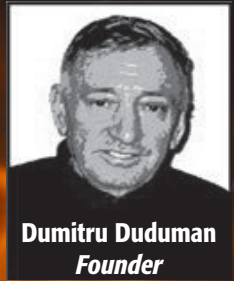


Hand of **HELP**



Dumitru Duduman
Founder



*December 2017 –
January 2018*

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Don't Let It Snow!



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Don't Let It Snow!

Most people look forward to the first snowfall of the season. Children dream of snowmen and sledding, while the adults prepare their mittens, snow pants, and boots for the prospect of shoveling the driveway or scraping ice off windshields. For the most part, those that don't like snow find ways to avoid it, like moving to one of the coasts, or somewhere warm enough where snow is as rare as comets.

For the Diaconu family, the reason they do not want to see the first snowfall is more practical. It has nothing to do with not liking the prospect of a snowball fight, or

making snow angels after a fresh snowfall. The Diaconu family is dreading the first snow of the season because they have a giant hole in their roof, and they know that come first snow, not only will the weather not permit them to fix their roof, but it will likely make the home uninhabitable.

The inside of the home isn't faring much better than the roof. The walls look like giant Rorschach tests made of mold, and one would be hard pressed to find a section of the home where mold isn't visible to the naked eye.



Don't *Let It Snow!*

Oddly enough, this is not an old home passed down from generation to generation. This home is relatively new, especially by Romanian standards, having been built in 1991. It was, however, built with materials procured from a company that has since gone out of business, who was known for shady business practices such as selling asbestos laden materials, as well as sub-par supplies such as the wood beams the Diaconu family purchased to keep their roof erect.

Because their materials were not up to code, they were offered at a cheaper price than their competition, and in a country where everyone is trying to save a few pennies, or get a good deal, they did booming business until they got shut down.

After a handful of years, the wood beams began to develop cavities making them weaker, causing the roof to sag, and eventually it gave way altogether under the pressure of the tiles. Numerous leaks developed in multiple rooms, and as constant moisture is recommended only for an oven roasted turkey, mold began to grow wherever the moisture was present.

On June 23, 2017 a powerful storm rolled through the area, replete with hail, causing further damage to the roof and affecting the electrical installation. The family has not had electricity since the storm, or more accurately, they've been unable to use the power for fear of an electrical fire or other further destruction.

If Romica would have had the financial means to fix his home, he would have done it long ago. Romica works in a bakery, and has an income of 1000 lei per month which translates to roughly \$250. Angela, Romica's wife, is unable to work due to having to care for their fourteen-year-old son named Sergiu who suffers from Hydrocephalus, the medical term for water on the brain, and who is also prone to epileptic seizures.

Three of the Diaconu family children who are as yet minors are still living at home: Tabita who is 12, Sabina who is 10, and Abel who is 8. Due to the holes in the roof, this is an imminent need and waiting until



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Don't *Let It Snow!*

spring is not a viable option as the family has nowhere else to go for the coming winter months.

The cost for fixing the roof is \$3000, and it is something we have to do first, before we consider any other repairs to the home.

Please keep the Diaconu family in your prayers, and if the Lord leads you to help with this project, it will go a long way toward bringing some joy to this family, and making them look forward to the first snowfall rather than dread its imminent arrival.

In His Grace,

Hand of Help Staff

REMINDER:

If you would like your donation to be included with the 2017 year end receipt for tax purposes, please have your envelope postmarked by December 31st or processed via our website no later than December 31st.



Beauty for Ashes

We have just gotten back from this fall's mission trip to Romania and we wanted to share some of the testimonies we were blessed to experience.

Two months prior to our trip to Romania, some dear friends of ours contacted us and said that they want to send money with us to help the poor in Romania. They felt led to give financial help to two widows in particular and the orphan that they sponsor. Their son, who has his own business making log furniture, had decided that he wanted to purchase a cow for a family with lots of children.

One month before our trip, we got a phone from them informing us that their 3,000 sq. ft. home had burned to the ground, in one of the many forest fires that were devastating vast areas here in Montana, and that they had lost everything they owned.

