

# B U L G A R I A

REVIVAL  
MUST GO ON

## THE BULGARIAN Easter

Bulgaria became a Christian country in 864 AD. under the reign of Kniaz Boris I. However, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bulgaria was under Ottoman oppression and under the influence of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy which dictated the religious expression of the Bulgarian church.

On April 3, 1860, during Easter Sunday service in Constantinople, the Bulgarian bishop Illusion of Makariopol expressed the will of the whole Bulgarian people by solemnly proclaiming the separation of the Bulgarian church from the patriarchal in Constantinople. The day commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ coincided with the resuscitation of the Bulgarian people. However, the struggle continued for another ten years when Russia forced Turkey to legally recognize the independence of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In 1870 a firman of the sultan decreed the establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian church institution - the Bulgarian exarchate.

## Cup & Cross in Bulgaria

### Yambol, Bulgaria

As the weather in Bulgaria is getting warmer in the spring, traveling to the villages where our team works has become much easier. Several of the new churches are in remote locations in the Starandja-Sakar Mountains where transportation is very unreliable. Fortunately, as warmer seasons have begun in Bulgaria, we have been able to increase the number of services in the churches and prepare for the coming Easter holiday.

At the same time, we are closely working with the mayors and council members of all villages where we minister requesting permission for extensive evangelism campaigns during the summer. This endeavor has been planned along



with regular prayer meetings and training sessions for local leaders, some of which are already serving in key positions of ministry in area churches.

We are again requesting prayer for the radio ministry in the Yambol region. This ministry has gained a significant influence in the past four

years. Every week, our broadcast reaches over 80,000 people in the region. The radio management allows extra broadcasts for the national holidays and special occasions, and our team is often asked to produce several broadcasts per week.

**Cup & Cross Team  
Bulgaria**

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## BULGARIA ENTERS NATO

On April 2, 2004 Bulgaria is expected to be officially accepted as a member of NATO. Having actively participated as an ally of the United States during the wars with Serbia (1999) and Iraq (2003-2004), Bul-

garia was invited to accession talks with NATO at the summit in Prague in 2002. Membership invitations were also extended to Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The country's willingness

to join NATO was officially confirmed March 17, 2003 and just a few days later on March 26, 2003 an agreement for Bulgaria's joining was signed in Brussels.

## CHURCH PLANTING TESTIMONIES

Since 1998 our team has worked toward establishing a church in the village of Leyarovo. Occasionally, our team has been able to establish home group meetings in several locations in the village. Unfortunately, due to the high rate of unemployment, people with whom we have worked have had left the village to find jobs elsewhere. This negative migration has prevented us from establishing a congregation.

Regardless of these difficulties, our team continued to visit the village and hold regular meetings which consisted predominantly of unbelievers or members of the Eastern-Orthodox church.

In December of 2003, one of the village ladies we have worked with began praying and fasting for the establishment of a permanent Pentecostal congregation in the village. This lady made it a practice to stand at her house balcony every morning and evening and cry to the Lord for revival.

During the cold winter months, our team could visit the village only several times and could not hold regular Bible studies as usual. Regardless of this fact, chain prayer and fasting for this need continued.

In March, we received a phone call from the lady from Leyarovo to tell us that several families returned to the village and had decided to join the church. Furthermore, they have established a team to work toward the establishment of a Pentecostal congregation in the close-by village of Atolovo.

## BULGARIA ENTERS NATO

At the end of 2003, it was announced that Bulgaria and six other NATO invitees would join the Alliance before Istanbul summit in June 2004. Bulgaria and the other six NATO invitees will be asked to join NATO right after the completion of ratification of the accession protocols.



## OUR CHURCH IN POLYANA

In February 1997, Cup & Cross Ministries visited the village of Polyana for the first time. Due to the lack of building and the resistance of the local authorities to allow us to meet in an available auditorium, the first service was held in the local bar. As the Lord richly blessed the meeting, 26 were saved and 3 were baptised in the Holy Spirit.

The following week we arrived at the village for another service. The mayor met us personally to let us know that because of different complaints we were restricted from ministering in the area of his jurisdiction. We referred to the National Constitution, which gives offi-

cially recognized and registered religious groups and ministries the right to hold meetings and to minister. Yet, we were not given the opportunity to preach in Polyana.

Four years later, the situation changed radically. After the Lord touched the mayor and his family, our Mission Team was allowed the freedom to hold meetings in the Polyana village. Due to the lack of our own building the team has often held services in the local Orthodox Church, an event which is a precedent for Bulgaria.

The group of believers quickly grew and we had the opportunity to

rent the House of Council, a building built for the purposes of the local Communist Structure, for the church meetings. The building has a meeting room, Sunday school room which turns into a children's church during the service hours, church office and food pantry. The congregation has over 50 members and a number of sympathizers who visit regularly. Each week the Sunday School gathers additional over 20 children in the age of 3-14 years. The children are taught the Bible and fed in the services. We are praying that one day we will have the opportunity to purchase the building to be owned by the church.

## A THANK YOU NOTE

Five years ago, Cup & Cross Ministries initiated an extensive media campaign purposing to inform about the work of God in Bulgaria. In this endeavor, we engaged the means of internet, radio, television, printed publications, as well as our personal presence and stories. Today our news updates and ministry reports reach over

3,000 individuals and churches worldwide.

Our ministry would have been impossible without your help as partners in the work of His Kingdom. We thank you for faithfully standing beside us as supporters of every new thing to which God leads us. We have been blessed every time we have been invited to

preach at your church and every time you have supported our ministry. As we believe that your partnership with our ministry through prayer and support will continue in the future, we pray that you are exceedingly and abundantly blessed.