.

This might have been called a Sponsor Tour, but I saw a change that came over many who journeyed with me. As we developed relationships with each



'Gift in Kind - Operation Cover-Up' Update

Thank you for all your efforts in 2009. We achieved so much and our field countries are so thankful for everything!

PLEASE NOTE PACKING DOES NOT RESUME IN SYDNEY OR MELBOURNE UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY – our dedicated packers are enjoying a well deserved break! So please hold onto your knitted and created items until then.

As you make plans for 2010, if you live in Sydney and have some spare time we have an urgent need for volunteers; volunteers to sort and pack the knitted items as well as help in the warehouse itself. We finished 2009 with a big backlog of knitted items we simply did not have the man power to get ready to send and we would love to get them sent early in the year. Any help you can give, weekly or when you have some spare time, would be a great blessing! Please contact us if you are interested and we can fill you in on the opportunities available.



What is needed:

With companies providing large quantities of their excess stock, we will be restricting donations to the following list:

Knitted, Crocheted and handmade items are needed:

- **Blankets – large and small.**
- **Jumpers** – the older children, teenagers and adults are in greatest need.
- **Scarves, beanies, and bed socks**
- **Knitted Teddy Bears**
- **We are not able to accept the tiny sleeveless jumpers known as 'Aids Baby Jumpers'.**

- **Knitting patterns are now available** - contact Jenny Grainger, our office or visit our Website (www.mwb.org.au)

- **Patchwork quilts**

All items for sewing, embroidery, knitting and craft activities - material, wool, needles etc.

(For the Vocational Training courses as well as for the poor families and elderly who would love to sew or knit for themselves, but cannot afford the materials).

ALL ITEMS MUST BE NEW PLEASE – (CUSTOMS REGULATIONS WE MUST ADHERE TO)

COORDINATORS AND COLLECTION POINTS

This huge country of ours presents some challenges of how to get your wonderful hand-knitted items to us in Sydney or our 'Workshop' in Melbourne. Please contact our office for the latest comprehensive list, or contact the nearest collection point listed here.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Dorey".

Michelle Dorey - National Director

David Turner is the Australia-wide Coordinator of our Gift in Kind

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