

ECL Door of Hope

Bringing Hope to the hopeless and Help to the helpless

“Mixtures of desolate sadness and painful laughter”

May/June 2007

Dear friends and supporters,



Sorry for the delay of this summer newsletter. Four weeks ago I suffered a most unexpected heart-attack. Thankfully, I am gradually on the mend and eager to tell you of pain and distress far greater than my own.

Without appearing unkind, I have to say that the two children in this picture, smelt awful! That's because poverty has a smell to it. It was a bitter, stale and rancid smell in contrast to the perfumed shallowness here in the West. I wish I could impregnate this letter with the odour of poverty. Maybe you can detect it as you look at the bleakness and loss in the faces of these children. Don't get me wrong, they can and do laugh quite heartily, especially when asking for their photograph to be taken. But I always sense that after the photograph, they will be returning to awful circumstances that are void of laughter and fun. It is certainly the case in poor parts of Bulgaria and the Ukraine where Door of Hope operates

its feeding and educational programmes.

I have visited housing estates (I say 'housing', they were in fact little better than hovels) in deprived, ghetto areas of Bulgaria where the ramshackle accommodation was comprised of gaps in the walls, glass absent from windows, slates missing from roofs and guttering propped up by poles. One such village was furiously cold in the winter when I visited. Snowflakes were falling from grey skies and emaciated dogs prowled the muddy, garbage-strewn streets that separated the ghetto accommodation, many of which had no heating or lighting.

And there were children – **lots of children**. They looked cold, dirty and they *smelt!* Two or three clutched hold of my hand, leaving it sticky and unhygienic. Most were what we term, "street children", children who were sent out in the morning with an order to return with money by late afternoon. They did this by begging and stealing. Street children are not really aware of what it is like to be hugged and loved. They are little more than abused workers and providers.

Thinking that we were helping one of these wandering street children, we provided one twelve year old boy with a meal outside of a restaurant. Hungry as he was, only half of the

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meal was eaten. It was all that his shrunken little stomach could cope with. He said that he had eaten one slice of plain bread for breakfast.



Marianna (on the streets in Bulgaria) and her little brother Jakoruda.

It is the same in the Ukraine. Most of the children that we have been able to support are raised in single parent families. Once the father has departed - for various reasons, mostly alcoholism, death, or simply abandonment, the mother is doomed to extreme poverty, her income tottering on zero. Thankfully, because of your aid, many of these children are receiving a warm meal of soup, bread, macaroni or potatoes. It is a sort of *Oliver Twist* situation in reverse. Instead of cold, harsh refusal, there is a **giving of everything we have, little though it be.**

Understandably, all our projects require constant financial support. For this reason, we politely ask you for your financial help. **Can you kindly make a special summer donation to help the type of children that you have been reading about in this newsletter? If so, we would be grateful beyond words.** We thank you in anticipation. God go with you, always.

In deepest sincerity and appreciation.

Reverend Philip E. Streeter
DOOR OF HOPE

P.S. There are children that look to you and to me.



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