



From the US Director

*Nasko Lazarov*

I met Sarah Johnson a few days ago at O'Hare Airport, during her group's layover on their way back home.

Our meeting allowed me to briefly say zdrasti (Bulgarian for hello) to the young men and women who had just returned from Bulgaria, my home land, after a short-term mission trip.

I could sense a freshness of God's spirit in their lives. Sarah agreed to share a few glimpses with us from their time of ministry and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Bulgaria.

I wish that I had been in Bulgaria with the team too, but I did have the privilege of being one of the first to read about Sarah's group's travels, and I am happy that this month we can share the story of their mission experience.

Enjoy!

Mission Trips - Who Is Changed the Most?

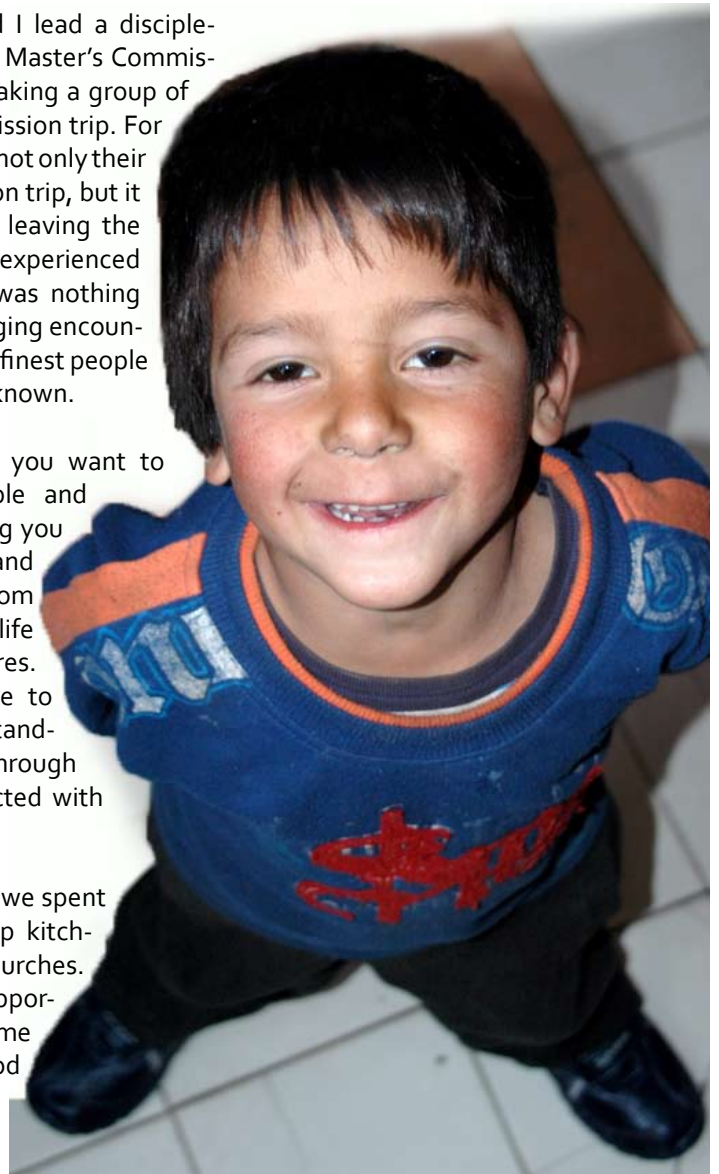
By Sarah Johnson

Not long ago I knew little of Bulgaria and nothing of Mission Possible. However, on March 6th, all of that changed. Thirteen of us spent ten days in Bulgaria working with the incredible Mission Possible team there.

My husband and I lead a discipleship program called Master's Commission, and we were taking a group of our students on a mission trip. For some of them it was not only their first time on a mission trip, but it was their first time leaving the country. What we experienced in those few days was nothing less than a life-changing encounter with some of the finest people any of us have ever known.

I believe that if you want to understand a people and where they are going you need to understand where they came from and the outlook on life their culture shares. Our group was able to gain some understanding as we traveled through Bulgaria and interacted with her people.

During the week we spent time at several soup kitchens and Gypsy churches. We also had the opportunity to visit some villages and give food to the children, spend time with them, and pray together.





Sarah Johnson - second from left, Roumen Ivanov second from right. Pastor Dimitar from a Gypsy church is standing in the middle.

One of our favorite times was when we handed out new shoes to little kids who were running around in old ragged ones. The children were so proud of their new shoes even though some were several sizes too big for the tiny feet they adorned. Still, they were thrilled and jumped around like it was the best thing that ever happened to them!

As we arrived in one town, the children were engaged in a Bible lesson. They sang songs for us and had such joy in their voices as they told us how glad they were to know that God loves them. They prayed with more passion in their voices than most Christians I know. God gave us some incredible ministry opportunities in these places.

We also shared at a youth leaders conference in Sofia. We spent time with some of the key leaders of churches in the area. God moves in awesome ways, and during one of the sessions our team was given the chance to lead praise and worship songs. None of us speak Bulgarian so we sang in English, when all of a sudden they joined in singing in Bulgarian! It was an awesome experience to be worshiping and pouring out our hearts to God together, yet in our own tongues.

When preparing for a mission trip we tend to have the mindset that God is going to use us to do big things--and He does—but He also uses the people we meet to do bigger things in us. It's amazing how far God will take us to teach us a few lessons. Every time I go on a mission trip I think I leave having been changed the most. God never ceases to amaze me!

Our team will never be the same because of what we experienced in just a few days. Roumen and the team at Mission Possible are some of the most dedicated, giving, and self-sacrificing people I have ever met. They have a deep love for their people and their country. I am so grateful that we were given the opportunity to meet and work side by side with these wonderful saints!

Mission Possible has been working in Bulgaria with Gypsy children for ten years, providing food, literacy and professional development. Hundreds have accepted Christ and attend the local churches. Your prayers and financial gifts enable us to change the future of a whole generation of children.

