



Praise & Prayer

Winter 2005

I recently received an email from a Bulgarian minister headed 'warm greetings'. His church has just installed heating throughout the building and this is what he writes, " *now with God's mercy and your help (the partner church) we have a wonderful place to worship God and serve the people. Now we spend almost the whole day in the church and the door is open for people to come. It is very encouraging, they are interested in our activities. Our dream to make up for the enormous spiritual emptiness in the neighbourhood is coming true. In Bulgaria it is a very serious problem for the elderly people, because they don't have the money to buy fuel so in the well heated church building they will spend all the daytime and go back home only for the night. We hope to give them lunch also and to use the building in the best possible way so it is a place for worship and prayer as much as a place where people can find shelter and warmth, help and hope*".

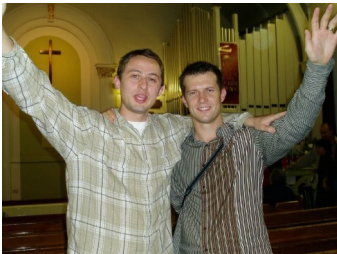
If you have ever experienced sitting in a cold church (and who hasn't at some time!) then you can identify with the congregation of this little church in Romania pictured below. The basic building was constructed without any heating system and so a request was made for help and thanks to an individual gift a new boiler was installed and in October the heating was switched on just in time to make the church warm enough to begin an English language children's club. Up to 35 children are coming each Saturday and slowly they are being drawn into other activities at the church.



Now some good news from home! **We have a website.** It's taken a long time to get it right, but we hope it will be a useful tool in connecting with more English churches. The address is

www.EPIC-churches.org

Most visits from Eastern Europe take place in the summer but Anatolie from Bulgaria braved our autumn weather and came to England in October. He visited his partner church in



Anatolie on the left

Staffordshire and met members of the three benefice churches for the first time. He also visited a church in Essex for a week and experienced such things as home groups and mum and toddler groups. He returned home full of ideas for his own church to adopt.



with Rod & Heather Sexton

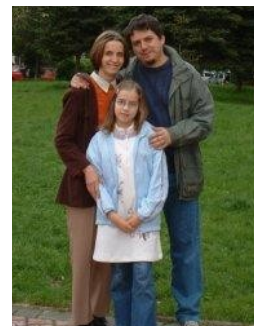
Rod and Heather who are pictured above, have been visiting Eastern Europe on behalf of EPIC for a number of years and have a mentoring and training role especially with young ministers like Anatolie who feel they have no-one to go to for help and advice. Recently they spent 10 days in Romania working with the leaders of a small church and there are many requests for their help next year.

We haven't given any news from Bosnia for a long while but there are some exciting things happening in 'New Hope Church' in Tuzla. Two years ago they started as a house group, now they have grown in numbers and maturity that they are helping churches in Lukavac, Sarajevo and Gorazde. They are planning a conference with guests coming from Hungary and Croatia as well as from other Bosnian towns. This is an extract from their latest email.

" We will have time for lessons, prayer meetings, and sharing ideas of ministry in central and East Bosnia. Our church is making big and important step to become church with a mission orientation. We should like to show to others that they should not wait for someone else to take care of church planting in their own country. Bosnians have to become more active in making important steps. We are very excited and we hope to have beautiful and blessed time, please be with us in prayer"



Some of the members of New Hope Church



their minister, wife and daughter

Next July EPIC will be 10 years old and we want to celebrate reaching this milestone with you. So this is an advance invitation to put **SATURDAY 15th JULY 2006** in your diary. The venue will be EPIC's home church here in Bildeston, Suffolk and we hope to have guests from several countries speaking about their church partnerships plus a review of all that has happened in EPIC during the last decade. There will be more info about the day in the next newsletter but consider taking a short break and come to beautiful Suffolk for the week-end and join us on the Sunday as well. Members of the church will offer accommodation and there are some excellent Hotels and B&Bs nearby.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a form making it easier for you to give us a gift. We have only done this once before but there are some outstanding requests which would take only a small amount of money to complete. BUT dare I say this, more than money **we need new English churches to link with ones already known to us in Eastern Europe**. If everyone reading this newsletter got their own church linked it could change lives both here and 'over there'. Would you please consider mentioning the idea to those in 'positions of influence' and get me an invitation to come to your church and explain what would be involved?

PRAISE GOD FOR

Rod and Heather Sexton's recent visit to Romania

Mary Vezentan in Romania making a complete recovery from cancer

The encouragement and faithful support of EPIC friends

PRAY FOR

The health and safety of pastors as they drive long distances to their churches in the snow and ice during the winter

More opportunities to speak about the work of EPIC in English churches

Wisdom for the Trustees as we seek to expand the work in our 10th year