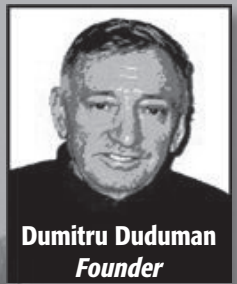


# Hand of **HELP**



*October  
November 2017*

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# The World We Live In

**I**t has been a rough couple of months for the world we live in, and that's putting it mildly. Even the godless, those who have not a clue as to what has been foretold regarding the times we are living in, are scratching their heads and wondering aloud if perhaps these are more than just your average run-of-the-mill weather events taking place throughout.

For those who choose not to look deeper than the surface of things, the idea of statistical anomalies or statistical variance is enough to placate their fevered thoughts, but try as we might to just brush off recent events as nothing more than just a spike in an otherwise normal pattern of events, evidence is piling up that what is occurring is anything but normal.

No, I am not about to go off the cliff accusing some nation or another of using ultra secret weapons to manipulate the weather, although it is a given that when you try to tinker with the natural order of things it never turns out well, but what I will do is recall the words of Jesus regarding these last days, and see how much of a parallel there is between what He said and what is currently taking place.

The earth is groaning. It is not groaning because of cow flatulence, or because not enough people purchased the Chevy Volt, it is groaning because of sin both within and without the church, because sin in all its forms is an unnatural element in any of God's creation.

All that a holy God creates, He creates with the intended purpose of remaining in holiness. A holy God cannot create something He expects to be

befouled by sin and rebellion because His nature would not allow it. As such, each time the pollution of sin becomes unbearable to His creation, His creation groans, and the true measure of man's impotence is put vividly on display for all to see.

With all our self-professed genius, with all our self-congratulatory and self-aggrandizing notions of how godlike we have become in our modern age, we can do nothing to keep the earth from shaking, or the winds from howling, or the seas from raging, or the fires from consuming everything in their path.

For those who do not know God as Protector, Provider, Father, and Friend, such events are harrowing to say the least. For those who are not under His covering, feeling the earth shake beneath your feet, or seeing a wall of fire off in the distance barreling toward you is unnerving and downright terrifying. It is in those moments that all notions of godhood or invincibility vanish, and man sees himself for what he truly is, and is forced to acknowledge not only his own insignificance, but the existence of true power, true might, true invincibility outside of himself.

As children of God we can stand in the midst of the tempest not because of who we are, but because of who He is. As children of God we are secure in the knowledge that He is with us through the fire and through the flood, and this knowledge comforts us regardless of the circumstances surrounding us.

We know what the world will look like before the return of Christ our King. It was foretold not



# The World We Live In



only by the prophets of old, and the apostles who received divine revelation, but by Christ Himself. The events preceding the return of Christ were laid out in Scripture for two reasons. First, so that as children of God we would not be ignorant of His plans as the world is, and second, so that when we see these things beginning to happen, we would look up because our redemption draws near.

We live in a world that has given itself over to sin and vice. We live in a world that openly mocks decency and goodness, that openly derides nobility and virtue, all the while embracing the vilest of practices insisting that they are the new normal. Can any nation reasonably expect the blessing and providence of God when they wholly reject God from whom they expect the blessing and providence?

Since first man's fall the malady has been sin. It has not changed throughout millennia, and though the remedy has remained the same, few are willing to administer it because their hearts are still tethered to this world and the things thereof. The only remedy to what ails not only this nation, but the world as a whole, is repentance. The repentance I speak of is not some halfhearted 'I'm sorry' replete with shrugging shoulders and rolling eyes. The repentance I speak of is the repentance exhibited by the people of Nineveh, a repentance which got them a hundred-year reprieve from their well-deserved judgment.

If we have any hope of seeing repentance, it must foremost begin with the household of faith and those who name the Name of Christ.

The watchmen have warned, they have spoken, and they have cried out, but a message can't only be spoken, it must be heeded. Before we can expect those in the darkness to come to the light, before we can expect nationwide or global repentance to circle the globe, the church must humble itself, turn from its wicked ways, pray and seek the face of God.