Though few experience total loss and devastation of their livelihood, we all go through difficult situations of some sort in our lives. That something, whether big or small, can either cripple you or give you an opportunity to rise above, trusting in our Heavenly Father.

What happened next was both a very humbling and a most encouraging conversation. We received a call from the same family saying that they felt led to send even more money, in order to bless a nursing home that we often visit that is about a 45 minute drive from the orphanage. Their son felt led to buy a second cow for another family.

Only followers of our Lord Jesus could have that degree of love and compassion needed to not dwell on personal loss of all earthly possessions, but to allow one's self to be used by God, even in one of life's darkest hours, and bless strangers half way across the globe.

We were fortunate not only to see the miracle of self-sacrificing generosity, but the result of it in the lives touched in the villages of Romania.

Upon arriving at Mariana's home, a recently widowed sister who was now left to take care of her 10 children alone, she began sharing with us how just yesterday she

was crying out to God because she had no money with which to buy school clothing for her children. Tears of joy flowed freely as she gathered the whole family to share with them how God loves them so and how their Heavenly Father will provide all their needs.



Amazingly enough, upon arriving at Ilenuta's home, she shared a similar testimony of how they had also asked the Lord for help in providing clothing for the children to wear to school.



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Beauty for Ashes



Both families now have more than enough for clothing and God is being showered with praise and thanksgiving.

While we were in fellowship with the family that runs the nursing home, they shared that “Every time we think we are going to have to close the doors on this ministry, God miraculously provides the money we need to remain open and tend to the needs of the 40 residents in our care.”

Both of the families that received cows were elated to now be able to provide milk, cheese, cream and butter for their children. One cow is pregnant and due any time now and the other just delivered a calf. Isn't God good?

The family that donated the funds necessary for these projects requests our prayers for God's guidance and direction as to what He would have them do.

Thank you for your prayer on their behalf and on behalf of the Hand of Help Ministry.

It is your self-sacrificing generosity and willingness to be used by God, that touch hundreds of lives, whether

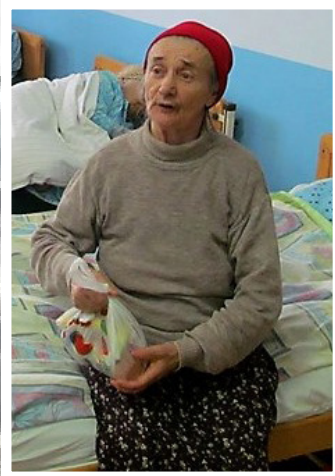


they be orphans, widows or poor families, they are experiencing the love of God in action, through your prayers and support.

Isaiah 61:3 "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them *beauty for ashes*, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified."

Blessings,

Dave & Cheryl Edman
Kalispell, Montana



Basic Needs

There are a handful of basic needs that are the same for everyone living on planet earth. These are not wants, or luxuries, they are not peccadillos or preferences, they are the bare bones things a human being must have in order to survive.

While opinions differ on most everything under the sun, from whether French fries are best with ketchup or mayonnaise, or whether dogs make better pets than cats, we can all agree on the five basics required for survival: air, water, shelter, food and sleep.

That's the short list. That's it! Five things, no more no less. Since air is free, and sleep is up to the individual, what we've been striving to do as a ministry is to provide the other three basic needs to as many individuals as we could. Water, shelter, and food. That is our

wheelhouse, this is what we aim to provide day in and day out, 365 days per year.

To some it may be difficult to grasp that there are people in our day and age, today, right now, on every continent of the world who are doing without at least one of these three basic needs. While some are deprived of clean water, while others of shelter, and others of food, there are some who are deprived of all three. These are individuals who have no one to turn to but God, and hope that their prayers will be answered, and someone, somewhere, will be stirred to reach out to them in their time of need.

It takes much faith to believe that a stranger who has never met you in person, who has heard of your dire

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Basic Needs

circumstances via a second hand, poorly worded retelling by a third party, would stop what they are doing, and give of what they have earned with the sweat of their brow in order to alleviate your suffering.

