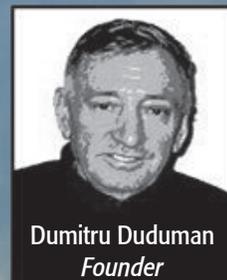


Hand of HELP



APRIL – MAY - 2016

Romania



*The only place one still sees a
glimmer of hope is on the faces of the young.*



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Romania

The verdant fields whisper reverently of springtime and the explosion of color draws the eye like blushing cheeks or a starburst in the dark of night. It is an environment conducive to hope and dreaming, to shaking off the gray cloak of hopelessness and embracing the warmth of what could be. Nevertheless, hope is in short supply here and with each passing day fewer and fewer hearts feel its warmth.

It's not as though the people reject the notion of hope or that they don't want to experience it, but rather reality has set in, an undeniable, constant, suffocating reality wherein even the most hopeful and optimistic of souls simply shrug their shoulders and wonder to themselves how much worse it's really going to get.

It's not as though the nation doesn't have enough problems of its own, now the European Union is pressuring the powers that be to open their doors and receive Middle Eastern migrants if ever they hope to be full-fledged members with equal rights, and not just a place where the rest of Europe can dump their toxic waste and ply their goods to twenty odd million new souls.

The cry of 'we're all supposed to do our part' is echoing throughout the world, not just in America. Many are beginning to wonder exactly who defines what 'our part' is, and what happens when having done 'our part', there are still millions more waiting in the wings.

The only place one still sees a glimmer of hope is on the faces of the young. Many would give what little they have left just to regain the wonder, innocence, and inexhaustible hope exclusive to childhood, but try as they might, they can never return to that place. Reality has brutalized them so, that even when we show up with food, or clothing, or some sort of relief, they are skeptical and wonder out loud why anyone would take the time without asking for anything in return.

It is then that the door is open, it is then that the opportunity presents itself, and we can tell them with heartfelt honesty that they are precious in the sight of God, that they are loved, that they are not forgotten, and that there are still those, who in service of the King do their utmost to make sure that as few as possible go hungry, or naked, or cold.

We know we will never reach everyone. Even Jesus Himself said that the poor would always be among us. However, knowing that we can never reach everyone doesn't mean we should not do our utmost to reach as many as we are able.

Few feelings in this world compare to that of seeing hope restored in someone's eyes as you extend kindness and allow for God to provide for their present need through you. It is in that instant, that moment when you see the change in countenance, and that spark of hope, that you are overcome with gratitude toward the Father for choosing you to be the agent of His blessing, and working it out in such a way wherein you become the vehicle by which God fulfills His promises.





The examples are numerous as you can see by the pictures that we have included with this article, but there are still so many in waiting, crying out for an answer to their prayer, waiting to see the promises of God manifest.

The world is in upheaval. This is the undeniable reality which we must accept here in Romania, as we assume you are likely noticing in America as well. Just because we are an ocean away it does not mean we are spared these global machinations, and looking to the future and what it likely holds only makes us want to learn to be ever more dependent on God.

Hope Changes Everything



We know the night is coming. We likewise know that when the night comes no man can work. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work in His harvest field now, while it is still day, and giving of yourself to reignite the spark of hope in the hearts and lives of so many souls.

We are servants just as you are servants, and together we labor for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, knowing that no act of kindness is carried out without God knowing it, and rewarding it in due season.

In His Grace,
Hand of Help Staff

The Image of God

From the moment God called me to this great and wondrous work, I learned to see the image of God in every single one of His children. Whether we are visiting gypsy villages, widows, orphans or the handicapped, I cannot help but see the one thing that unites all of God's creation, which makes us brothers and sisters, and members of His body.

We were made in the image of God. Even the broken and the bruised, even the homeless, even the forsaken, even those whom society has written off as not worth saving, all were made in the image of God.

It is the knowledge of this undeniable truth that compels me to look beyond the circumstances of certain individuals and take my time with them, hear them out, pray with them, offer them comfort, and leave them with their dignity intact.

Unless a family offers to pose for a picture, I will not insist upon it even if we help them. Unless someone gives us permission to use their names, and their situations in one of our articles, we will simply do what we can, pray with them, and be on our way.

This is why for every face you see in our newsletters there are dozens of others whom we've helped in various ways, that you will never see, and never know about.

Some people are comfortable with telling their life story, and with having their pictures taken, and others are not, but it does not make their need any less real, or immediate, and so we still help regardless of whether they choose to unburden themselves or not.