The Church must cease to be satisfied with superficial pabulum, and spiritualized humanism, and hunger for relationship and intimacy with God through Christ Jesus.

A sea change within the church is paramount, and without it we will keep doing what we've always done, and get the same results we've always gotten. Not only that, but the sheer strength and magnitude of what we will behold will only increase in intensity and frequency because nothing in this world is static, and the notion of a status quo is a juvenile delusion.

Things can either get better or worse, but they will not stay the same due to the nature of the opposing forces in the spiritual realm. One side

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# *The World We Live In*

must gain ground and one side must give up ground. Either the light pushes back and vanquishes the darkness, or the darkness will continue to erode the strength and brilliance of the light. Either the household of faith will step into its calling and take its rightful place, be strong, and do great exploits, or it will continue to flock to the date setters looking for the next guaranteed rapture day, sitting idly by, doing nothing, growing evermore embittered as each date comes and goes with not a rapture in sight.

Our duty as sons and daughters of God is not to whittle away the hours or gaze at our navels until He comes, but to occupy until He comes. Our duty as sons and daughters of God is not to be indifferent to those who are perishing in sin, or silent in the face of evil because it may cost us something, but to be bold as lions in speaking truth regardless of the consequences to ourselves.

Our duty as sons and daughters of God is not to lay down our arms and hope the enemy doesn't spot us cowering in the corner, but to beat back the darkness, and fight against the forces of evil knowing that if we stand, God will stand with us, and with Him, in Him, and through Him we will be victorious.

When did cowardice become acceptable among the household of faith? When was it that we

made the turn and went from confronting the darkness to appeasing the darkness? When was it that we began believing the lie that discretion is the better part of valor? In case you haven't noticed, evil cannot be appeased, and the more the church gives, the more evil wants to take because evil is not satisfied until all that is good is utterly decimated. How much more of the foundation will we allow to be devoured before we acknowledge the reality of the war we are embroiled in? How many more casualties of war must we see within the household of faith to realize that any truce the enemy promised was a ruse to get the church to drop its guard?

The state of the world today is an indictment of the church because as the church goes so goes the nation, and ultimately the world. If we do not like what we are seeing, it is because the church has been silent, distracted, indifferent, and lazy. If we do not like what we are seeing, we have no one to blame but ourselves, because rather than call out those who insist that being lukewarm is wholly acceptable to an unchanging God, we went along with the charade. We didn't want to make waves; we didn't want to disrupt the status quo because our ministries were growing and the building funds were overflowing with cash. We didn't want to speak the hard truth because we knew what it would mean for the bottom line, and when it came right down to it, nothing was more important than the bottom line.

We mocked and ridiculed those who stood on the battlements and warned of the darkness approaching. We belittled and spat upon those



# The World We Live In



who pointed to the Gospel and insisted upon the proper delivery thereof, because while they spun their wheels going on and on about repentance and holiness, we were looking for another sign which we could twist and cajole into being yet another date we could present as the definitive day of Christ's return.

It is a frightful thing indeed to see just how complicit the church is in the current state of affairs, and all because we chose the path of least resistance rather than the right path. We chose the popular rather than the true. We chose to deliver to the masses what they wanted to hear and not what they needed to hear.

We live in a world growing more chaotic with each passing day, and as those who have the cure for what ails it, the church can no longer be silent or sit on the sidelines hoping to wait out the clock. We either strap on our armor, pick up our shields, brandish our swords and begin to advance against the enemy, or we will be called to account by our General for not doing what we had been commanded to do when we had the opportunity to do it.

With love in Christ,  
Michael Boldea Jr.



## Romania



**I**t is easy to grow numb to something when you are constantly surrounded by it. It matters not what that something is. History has shown us that people became numb to the most dehumanizing things simply because they were continuously subjected to them. What once shocked shocks no longer, and what once seemed out of place or unprecedented becomes all too commonplace and mundane.