And yet, it happens every single day. You are stirred, and you take time out of your day, and give of your resources to give aid and comfort to someone you have never met, whose name you know because we mentioned it in one of our newsletters. Tell me that isn't God! Tell me that is not a miracle in and of itself.

What we will be presenting shortly is a handful of basic needs that we have been confronted with, as well as some praise reports of basic needs that have been met already. As mentioned, these are basic needs, not air conditioning for someone's dog house because their poodle perspires in the summer, or crocodile leather seats in someone's private jet because cow leather simply won't do.

The first case is one of shelter, and it has to do with the Chiriac family from the city of Negresti. This family is comprised of seven children, six of whom are still living at home, and some time ago we provided for the basic need of food for this family by buying them a cow. Now they have another hurdle to overcome, the new hurdle being one of shelter.

The Chiriac family has a home already. They scrimped and saved and went without, dreaming of one day having their own home, and one day a group of missionaries even gifted them a small plot of land which had been

allocated for a church building but turned out to be too small.

Seeing the land as an answer to prayer, they built a small home on the plot of land they had been gifted, as per the ordinances of the time, and the advice of the then mayor. Now they were told they owe a little less than \$1000 in zoning fees, building licenses, and other bureaucratic taxes, fees, and penalties, and there is no way they can come up with that amount of money without some help.

Our second case is a need exclusive to colder climates, and that is the need for firewood. Technically it can fall under shelter, or sleep, since you can't really be comfortable doing either if the wind is howling and the snow is falling and you have no way to get warm. What makes this case all the more impacting is that we are not talking about one family, but an entire retirement home that needs our help in getting firewood for the coming winter months. We visit this home often. We bring sweets, fruit, have donated countless adult diapers throughout the years, but now they are confronted with the prospect of not having any firewood, or money to purchase it. Please pray about this need, as it is of utmost urgency.



Our third case is not a need, but a praise report. Since our ministry has always been of the attitude that few words and much action is always the best course, we sometimes fail to fill you in on what we have been able to accomplish as a ministry. Most of the time big talkers aren't big doers, and we would rather be doing the work than beating our chest and pointing to some thing or another hop-

Basic Needs

ing someone takes the time to pat us on the back. That said, although the Marcu family is young, both being 38 years of age, they have had more than their share of hardships and trials. Viorel and Simona have seven children together, the oldest of which is Cristina who is 16, and the youngest being Lucas, who is only two. Cornel, their ten-year-old was diagnosed with hepatitis recently. The Marcu family's need was one of food, especially since their cow took ill and they had to butcher it in order to salvage something. We were able to purchase a cow for the family recently, and it was as an answer to prayer for them.



Another basic need that was met recently was, again, one of food, this time for the Toma family, and their six children. We have known this family for a long time, and



while Virginia Boldea was still alive she built a home for them. Now Simona is due to have her seventh child, and the new cow they received was a true blessing due to the nourishment it will provide this growing family.



There is no shortage of needs, but thankfully there is no shortage of praise reports either. We serve a God who cares for the widow and the orphan, a God who remembers the forgotten, and comforts the forsaken. We serve a God who speaks to His servants from across the seas to be a present help and reach out to souls they have never known, but whom God has known since before the creation of the world.

The need is ongoing and the situations we are confronted with are ever-growing. Please pray for divine discernment and leading, and the resources needed to continue blessing the least of these.

All we can do is thank you for your obedience, and thank you for not growing weary in doing good. May God keep you in the warmth of His embrace, and may His grace and abundant mercy be ever present in your life.

In His Grace,
Hand of Help Staff

Faces of Evil

Evil exists. It is real, evident, palpable, and each time it comes close, each time it enters our sphere, we sense its presence and see the carnage it leaves in its wake. It is not as though evil is a new concept. It has been an ever present reality ever since the serpent tempted Eve into taking the first bite of what God deemed to be forbidden in the garden. Throughout recorded history, we see glimpses of manifest evil, and whether we label them atrocities, genocides, or holocausts, they all fall under the umbrella of evil.

