



## MARTIN'S "BACK IN BULGARIA" UPDATE

May 6, 2010, "Happy St. George's Day!"

I can't believe that I have already been back in Bulgaria for a month! This has probably been the busiest month of my life!! I jumped off that plane, hit the ground running, and haven't stopped! Since being back I have renewed my yearly visa, had the closing for the house in Maluk Varshetz, and started the renovations on the house and barn! Praise the Lord!

### THE RENOVATION BEGINS!!

Finally!! After so much prayer and preparation, setting up a foundation and a corporation, getting licenses, registrations and certifications, we have now actually started work that we can see and touch that are more than just papers!! I have stacks and stacks of papers. Now I also have stacks of bricks and stones and wood!! I never thought that I could be so excited about building supplies!! (Even though I do love to go to Home Depot and stores like that, I like to walk around and look at the stuff, and wonder what it is, and what to do with it. Now I will know.) It is a new world to me, but I am anxious to learn.

Right now we are doing the demolition work. We have to wait for the building permit before we can do much actual building, which will be more paper, but that is all in the works. I put in the application last week, and next Monday (May 10) I am supposed go to the chief architect of the municipality with the architect, and he should sign off on this initial permit. Then within the month the blueprints, along with the electrical, water, heating and sewerage plans will be done. Then a board must approve the whole project.

Right now Howard Whittaker, who is overseeing the project, is working with two men from the church, Kamil and Akif, and things are really moving right along! Our neighbors in the village are also being quite helpful. They all seem excited to have something like this happening in their village. Here are some pictures of our progress.



New open floor plan!



Kamil and Akif removing the outside stone staircase.



Howard rewiring into the barn.



The upstairs hallway now reaches all rooms.



A big pile of stones!!  
Hmm, maybe a bbq pit!



Kimal breaking up the stone floor of the kitchen

## MY TRIP TO THE STATES

As most of you know, I was in the States for about nine weeks from February 4 until April 5. It was a very successful trip in every way. I would especially like to thank the churches that allowed me to come and share the vision for the children's home. They were New Life Church in Clarion, PA, Asbury United Methodist Church in Strattanville, PA, First Baptist Church in New Bethlehem, PA, Central Parkway Church of God in Cincinnati, OH, Church on Fire in Harrison, OH, Iron Station Church of God in Iron Station, NC, Providence Baptist Church in Hodges, SC, Linwood Church of God in Gastonia, NC, Palmetto Street Church of God in Florence, SC, and Life Church in Houston, TX. It was a real privilege to be able to speak to those congregations, and to know that there are so many people praying for our work here in Bulgaria, and their generosity was so appreciated. I also got to speak to the Men's Prayer Breakfast and the Ministerium in New Bethlehem, PA, the Young at Heart fellowship at the Linwood Church of God, and the bible study group where I used to attend at Tip and Pat Johnson's home from St. Giles Presbyterian Church (EPC) in Charlotte, NC. So many pastors, mission pastors and leaders, and businessmen took time out of their busy schedules to talk to me as well. It was a real blessing just to get to share with everyone, renew old acquaintances, and make new friends. May the Lord bless them all for their friendship, kindness and generosity!

It wasn't all business either...I got to see lots of family and dear friends while I was there. While I was in Cincinnati, we had a big family get-together. Those are always lots of fun! Not only that, but through Facebook, I have gotten back in touch with a number of friends, and some of the most surprising have been old high school friends. When they found out that I was going to be in Cincinnati they decided to have a party for me, and after 29 years I got to spend a wonderful evening with them. I wasn't sure what it would be like after so long, but it was as if we had never been apart. Thanks, Vicki, for arranging that! It was great!! I hope we can do it again sometime. I also went to the Creation Museum in Cincinnati. I can't recommend it enough. Throughout the museum you are shown the scientific evidence for Creationism, and a young earth supporting the biblical account. If you ever have opportunity to go, you should go.



My uncle, George Short, and my mother, Priscilla Sutton.



My brother-in-law and sister, Chris and Vickie Kennedy.



Some of my high school friends from Loveland, Ohio.



## MY NIECE'S WEDDING

The highlight of my trip was my niece, Natalie Kennedy Johnson's, wedding. I don't know where the years went. It doesn't seem like it was so long ago that she was just a little girl calling me "Munka Merty". She married a wonderful, Christian young man, Chris Johnson, on March 13, and it was beautiful! She was beautiful...and she always has been! I have put a picture here just to prove it. I want to wish them all the blessings of the Lord on their home—love, peace, health, prosperity, and every good and pleasant thing from the Lord. I love you Natalie and Chris!



The bride and groom with me and some people from the church.