If not for the heart of Christ beating in our chests it would be easy to grow numb to the suffering and lack that surround us. On any given day we will hear a handful of stories that are unsurprisingly similar because need is need, and

even though there are minor variances, the underlying root is still the same.

Because we deal with individuals on a one on one basis, we realize that their need is personal, and unique to them, and as such we can empathize with their predicament in ways few other organizations can. The people that come asking for help, or the people we seek out because someone came to us describing their living conditions, are not simply statistics or numbers on a spread sheet to us, they are real live human beings, they are men and women and children who laugh, cry, hurt and hunger.

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# Romania

One of the most difficult things we must contend with on a regular basis is keeping hope alive in a place that hope has long since abandoned. People want to hope. It is an inherent need of all mankind to hope and keep the embers of it alive even in the direst of circumstances. As such, it doesn't take much to fan the dwindling flames and see hope rekindled in the eyes of those whom we are blessed to help once more.

If you've never seen hope rekindled in someone's eyes, it is an indescribable feeling. It stops you in your tracks, and you find yourself holding your breath, fearful of disturbing the moment. That precious moment is in itself so rewarding that it motivates us to do more today than we did the previous day, and hopefully, with God's help, do more tomorrow than we did today.

We have learned to approach this ministry and the work to which we have been called, not by cataloguing how many meals we served, or how many blankets we passed out, or how many cords of wood we delivered in any given month, but by how many glimmers of hope we saw in the eyes of those whose prayers were answered and whose lives were impacted by this work.

The encouraging thing is that we are continually able to help more and more individuals with each passing year, but it seems the more need we meet, the more need there is, because in a nation such as ours, suffering from ongoing systematic economic decline, more and more families sink below the poverty line, and more and more families come to the point of needing help.

There are countless moments when we wish we could multiply the fishes and the loaves, but

looking back on what God has done through this small ministry we realize that although we did not see them multiply before our eyes, it has often felt as though God was increasing the little we had to meet the needs of the day.

We know as sure as there will be another sunrise, Lord willing, that new challenges await us, and more individuals on the edge of desperation will seek us out hoping for relief, but we also know that the God who has been with us thus far will not abandon us now. He is a good Father and a faithful Friend, and He is the One who began this good work. Knowing this, we are unshakable in our belief that He will be faithful to complete what He has begun.

All we can do is be faithful to the work and the calling to which we have been called, and thank you for your prayers and all you do for the people of Romania. It is not a kindness that will soon be forgotten, and what's more, God Himself remembers the smallest of kindnesses done in His Name.

In His Grace,

Hand of Help Staff





# Of Birds and Flowers of the Field

I used to worry about getting old until I got old. Now it doesn't bother me so much anymore. I don't think of it the way I used to, with an anxious energy that I could not shake off, I simply contemplate it once in a while for what it is, the natural progression of this present life beginning with the introduction, weaving its way through the first verse, then the chorus, then the bridge, all leading up to the coda, that moment when we are set free from the bonds of this present existence and are made present with the Lord.

I never feared getting old, but I was always leery of getting old and becoming useless with old age. It's that second part that always made me cringe a little, because I've been to enough homes and comforted enough people to know what helplessness looks like, and I never wanted to be helpless. Thankfully the Lord has shown me this small grace, and although I am getting on in age, my strength and vigor remain and I am able to work for my Lord and King with an energy reserved for men much younger than myself.

To be perfectly honest with you I sat down to write a different article than the one currently making its way onto the page. I sat down to write you of certain needs that are still outstanding, and of certain families that are still in need of help, but I felt compelled to travel down this particular avenue, and the compulsion was so strong that I know this article is for someone who perhaps is not worried about getting old, but is perhaps worried about other things, things we can't possibly affect by worrying about them, but things we can't help but worry about nevertheless.