One cannot see unbridled evil and mistake it for something other than what it is. It is when we attempt to obfuscate the obvious and redefine words to suit our narrative that we take away from the true horror of what evil is, thereby diluting the impact acts of evil ought to have, and rightly so. It is necessary for evil to shock us to our core. It is necessary for evil to disturb us on a basic, fundamental level, because if it ceases to do so, if evil becomes normalized, then what we once saw infrequently will become common.

Barring the large scale acts of evil throughout history, the atrocities and genocides whose death toll reached into the millions, one need only glance at the last decade to see a noticeable and disturbing trend emerging: Acts of evil that leave us speechless are growing in their frequency.

There has been no shortage of individuals who try to find reasons for why these things occur, the motivations of individuals who do such horrendous things, and how they can hope to prevent it in the future, but as yet, at least from what I've heard thus far, none have come close to the mark of getting to the root cause, and fleshing out why we continue to be bombarded with acts of evil on what seems to be a weekly basis.

Whether by choice or out of ignorance, each pundit has ignored the preeminent reason why more and more individuals can descend into such depravity as to walk into a church and begin executing innocent people who never did anything to them.

The preeminent reason we are seeing such horrors play out before us is because as a culture and a species we have abandoned God. It is godlessness that is the root cause of the awfulness that surrounds us, because if an individual does not believe that all men were created equal, that God breathed life into a lump of clay and that we are all endowed with the spark of the divine, then why would he harbor any qualms about snuffing out a life?

Men have abandoned the fear of the Lord and have become lower than beasts. Nothingness has become their god. As such, a purposeless existence is their constant companion, and the ever present void in their hearts is never filled.

We are seeing more and more evil because we have rejected the God who kept evil at bay. We cannot remove the spiritual aspects from the equation and still hope to find the answers as to why we are seeing the horrors we are seeing. Everything is spiritual! How can we then do away with the spiritual and still hope to make any headway? What we have beheld in recent months is the consequence of our rejection of godliness, holiness and righteousness. I know many don't want to hear it, but it is nevertheless the truth.

Until this is remedied, until this is dealt with, we will continue our descent into the abyss as a culture, a society, and as a species. Every society that has attempted to remove or otherwise replace God with something else has experienced decay and ruin. Whether the attempted replacement was Communism, Agnosticism, Nihilism, or Atheism, the end result was almost identical, and the rubble it left behind was evident to all.

Every society also hoped they would turn a corner eventually, that the descent would cease, and they would begin the climb toward enlightenment, but it was a vain hope that became stale resentment with the passing of time.

One cannot have nobility and virtue absent God. It is as impossible as having breath without oxygen. As such, the longer the hearts of men are removed from the light of truth, the darker they become, and things that were

once unheard of and thought beyond the pale begin to occur with frightening regularity.

Nothing is sacrosanct to the darkened heart. Even places deemed a sanctuary throughout history, places where one can go and know that no harm can befall them have become uncertain.

If not for the hope we have in Jesus, surely grief and fear would consume us. If not for the hope we have in Jesus, surely uncertainty would make the sweet taste bitter. If not for the hope we have in Jesus, surely we

would be as despondent and despairing as the rest of the world.

Thank God for Jesus. When we have Him, hope remains intact even on the darkest of days, and though we may not see it in the present, we take comfort in the knowledge that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr.

Child of the Month

Raul O. was born in August 2006. At the tender age of only 5, he was abandoned by his mother and was left in his grandmother's care. Suddenly faced with the absence of his mother, Raul was also forced to endure the challenges of an alcoholic grandmother who was unable and unwilling to provide the necessary care for her young grandson.

Seeing Raul's desperate situation, a family providing foster care decided to offer him a chance of a normal life. They took Raul, along with other children, into their house and filled the void in their hearts and lives. Raul grew up harmoniously and slowly overcame the disheartening abandonment and lack of parental love.

However, his foster mother turned 60 and Romanian laws prohibit her from continuing providing care for children in our social system after the age of 60. Believing that her children should not be affected yet again by such dramatic changes in their lives and wanting to prevent them from being left alone again, she asked us to take Raul into our family, knowing the love and care that we would offer him.