## **ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL BRIDE & WEDDING!**

On Saturday, May 1, I had the honor of doing the Christian ceremony and blessing for my pastor's daughter, Yordanka (Dani) Stefanova, and her fiancée Dmiter (Mitko) Kolev. It was the first time I have done a wedding here. In Bulgaria church weddings are not recognized by the state as legal marriages. So Christians will have both a civil ceremony and a Christian ceremony to bless their marriage. The

Christian ceremony was held outside at the church, and the weather could not have been better! Not only did I perform the ceremony, but I also baked two cakes, and made two cheese balls and the punch for the reception. My pastor's family is such a blessing to me, and they are like my family here. It was a real blessing for me to be able to serve them in this way. Yet another beautiful bride and wedding! God bless you Dani and Mitko!!

## **THE DEATH OF A FRIEND**

My dear friend, Zhivko Kanzanjiev, went to be with the Lord last Tuesday morning after his struggle with cancer. He was only 34 years old. He was a real inspiration to us all here. The Lord was surely his comfort. When I saw him on Monday he said that his body was weak, but his spirit was strong. He went that afternoon to the hospital, and he told us that when we come to get him from the hospital in Gabrovo come with a banner of victory. Early the next morning I got a call from his wife, Dani. Zhivko had just passed away. I went to pick her up, and we had to go to several places to get documents signed, and to get his death certificate. Then I took her for some lunch. As she sat there she said, "I just keep thinking about that banner Zhivko talked about." I asked her if she wanted to make a banner for him, and she said yes. So we went to a fabric store, and she chose some fabric—deep scarlet and gold—and we all pitched in and made a banner of victory for him. It was really beautiful. It may sound strange to some, but Zhivko has won the victory. He is with the Lord, and is safely in His arms—out of the reach of the effects of cancer and sin and the curse that is on this world. I know one day I will see him again.

## **A NEW LOGO!**



While I was in Cincinnati I met a young man from the Central Parkway Church of God, Jeremiah Goode. He is over their public relations, and is a graphic artist. I saw his good work, and the Bulgarian foundation needed a logo. I told him that I wanted a logo that would convey that we were an anchor of hope in a shifting world. I think he did a fantastic job! Thanks Jeremiah!

## **MISSION TEAMS ARE COMING!**

We already have two teams scheduled to come and help us with the renovation work! One team is coming from Church on Fire in Harrison, Ohio from June 22-July 2. They are coming with some real expertise in construction. We also have a team coming down from Vinga, Romania, and many of them have good construction experience. They will be here from August 15-21. Also we are planning teams for teams to come from North and South Carolina, but their dates have yet to be confirmed.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Pray for Zhivko's wife, Dani. She is pregnant (due July 8), and has since the funeral gotten a tear in her placenta. She has to stay in bed now. Pray for her, and the health of the little girl that she is carrying, Darena—which means gift. God is able to heal that tear, and allow her to carry the baby to full term.
2. Also pray for their little five year old boy, Marty. I know this is a confusing time for him. Yesterday his mother told me that he is having nightmares. Pray that God will keep him from fear, and keep his heart at peace.
3. Continue to pray for my British friend, Brian Rowe, who has returned to England for medical care after being diagnosed with Lou Gherig's Disease. We are believing God for a miracle. Christ bore stripes on His back for our healing.
4. Pray that the work with the architect will go smoothly. It has been a bit of a challenge, but I know that we are able to work out all the details to maximize the use of the property.
5. Pray that we will have the right workers at the right time for each stage of renovation and construction.
6. Pray that the finances will continue to come in. My God shall supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory!
7. Continue to pray that I will be in good health, and that I will continue to lose weight.
8. Pray that I can find time to rest sufficiently, and that I will have the wisdom to find the time to do it.
9. Pray for Howard Whittaker, the project supervisor. He has been invaluable to the progress of this project. Pray that God will bless his life in every way, and continue to give him wisdom and creativity as we delve further into this work.



As always, I would like to thank you for all of your prayers and financial support. It is so important for the success of this ministry and project that we are covered in prayer. We also

can proceed unhindered. Very soon I will be sending an update on how you, your church, your Sunday school class, or your home group can sponsor a particular part of the buildings we are working on. I am also interested in acquiring a couple of the surrounding properties. I will let you know how much those will be as well.

. If you would like to support us financially, you can send your tax deductible check or money order to: Obedient Life Ministries, P.O. Box 267, Clarion, PA 16214. Or you could donate by credit card through our secure PayPal link from our website at [www.obedientlife.org](http://www.obedientlife.org). Just click on the "Make a Donation" link on our front page. Thank you, and be blessed in Jesus' Name!

Martin Sutton



Finalizing the sale of the house.



Heaps of bricks and old building materials. We kept the usable stuff. The rest is gone now.



See that gateway? It isn't there any more!