Throughout my many years on this earth I have learned that some things are easier said than done. It would be easy for me to sit here and pontificate about how Jesus Himself said not to worry about

this life, but until we understand why we have no reason to worry or fear, not worrying about one thing or another will become an untenable endeavor. When Jesus said we ought not to worry about our lives, He didn't mean we should just ignore reality or pretend as though certain things are not occurring. Jesus did not imply that we should all create a fantasy world and live in it in perpetuity and as such never have a need, a lack, or a worry for the rest of our lives.

What Jesus meant when He said we ought not to worry about our lives is that even though we might have every reason to worry, even though the storm clouds look dark and imposing, even though madness seems to have gripped the world, even though everything that can be shaken is being shaken, our heavenly Father is in control. Not only is our heavenly Father in control, He knows what you need, when you need it, how much you need, and for how long.

He feeds the birds and dresses the flowers of the fields, and neither of these are creations for which He sent His only begotten Son to die for. You are!

The reason you and I ought not to worry isn't because there is nothing to worry about, but rather because the God we serve is bigger than the things we are worrying about. It is this perspective that gives us the sense of calm so much of the world is envious of. I know that my God is bigger than my problems, and bigger than any tyrant, and bigger than any plot or scheme or skirmish or natural disaster. I know that my God is able to keep me, and that it is His good pleasure to do so because He loves me beyond my ability to understand with human reason.

It is the knowledge of His love for us and His promise to never forsake us that keeps us from worrying

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# Of Birds and Flowers of the Field

for this life, or what we will wear, or what we will eat, because lo these many years, every time I have placed my trust in Him, He has never come short, been late, or been insufficient. With every trial and subsequent victory our trust in our heavenly Father grows all the more, and we soon come to realize that there is nothing He cannot do. Part the sea? Already done! Stop the sun in the sky? Yes, that's been done too. Keep one safe in the midst of a fiery furnace to the point that even the clothing they wear doesn't smell like smoke? Did it thrice in one day.

He is able. Through it all, whatever the valley, whatever the hardship, whatever the trial, what-

ever the circumstance, as long as we keep this undeniable truth at the forefront of our minds, we will not worry, we will not fear, and we will not grow despondent as so many are doing nowadays.

Rather than be consumed with worry, may we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that as we are faithful in seeking after these things, all that we require will be added on in ways and by means undeniably sovereign.

In Christ,

Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.

## Joy Unspeakable

Sometimes we learn the most from those the world has deemed the least among us. Profound life lessons of thankfulness and gratitude, of joy in spite of circumstances, of peace in spite of trials, are all a conversation away if we are willing to spend a little time with those the world has forsaken and hear their stories.

I have had the privilege of learning many such lessons and hearing many such stories throughout my life, and each has had a lasting impact in one way or another, because you can't help but be moved, you can't help but be touched, you can't help but be marked by the emotion with which life stories are retold, as though they are being relived anew.

One such lesson was learned as my son Sergiu and I were visiting the Gradinaru family in Tudor Vladimirescu one afternoon. Unlike many Romanian families who have multiple children, the Gradinaru family is only made up of Ioan and Anisoara. The Lord never blessed them with children, and all





# Joy Unspeakable (continued)



they've had was each other since they were married as teenage sweethearts.

In 2003, Anisoara was diagnosed with diabetes, and has been insulin dependent ever since. Due to the diabetes and poor circulation, three years ago the doctors made the decision to amputate her right leg, and this year they had to amputate her left leg.

Because her body doesn't process toxins the way it ought to, Anisoara also goes to kidney dialysis twice a week, yet as we sat and talked with her, the peace and joy that exuded from her countenance was something both my son and I noticed immediately.

There was no sadness there, there was no mourning or self-pity, there was only joy. No, her joy did not derive from some earthly place, or from some possession, because possessions are in short supply when all you receive is a stipend of less than one hundred dollars per month from the government. Her joy was of divine origin and it was evident in her countenance, her mannerisms, the words she spoke and the way in which she spoke them.

Even after having endured what would have surely broken many an individual, sister Anisoara is still thankful to God for all of His care and provision. She is thankful for His presence in her life, and for the peace He brings in her life.

We spent a good while in fellowship with the Gradinaru family, and after leaving what we had come to bring them, we began the drive home in silence. It was only about halfway back to Botosani that my son Sergiu turned and looked at me and said, "I'm not as thankful as that woman, and I have all my limbs and both my eyes, and I suffer from no malady that requires me to be bedridden or have a standing appointment with a dialysis machine twice a week."

I could have spent an entire week from sunrise to sunset and sunrise again teaching on the need for thankfulness and a thankful heart, and it would not have made as much of an impact on my son as did a thirty-minute conversation with Anisoara Gradinaru, who in spite of all her trials, was still joyful, and thankful, and full of peace.

God allows these lessons in our lives periodically in an attempt to move us from where we are to where He desires us to be. We do not learn lessons such as these merely to have learned them, but to act upon that which we have learned and initiate change in our lives.

I know that my list of things I am thankful for has grown exponentially since our fateful visit to the Gradinaru family home, and every day I thank God for being loving enough to teach me something new on a consistent basis.

In Christ,

Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.



# Shelter From the Rain



**T**he Lupu family lives in an old home. It is not an atypical thing for the rural regions of Romania, as most homes get passed down from generation to generation, until there is either no one left to inherit it, or someone along the way decides to leave the family homestead and venture out into the unknown, to new lands, looking for the opportunities sorely lacking in their small village. As the years pass, it is inevitable that these homes begin to deteriorate, especially given the intemperate climate of the region.

The fact that this home is still standing is a miracle unto itself, but the years have not been kind, and although this home was long ago built of beams and mud, the mud has long disintegrated, and in its place the Lupu family has stuffed rags and other expendable things in order to keep the rain from pouring in.

Ioan, the man of the house, has done his best to keep the exterior walls from caving in, and with a liberal use of mortar, sand and cement, the walls look like they will hold out a few more years. What needs to change, and change as soon as possible, is the roof of this old homestead, made

of very old asbestos, riddled with holes and cracks through which one can see the sun on a bright day, or feel the rain on a wet one.

Although brother Ioan can do the labor himself, the materials needed to replace the roof cost over \$1000. It is a sum that this family with six children cannot hope to scrape together given that what they receive as stipend from the government is a little less than \$100 per month.

Having visited the home, and having met with the family, consisting of Ioan who is 40, Violeta who is 37, Dumitru, their oldest at 19 who was also diagnosed with Down's Syndrome, Izabela who is 15, Elena who is 12, Alexandru who is 8, Andreea who is 3, and Maia, the baby of the family who has just turned one, we feel as though this is a worthwhile project, and something that would bring much joy to this family who is trying their best to keep their head above water and survive.

Please keep the Lupu family in your prayers, and if the Lord leads to help with this project in any way, it will be greatly appreciated.

In His Grace,

Hand of Help Staff





# Child of the Month



Alecu G. (born in 2002) and his brothers, Dumitru and Elvis Ionel, have been with Hand of Help since 2006. As a child, Alecu had to suffer the pain of seeing his family broken up by alcohol. Their father, a notorious alcoholic, used to physically abuse his children and wife, driving them away numerous times in the middle of the night. After years of enduring his beatings, the mother left the home and sought refuge with some of her out-of-town relatives, leaving the children alone, unattended, and having no one to turn to.

For a while, nobody knew anything about her and the father continued to abuse his children. The local community decided to take measures against the situation and contacted our orphanage. We received the brothers in our family and shortly after, the mother was able to contact them and keep in touch with them. A few years later, she found a place to work abroad and left the country for an indefinite period of time, maintaining the relationship with her children from afar.

Alecu and his brothers used to visit their father during their holidays but even then he continued to abuse them. He passed away in 2016 due to an alcohol overdose. His wife came from abroad to

attend the funeral and the family was reunited at this tragic event.

The three brothers have suffered a lot and it seems like this event marked their lives and their perspective on how their future should be. They are now more driven to study in school and want to prove that they can overcome the prejudice and make everybody proud of what they can accomplish with our God's help.

