



# Praise & Prayer

## January 2011

I usually write a letter towards the end of the year but this time I decided to change the format and ask various friends in different countries to tell me their hopes and visions for 2011 and what follows is mainly their story. No apologies for the grammar and phrasing – they are having their say !



We begin with CROATIA and Timothy, a young pastor living in the centre of the country well away from the tourist region and where there is a high level of unemployment. *“Last year has been a very hard one for our church. It was a year when we have passed through hard recession. Some people lost their jobs and some of them did not receive their salary for many weeks. But, we have learned through this circumstance that God is always with us and we can truly trust to Him and his promises.*

*In year 2011 we will be encouraged that our God knows already everything and that He will be always with us just as He has promised, ‘I am with you always, to the very end of the age!’ As a church mission project we were doing some projects for the kindergartens in our town. Over the whole year we were preparing some religion education workshops for the kids and teachers. It was very good to see how God was doing beautiful things in the life of these children and how they were taking all songs and stories to their homes sharing with their family. We have had lots of new contact with families and have seen how God is using us in this ministry. Our church is the first church in Croatia started in this mission project. More then 200 kids and their families are given to us from God that we can share our lives with them and talk with them about Christ and salvation. This is really what God is doing! For Christmas, we were so happy watching those kids how they were praising God with us. One of mums said that those songs are changing her daughter to be more happy and open. We pray that in this year God will give us much more people willing to receive a new life with Jesus”.*

### BOSNIA



Lela and Zeljko write, *“Bosnia is one of the least evangelised countries in the world. It is our prayer and hope that God will open more and more places in which the Gospel will be heard. Our church in Tuzla with only 25 members is one of the biggest churches in NE Bosnia. It is big responsibility for us and we pray that God will give us strength and wisdom to be able to start many churches in our area. During the previous years our church was very often under attacks. Our church members are facing many difficulties when their friends, family members and neighbours realise they believe in Christ. This year something very special happened. During our Christmas service we were surprised when large numbers of non- Christians who are coming to different programs of education in our church ( we call it Wave projects) came. It was the most beautiful way to celebrate Christmas by sharing the Gospel. Our vision for 2011 is to pray for more people in Bosnia to hear about Jesus”.*

### POLAND

Daniel is one of my ‘oldest’ friends in Poland- we go back nearly 25 years and I have seen his family and his church grow and he writes,



*"We hope 2011 will be a year of mission and evangelism in our church. But first of all we pray how and in what ways we can spread the Gospel in our community to reach our fellow citizens for Christ. Shoe boxes at Christmas time opened new doors for the ministry. By now we have developed regular Art and Bible classes in two local orphanages. And if you keep in mind that we live in a predominantly Roman Catholic society which is not necessarily friendly towards evangelicals, it is really amazing to have such classes run by evangelical Christians in this country. Since we believe it is God opening these doors for us we are willing to go through them. Our 'policy' is this "To do what we can (prayerfully faithfully and diligently) and leave all the rest to God" So we are full of expectations as far as the year 2011 is concerned, waiting for His results and His blessings. We are still just a small group of believers, but being the pastor I am proud of my people because almost all of them, young and old, are involved in the church ministry".*

**BULGARIA** Daniel and his wife Emilia started the church in Russe from nothing and now it is thriving and reaching out to the community particularly with the medical centre and the youth work.



*"Our hope for our country in 2011 is to continue the process of confirmation of our civil community. People to realise their own rights and to fight for them in all the rightful ways. The corruption to go down and the gap between rich and poor people to be removed. Our hope is for Friendship Church in 2011 to become well-known in the area and people to find inside comfort and salvation. We Christians need to be closer and sensitive to others needs. - to bring hope to the discouraged people. To be closer to poor and sick and abandoned children, to the jobless and to lonely people whose children live abroad, to the children whose parents work abroad and who live without control and upbringing. Like church we plan to pray more for the young people and for devoted ministers. We are so thankful for your regular support for our church, this winter for the first time we could stay in warm rooms, the heating of the church works well and people prefer to stay here instead of in their cold flats".*

**ROMANIA** I have asked several pastors to have their say, firstly John who has planted over 20 churches.



*"2010 is gone in the history with good and bad situations that we went through. At the end of 2010 I had a great joy and gladness for God's answer to my prayer for about fifteen years. A young lady from a nearby village gave her life to Christ and was baptised by water baptism. Starting with that moment her husband's behaviour against her was very aggressive. He did not allow her to become a Christian and she did it in spite of his opposition. He became very aggressive, beating her fiercely. The poor lady was not allowed to attend church and when she did in a hidden way she was brutalised. Nobody could convince him to stop his bad behaviour, contrary he became even worse. Her parents and members of the church, asked me to help them in prayer and fasting to ask God to change the heart and attitude of their son-in-law. For 14 years we prayed and fasted. Last September this man brutalised*

*his wife and 17 year old son in a wild way and they suffered deeply. We all thought God doesn't answer our prayers because the situation became desperate. But when the darkness was the deepest, God interfered. In the month of November the man started to allow the members of the family to go to church, then immediately he himself expressed the need to go to church. Now he attends the church regularly. Now the situation is totally changed with this man. This is a 180 degrees change. Only God can produce miracles changing a heart of stone into a heart of flesh and to pour His Holy Spirit into it. He has His time of acting, but God hears the prayers. Praise His wonderful name!*

*We are now in 2011, one year close to Jesus second coming. I am aware that my duty is even greater to work for the Lord in order to spread the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those that live in the darkness of sin, away from God. The Romanian nation is a former communist-atheist nation. The remnants of communism are very strong in almost all areas of life. The mentality of the big majority of the Romanian people is still captive to the communist way of thinking and doing things.*

*Even the church is still strongly marked by that mentality. The Romanian economy is in a strong recession and this crisis is partly the expression of the quality of the political class of Romania formed by the former communist leaders. In this situation there is a big need to bring the light of the Gospel to the people of this nation, so the role of the church of Jesus Christ is a great one in Romanian society.*

*I am fully aware of the importance of multiplying my efforts to strengthen the new planted churches particularly in their evangelistic activities. I am aware of the need to pray more for our nation and to teach the churches about the need for revival in order for the church to be able to bring the healing to this nation. I hope 2011 to be a year when God starts something new for the revival of the church. Nothing is impossible with God. I heard a guy say that God's economy knows nothing about recession and His book tells stories of many people that proved it".*

Dan, another pastor who regularly features in my stories writes this,



*"In Oradea and around, the Lord is working something wonderful and we are part of it. More and more Christians get involved in these days in the work of prayer. We hear all the time about new prayer groups that started. The Christians are hungry for fellowship and for the presence of the Lord. Our church got involved in a ministry of prayer called 'The Permanent House of Prayer in Oradea'. Right now we cover one watch each day of the week, people from different churches in Oradea and around gather for prayer and worship. Our intention is to cover 24 hours a day in worship and prayer before the Lord. More and more people are coming to our meetings. If in the summer we were afraid that the ministry would collapse due to lack of people now we hardly have room for all that are coming each evening.*

*For 2011 we are looking for the great things that the Lord is going to do as a result of His mercy and our prayers before Him".*

Finally Petru, another pastor who will be familiar to readers of the newsletter is having the last word because of his chosen verse for us at the end.



*“We here in Romania desire to encourage people to lead a clean life, and to point their thoughts, hope and way to Jesus who can help us. I believe we were born in Romania because God has a special plan for us and we want to be his servants. For this purpose we’re trying to spread the Gospel in this area, so that many people will come to know Jesus as their personal Saviour. We started to build a church and Bible School in a village called Ruseni. Due to the economic crisis and the rise of prices we managed only to finish the foundation. To be able to continue we need help, in the first place we cry for help to our God who holds all the financial resources in His hand but we also want to make this need known by people that are used by God to administrate His resources, our brothers in faith.*

*From the economical point of view I hope that 2011 will be better than the last one. Considering that the entire economic world is affected by crisis, it will be hard to happen. Personally I am expecting a spiritual refreshing in Romania and I am praying for this. I believe in the awakening of the ones that are called ‘Christians’ first, and I believe that this way the other people will be able to hear His voice and act as they see God’s children.*

*I believe from all my heart that God is ready to fulfil His promise so I want to share with all of the people reading this message the promise that God made in the second book of Chronicles Chapter 7 verse 14. ‘if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land’.*

**This newsletter is a departure from the usual one and will take you longer to read. Having asked for a contribution from dear friends, I could not edit their words down to a few sentences. Every one of these pastors has experienced difficulties and hardships the like of which we can only imagine, but not one is focussing on himself, they are all committed to serving God in 2011 and beyond and this is why I feel passionate about helping them in whatever way possible. Of course there are many others who could have contributed but I think they would all have said similar things.**

**Finally my ‘dream’ for the coming year..... after nearly 15 years the aim of EPIC is still to link churches because we have proved this is most beneficial to both congregations and can involve so many people in praying, giving and visiting. So my dream is for more English churches to be in partnerships.**

**Please pray for these pastors as individuals and for the work of EPIC and if you would like to be more involved please contact us at any time.**

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