The love of God in us compels us to look beyond the tattered clothing, beyond the smudged faces, beyond the mud floors, beyond the desperation and see Him there. It is the only way we can remain both dedicated and selfless in this work, it is the only way we can be as enthusiastic tomorrow as we were today about getting up early, bouncing on uneven roads, giving until there is nothing left to give, and returning to our beds with the full knowledge that, come the morning, we will be doing the selfsame thing all over again.

One day the King will come. One day the King will sit on His glorious throne and gather all the nations before Him, and separate them to the right and to the left of Him, and He will proceed to honor those who fed Him, and clothed Him, and looked after Him in His sickbed, and visited Him in His prison cell. They will receive their inheritance for seeing Him in the least of His brothers and sisters, and answering the call to do rather than speak, to act rather than ignore.

This inheritance of which He speaks, this inheritance which is promised us is not some plaque that we can hang on a wall, it's not a trophy or a ribbon, it is nothing less than the kingdom, the selfsame kingdom that was prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

We know that we do not labor in vain. We know that seeing Him in those around us is both a gift and a calling, for only those blessed of God have this sight, only those who are blessed can see beyond the surface. How can I say such a thing? Because Jesus Himself said it with His own lips, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Myopia and the inability to see Jesus in the least of His brothers is not exclusive to those of the world. It is not exclusive to those who wander in darkness, far from the light of truth, but even many within the Church, even many within the family of God have been conditioned not to anyone else's needs but their own. Even when God who is faithful provides for their needs, their myopia remains, for now they see only their own wants, rather than the needs of their brothers and sisters.

You are already blessed of God because you are able to see. You are already blessed of God because in seeing you have not sat idle, but actively sought to comfort the hurting, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked.

You are blessed because you have chosen to be a blessing to others, and when the King comes, He comes with your inheritance in tow.

In Christ,
Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.

A Father's Heart



Shortly after graduating college I was assigned a job. It was the way things worked during the Communist era in Romania. Even if your position was redundant, even if you were overqualified or underqualified, even if you had little to no productivity, it was a badge of honor for the regime to point to the fact that everyone had a job.

This was one of the ways those holding the reins of power convinced themselves that Communism was viable, that it worked, and that a glorious future awaited those who stuck it out even though the people were miserable, fearful, apathetic, and joyless.

After our family was summarily banished from Romania and we arrived in America, it took me no time at all to find someone who was hiring, apply for a job, get it, and work to earn enough to put food on my family's table, and provide for basic necessities.

This is why I can only imagine the heartache and pain a father's heart must go through when he sees his children go hungry, is more than willing to work any job for any wage, and still finds no one that is hiring, that is looking for help, even if that help happens to be a day's worth of labor for a day's worth of pay.

Marcel Lupan and his six children live in a room behind his uncle's house. Hastily erected when the entire family was kicked out of their previous residence, the room is basic, with very little in the way of comforts.

Although poverty is commonplace in a village like Buda, the Lupan family's situation is so exceptional that a local pastor contacted us and told us about it. Upon visiting the Lupan family and asking them what their needs were, Marcel asked for a sack of potatoes to be able to feed his children.

For many it is hard to believe that the pinnacle of someone's hope can be a sack of potatoes, but here a father stood before me whose only request was the most basic of provisions for his children.

When we sent two sacks of potatoes along with other food, with a smile on his face Marcel said, "I asked the Lord for one sack of potatoes, and He sent me two. What a good God He is."

With his wife in Italy looking for work, Marcel is left alone to care for his six children. It is not an easy task, and when we asked him what more he needed, his two biggest needs were milk for his children, and a washing machine to do laundry in.



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At first a washing machine may sound like an unnecessary luxury, but if you have children you know how quickly laundry accumulates, and washing it all by hand has become a nearly impossible chore.

After hearing of his needs, we prayed together with Marcel and his children and promised we would return with whatever the Lord provided for them. As it happens, the Lord provided both a washing machine and a cow for the Lupan family.

I was pleasantly surprised when visiting the Lupan family sometime after the washing machine and cow were delivered to them, to find that the cow was so well groomed and clean it was as if it had just gotten out of the shower.

“The children just love it,” Brother Marcel said by way of explanation. “They fawn over this cow as if it were a new member of the family.”

Although we have met many of the Lupan family’s needs, there is still one outstanding need that we want



to meet, and ask that you prayerfully consider. The room they are currently living in is in desperate need of a structural remodel, which includes adding some support beams and making sure the walls are sturdy enough to withstand something more than a brisk wind. The cost of bringing this room up to a minimum standard is approximately \$2600.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of those who cannot, as well as for your prayers for this work.

In Christ,
Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.



Happiness in Small Doses

It is said that only the fortunate live to see the twilight of their existence. One of the inevitabilities of the human experience is that with the passing of time, with the accumulation of experiences, with the living of life, we grow older, and eventually if we are given to walk this earth long enough we grow feeble to the point of being dependent upon others for our needs.

It is always something we keep at the forefront of our mind whenever we visit senior citizen centers. If God grants it, we too will be gray one day, and on that day we can only hope that there will be someone like the Hand of Help ministry to bring a smile to our faces.

We believe one of the most profound lessons life teaches us is that happiness comes in small doses. Ask those who have lived, who have gone through life for longer than a breath and they will be anxious to tell you that without having experienced heartache, they would have never learned to appreciate happiness, and without having experienced need, they would have never learned to be thankful for God's provision.



During one of our visits to a retirement facility, watching the residents rummage through the packages we had brought them, we realized that happiness isn't a palace or a private jet; happiness is a banana.

Perhaps it's due to the fact that bananas were a rarity during the Communist days, something only a select few were able to enjoy sparingly, or because they are a treat they rarely get to enjoy in the home, but the one item in the bag of goodies every one of the residents gravitated toward were the bananas.

It was endearing to see those who were still able, peel the bananas of those who could no longer do it on their own



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due to arthritis, helping each other as though they were one big family.

It takes less than one might think to make another smile, to bring joy and light into their life, and experiencing this firsthand is its own reward.

Joy is joy whether on the face of a child, or in the countenance of someone who is nearing the age of 100. It is undeniable, contagious, and something that cannot be confused for anything else.

Alexandra and Daniel Boldea

Dear Brethren,

2 Timothy 4:3-4, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

What can we expect of a society wherein feelings trump both science and reason? What can we honestly expect of a generation wherein just because certain individuals identify as something other than what they are biologically born as, they can assume it, and claim it as their own? How long before common sense goes from being derided and marginalized to outright criminalized because by simply speaking truth we made a handful of people uncomfortable, or hurt their feelings?

The lunatics have made it so that no one could question their lunacy, and anyone who attempts to point the finger and verbalize what everyone else is thinking is met with swift and brutal retaliation.

More and more believers are looking toward the heavens, hopefully wondering if this will be the day when every eye will see Him, not taking into account Christ’s own words on the matter, and the *when* of His return. I’m sorry to be the bearer of bad news to those still clinging to the misconception that we will be far gone, celebrating

in heaven, enjoying the offerings of the Father’s bounty when things start getting really bad here on earth.

Things *have* gotten really bad here on earth, they’re about to get a whole lot worse, and if the household of faith continues to remain disengaged, disinterested, and indifferent, the storm will sweep them away with all the other souls who thought that building their house upon the Rock was too much of an effort on their part.

There will be a price to pay for the *good enough* mindset many believers have adopted in regards to their spiritual houses, as well as for the slothfulness with which they approach everything having to do with the spiritual.

The darkness has consolidated. As I’ve said in the past, hatred makes for strange bedfellows, and groups of individuals who would have otherwise been at each other’s throats, have formed alliances in the hopes of destroying their common enemy, the Christian.

It is undeniable that the words of Christ are coming to pass before our very eyes, and that the world is beginning to hate us for His Name’s sake. It is only prudent and wise to acknowledge that if Jesus was right about this one thing regarding the last days, then He was likely right about everything else, including the issues the true believer would have to deal with both within the church and without the church.

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May's Child of the Month



Born on June 30th, Sebastian Barica will soon be 11 years old. He is doing well in school, loves playing sports (baseball) and is extremely careful and meticulous when involved in various activities, including cleaning his room or doing chores around the orphanage. He loves spending time with his friends, is very sociable and has always been a joyful child.

The pictures included with this article were taken just a few weeks ago when Sebastian spent his spring break with his mother and brother. It is his wish to be able to move back home and every opportunity he has to spend some time there, means everything to him.



Simona Barica, his mother, is 35 years old. She was abandoned as a baby and spent her first 18 years struggling to cope, one day at a time. Due to the numerous beatings she endured, she suffered severe trauma and hardly managed to finish a few years of school. Without any professional qualifications, all the work she was able to find was in the construction field, earning less than what she needed to get by.

Sebastian's mom is living in one room that her former employer graciously let her use. The conditions are deplorable. She doesn't have a washing machine or refrigerator. A make-shift burner is what Simona uses for both providing warmth and for cooking. Her children's allowances are spent on groceries (she has one girl that was taken from her immediately after birth into the Child

Protection Agency's care and one other boy named Bogdan, still living with her). The father only recognizes Bogdan as his child because he was able to find a physical resemblance in him, per Simona's words, but he still doesn't acknowledge Sebastian as his own.



Simona would like to be able to take Sebastian back so that both her boys could be together but she has no means to do that. Even though Sebastian remains in our care, we pray that God would work in their family and give them the opportunity to be reunited. Hearts can be changed and situations can be overcome, and we believe that in His time, our Lord will make a way for Sebastian to be joined with his family.



One of the most pronounced and repeated declarations Jesus makes regarding the last days is that there would be many false prophets and false christs whose singular purpose would be to deceive. Since the deceived are already deceived, the question that must be asked is who exactly would these false teachers, prophets, and christs be attempting to deceive? The reason this matters is because Jesus Himself said that many rather than few would fall prey to the torrent of deception. Due to the gravity of Christ's warning, answering *who* it is that the enemy would attempt to deceive is a question of utmost importance. Taking into account both the number of those who will be deceived and the inconvenient truth that this is the time wherein those words are coming to pass, it is perhaps one of the timeliest questions we can ask ourselves.

I have no desire to belabor the point, nor do I want to keep you in suspense, even though knowing the level of the intellect of those who read this newsletter, I am comfortable in assuming that you already know who the deceivers would be attempting to deceive.

Those whom the deceivers are even now attempting to deceive are the followers of Christ, those who have been washed and made clean by the blood of the Lamb, and those who hold to the absolutes of Scripture.

While we are being buffeted by the darkness from without, the voices within are beginning to whisper ever more fervently, encouraging us to give in, go along, stay silent, and allow lawlessness to take root in our churches and homes.

Wisdom itself dictates that we identify these voices, and see them for what they are rather than attempt to justify or otherwise excuse their unscriptural doctrine because we like the cut of their suit or the twinkle in their eye.

Wisdom itself dictates that we stand firm on the Gospel of Christ, that we are anchored and immovable when it comes to Scriptural issues, and that we allow the Word of God to be the final authority in spiritual matters.

The lies will only get better. The lies will only get more polished. They will be so convincing that if possible, the darkness will attempt to deceive even the elect. This is why we must have a firmly established plumb line, and that plumb line must be the Word of God.

We must lay aside what feels good, what sounds good, what makes sense to the flesh, and cling to the truth of

Scripture even when said truth grates against the flesh as truth is wont to do. We must cling to the truth of Scripture even when it contradicts our preconceived notions, and yes, dare I say, even our denominational edicts.

In the end we do not stand with a denomination, or with a man. In the end we either stand with Jesus or against Him. The math of this equation is so simple that no man will have either excuse or justification. No man will be able to claim ignorance, and no man will be able to obfuscate his responsibility for having embraced the darkness rather than the light, for having believed the lie rather than the truth.

Although by now we ought to know the hollow sound of deceit and depart from it, a good and dependable indicator of something not being right, of something not being true, of something not being wholesome and godly is the absence of Jesus as the ultimate goal. If Jesus is absent from any teaching, doctrine, or theory, then no matter how good it may sound give it a wide berth because if Jesus is missing from it there is no life to be had in it. By its very nature a lifeless thing is dead, and though intellectually speaking it may be an interesting exercise to wonder if ever it was alive in the first place, for practicality's sake it's best to walk away from it, and go seek out the living truth of Christ and His word.

Far too many of us have the tendency to attempt to ascertain the cause of death of a certain doctrine, movement, or teaching rather than spend that time in seeking after the living truth. False doctrine dies because it must. While it is still viable it attempts to pollute as many souls as it can, but eventually the truth exposes it for what it is.

Our responsibility and duty is to know the truth and have it settled in our hearts that when deception attempts to worm its way in, the truth acts like a shield and deflects it.

Jesus must be preeminent. Jesus must indwell within, and cover us without, for only in this manner will we be able to stand and overcome the darkness.

Revelation 3:5, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.