Following his father's death, Alecu decided to change his priorities in life and focus on his studies. He started the Economics High School in Botosani in September 2017. His older brother, Dumitru's acceptance to college on a scholarship has also positively influenced Alecu's academic drive.

He is very intelligent and has exceptional results in his studies. He also plays the violin in the church orchestra and enjoys drawing. He has already participated in numerous contests and art workshops, thanks to his talent, and we are so happy to see him being so passionate. We pray for Alecu and his family and ask our Lord to always keep them in a place of obedience and gratitude for everything He has done for them.

Please join us in praying for Alecu as he faces life's everyday challenges. May our God guide him in every step of the way and may He help him be a role model for others!





# Dear Brethren,

Psalm 27:13-14, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, On the Lord!"

Some two years ago I happened to be in Romania during the worst hail storm to ever batter the region, or at least as far back as the old timers and those who were nearing the century mark could remember. Not only was this hail storm devastating, with ice the size of golf balls denting cars and breaking windows, it was massive, and covered a large swath of northern Romania.

What's worse is that this storm came about two weeks before harvest, when all the corn and wheat and vegetables that had been carefully tended to for the past few months were almost ready to be plucked and collected.

If the hail was large enough to put dents in cars and break windows, you can imagine what it did to the farm fields surrounding our community. The devastation was a sight to behold. What had been majestic fields of sunflowers, corn and wheat blowing gently in the breeze the day before now looked like something out of a post-apocalyptic nightmare. It was as though giant fists had come down on the fields, and pummeled them into nothingness.

The farmers who had counted on their produce as a source of income to carry them through the winter months now had nothing but flattened fields, and the desperation within the rural community was palpable.

As we were coming back from surveying the damage and seeing where we could help, my father asked if I would mind stopping in the village of Corni to visit a new believer and see if his fields had survived. After telling him I wouldn't mind at all, he gave me some quick directions and twenty minutes later we pulled up to a gate and a modest home beyond.

The man's name was Titus, and like most everyone in the village, his crop had been destroyed by the hail storm. As we got to talking, Titus asked a question that I would have had a difficult time answering had I had any time to think about it.

"Why would God allow this to happen to me?"

Since my father had informed me he was a new believer, I realized his question was sincere, but before I had time to process what I would say, the answer flew out of my mouth. "Maybe so that those around you can see the difference between how a child of God reacts to a trial, and how the godless react to it."

Jesus tells us that God makes the sun shine on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. If we take the thought to its final conclusion we come to realize that to a greater or lesser degree we all experience the same things in life, from experiencing loss, to experiencing tragedies, to experiencing hardships, but what distinguishes the just from the unjust, or the evil from the good, is how they react to the circumstances with which they have been presented.

You can take two people, have them go through the same exact event, and one will react to it in a wholly different manner than the other. You can have a similar tragedy befall two individuals, and one will find strength, courage and hope to press on, while the other simply gives up or freezes altogether.

Jesus never promised we would be spared adversity. He never promised that we would not experience the difficult aspects of this present life, or suffer loss of any kind. What He did promise was that He would be with us through it all, that He would walk with us, and guide us, and yes, even comfort us when we need it.

I have friends and acquaintances in every place that has been ravaged by either hurricanes or fires in recent weeks. They are in my prayers daily, and I have reached out to see if they need help, or if they are okay. For the most part they are in good spirits, and have put their trust in the Lord, but what I emphasized with each of them is that the way they react to their trial and circumstance might just be the greatest testimony of their lives to those around them, and those who know of their situation.

Nothing in this life is without purpose. God takes no pleasure in the suffering of His children needlessly. As such, we know that every situation, every circumstance, every hardship and trial work together for good to them that love God. We may not see it in the present, but God is not constrained by time, and we must trust that He sees what we cannot.

Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand."

Psalm 5:11, "But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let also those who love Your name be joyful in You."

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr.