



# Praise & Prayer

## June 2006

As we approach our 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday in July we look back on the decade with gratitude and thanks to God for all He has enabled us to do for His people in Eastern Europe and we want to look ahead in anticipation of new things to come.

Since the last newsletter 2 churches have been linked, one in Romania and the other in Croatia and several more are nearing the launching stage. It is so exciting seeing both sides of the picture and knowing that the partnership will be successful because of the commitment of the two congregations to pray for each other. Even though the churches are in different countries they both have building needs which the English churches will help with. The one in Romania needs a building in a village where they have planted out a church and as they already own a small piece of land it made sense to build rather than look for a small house to renovate. In Croatia the need is to finish two rooms in a church to turn them into a Youth Centre.



At Easter a family came from Romania to visit their partner church in Oxfordshire. I saw the family after their visit and they said it had been the most wonderful time of their lives and they learned so much from two weeks in an English church community. What a testimony to the members of the church here who looked after them so well and showed them some of the sights of England.

Over 18 months ago I mentioned in a newsletter that there were three pastors who needed cars. Two were helped last year, but the third man had to wait until April, when thanks to a large gift we were able to send him the money for a new car. We have broken the VW monopoly as this time he chose to buy a Romanian made Renault model called a Logan.



Another answer to prayer is the progress on Sam's house. Very little work is done during the winter months and Sam is working alone most of the time as he cannot afford to pay for help so it seems an age since the foundations were built. However he intends to move his family into the house this summer. Yes, it does look large, but only the ground floor will be habitable for the foreseeable future. It made sense to build as large a house as possible on the site so that when the children grow up they will have a home to return to if they cannot find anywhere else to live.

Many years ago I remember seeing a huge poster for Christian Aid and the slogan was - 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, give him a fishing rod and you feed him for life', - well something like that! I thought about it because of a conversation I had with Virgil in Romania a few weeks ago. He is responsible for 3 village churches about 70 miles east of Bucharest and it is one of the poorest areas of the country. Very few of the church members have a regular job. Many work in the fields for little more than a subsistence wage. Every winter they ask Virgil for help with buying wood for their heating and money for food for their children. He had an idea which he discussed with every member and he then told me that he wants to establish a small farm. The land near the villages is good quality and in the past was very productive. This year the price is about £450 a hectare, but prices are set to rise rapidly once Romania joins the EU. Every adult member of the churches will work on the land and receive a wage and then a share of the profits.

I think this is a project that EPIC can begin its new decade with. Maybe we can get children to sponsor a pig(let) or a chicken or even a cow! They can sell milk and cheese at a good profit in local markets. There is a great demand for cabbages in Romania and in recent years they have been in short supply so this will be the first vegetable they will grow. They have to raise the money to buy land first, and then they will need a second-hand tractor, so it will take time but eventually when it is up and running it will restore self esteem and provide an income for 35 family units.

Still in Romania I talked with Mihaela, a young teacher who for the past 3 years has been working in schools with a Pro-Life programme. Abortion is the norm for unwanted pregnancies and there is little support for young women who might want to keep their babies. She is involved in both education and counselling and has an open invitation to take lessons and run discussion groups with teenage girls in a large number of schools. She had some support until the end of last year but since then nothing. Fortunately she lives with her mother so her living expenses are minimal, but she still needs to travel around the area (as large as an English county). She is working alongside the pastor's wife and they have a room in the church for storing literature and baby clothes etc but girls are reluctant to come to a church and so she needs a room in a secular building as an office and counselling centre.



These two projects could not be more different and yet this is Christianity in action and there will be more information about both initiatives at

### **THE 10th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION on SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JULY**

We will have guests from Poland, Romania and Bulgaria with us for the week-end and look forward to seeing you in Bildeston.

#### **PRAISE GOD FOR**

- Funds for John's car
- Safe travelling and useful trips so far this year
- The new partnerships

#### **PRAY FOR**

- All the arrangements for the 15<sup>th</sup> July - and a sunny day!
- Mary Vezentan (in Romania) whose cancer has returned