When we first saw Raul, we were overwhelmed by the warmth of his conduct and sensibility of voice. Later on we discovered his passion for music - he plays the flute and the trumpet. In the fall of 2017, after he began attending the school associated with the Art Institute in Botosani, he started playing the piano as well. Raul has already participated in numerous musical competitions ranking among the best every time.

Please keep Raul in your prayers as we work together to prepare him for independent life.

We ask our Lord to speak to Raul and reveal Himself to him, leading our little Raul to serving Him and becoming an obedient servant of His Kingdom. To see our children serving our mighty God is our deepest desire and the focus of our most fervent prayers. We are all entrusted with an incredible task- leading children to God and helping them to be faithful to our Savior and you are the reason we are able to continue in our work. Thank you for joining us in this labor and may God abundantly bless your efforts.

Dear Brethren,

Philemon 1:7, “For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.”

Sometimes it is easier to give in to grief than to pursue joy. I think it’s because we oftentimes lose sight of the fact that the joy is not ours, we do not manufacture it, produce it, or somehow create it in and of ourselves, but rather it is the joy of the Lord and it comes from Him.

It is an easy thing to lose one’s joy given all that’s going on in the world. Let’s face it, ten minutes of the evening news, and it’s all one can do to keep from running to their basement and locking the door behind them. The world has become an ugly place, and glimpses of beauty have become rare and precious.

It would be easy for me to sit here, pretend to be spiritually superior, and say that I’ve never had to struggle to retain my joy, but that would be a lie. Sometimes it is an act of sheer will to simply keep from bursting out into tears over what God’s creation has become and the callousness with which we have come to treat each other. The only reason I am able to retain it, to keep it, to hug it close to my heart and not let go of it, is because the Word tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

The joy of the Lord is not uncontrollable laughter, giddiness or a feeling of elation. It is strength, a strength we need every day in order to be able to stand against the slings and arrows of the enemy.

Nothing would make the devil happier than to be able to rob us of our strength. The enemy knows that the weaker we are, the less of a thorn we are in his side. He knows that if we are at our weakest when he engages us in battle, then the chances of him felling us are that much greater.

Since he knows this, the enemy attempts to make the world that belongs to him as bleak, and empty, and hopeless as possible hoping that by constantly being surrounded by despair and depravity, hedonism and violence, the joy of the Lord would be extinguished in our hearts. Even if it is a battle to cling to the joy of the Lord at times, it is a battle we must fight, a battle we can’t afford not to fight, because we know that this joy is the source of our strength.

I have known men who have lost their joy and they serve as a cautionary tale. I see the bitterness and the resentment, I see the anger bubbling up under the surface, I see

what losing one’s joy does to an individual, and I know I don’t want to become that. I catch myself letting go of it sometimes, only to grip it that much tighter. I sense it slipping away on certain days, only to go before God and ask for a refreshing, because this journey ought not to be burdensome and sorrowful, yet so many make it just that.

We are nearing what ought to be the most joyful of seasons, yet everywhere you turn it seems joy is in short supply. Men are attempting to rewrite the past, fearful of the present, and uncertain about the future, anxious and worried, with many questions but no answers in sight.

It is in this sort of environment that the children of God ought to shine bright and true. It is in this sort of environment that the children of God ought to be as beacons in the night, exuding joy, peace and a sense of calm. If I could pray a blessing over you today it isn’t that you would get rich, famous, or have everything you ever wanted, it is that you would have a double portion of the joy of the Lord. Fame fades, riches are squandered, and often times what we wanted isn’t at all what we needed, but the joy of the Lord is a present strength and something we can count on during the difficult days ahead.

Cling tight to the joy of the Lord and don’t let go no matter the circumstance, trial or hardship. It will carry you through and give you hope even when all seems lost.

Although some things are self-evident and need not be said, know that you are in my heart, and my prayers, and I am every thankful for what you allow this ministry to do on behalf of the hurting and the hungry. May you be blessed and richly rewarded for your kindness and selflessness, and may you know a double portion of the joy of the Lord.

Romans 15:13, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr.