

CHURCHES, SOCIAL CENTERS AND ORPHANAGES IN BULGARIA

*As part of the ministry of Terry & Tom Myers
and the Baptist Union of Bulgaria
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Upon our arrival in Bulgaria in January of 2002, and our subsequent year of language study, we became aware of the many needs in Bulgaria, both within the churches of the Bulgarian Baptist Union, our partner group, and in some of the government institutions which we visited. A shortage of funds is the main reason these institutions lack many of the basic things they need. Having had lots of previous experience with White Cross through American Baptist Women's Ministries before becoming a missionary, I immediately thought of White Cross funds and how they could be of great help to us in our ministry, and to the people in the Baptist churches in Bulgaria.

The first step was to identify some specific places which I felt would benefit most from a White Cross grant. In the beginning, this list included one orphanage with which we had developed a good relationship, and two Baptist churches in different parts of the country, both of which have active ministries within their churches and outreach to the community as well. I hope especially to expand the ministry to include more orphanages. It is a slow process for Christians to develop a trusting relationship with orphanage directors, but it is progressing and White Cross funds will soon be used in other orphanages in Bulgaria.

An application was completed, and Bulgaria became the recipient of a generous yearly White Cross grant, for which we are very grateful. White Cross funds are used in Bulgaria to show the love of Christ by helping to meet the physical and emotional needs of children and youth in local Baptist churches and in government-run orphanages.

Outreaches of Sofia Baptist Church helped by White Cross grant:

Orphanages: Each year before Christmas and Easter members of the Sofia Baptist Church visit 6-8 orphanages in various places around Bulgaria, delivering gift bags to the children. Church members are asked to contribute most of the items for the bags, but White Cross monies have purchased additional items such as fresh fruit and juice boxes for the bags.

Literacy Program: In the spring of 2007, after seeing a need to help the Roma (gypsy) children who live in the vicinity of the church, I began a literacy program with the help of White Cross funds. Most of the 6 to 8 children who attend the weekly program have little or no literacy skills. White Cross has helped to fund materials such as notebooks, pencils/pens, books, as well as a nutritious snack for the hungry children. Most of the children live in very crude homes without running water, so those who choose can shower and launder their clothes at the church. White Cross money keeps a supply of shampoo, soap and laundry powder the children can use, as well as some used clothes for replacement. Two ladies from the church help as tutors for the children in reading and math, and any expenses they incur are reimbursed.