



Hand of **HELP**

The Truth for Today



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Founder

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JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH 2012



THE
WORK
OF

Your Hands



THE WORK OF

Your Hands

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary since the Hand of Help orphanage officially opened its doors. We have had difficult times, we have had uphill climbs, but through it all, by the grace of God and your continued support never once in these fifteen years have our children gone to bed hungry, cold or naked. This is the work of your hands just as much as it is ours, for all of us are doing our part in the work of God, a work that He continues to bless in spite of all that we see happening in the world.

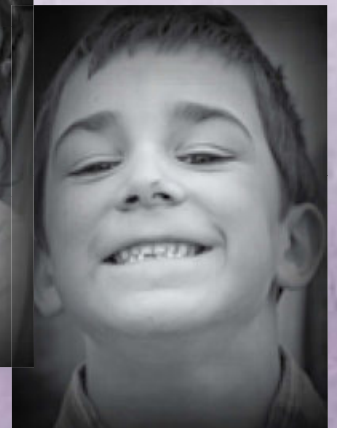
It seems like a lifetime ago, and those first children that crossed our threshold are long gone, married, with families of their own, but with each child that matures into adulthood and leaves our family another child takes their place, just as confused and traumatized by what life has thrown at them as those who came before them.

From afar, what we do would seem irrelevant in the great scheme of things. What are a couple hundred saved lives over fifteen years among the seven or so billion currently residing on this planet after all? To any one of the children in question however, the fact that they knew love, and had shelter, and were fed, and clothed and cared for, is anything but irrelevant. We can't save the world, and noble as it might be even saving a child will not change the world, but surely for that one child we manage to save, the world will have

changed forever. The fact that we can't save everyone is the harsh reality with which we have to contend every day, yet even if we had only saved one life during the course of these fifteen years, it would have been worth all the struggle and the labor and the tears.

Some time ago I came across a quote that says, 'you have never really lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you' I know not who it's attributed to, I saw it in passing on a church somewhere, but it is an apt quote nevertheless. For fifteen years you have done something for those who can never repay you, but you have done it in service to the One who can.

And so, to anyone that has ever knitted a scarf or a pair of gloves, to anyone that has ever sent in a pair of shoes or a box of clothing, to anyone that has supported





this work financially whether great or small, a heartfelt thank you for your sacrifice. Yes, large donations are a blessing, but they are also as rare and infrequent as solar eclipses, so to all who have faithfully supported this work over the years in whatever capacity the Lord directed, know that He sees

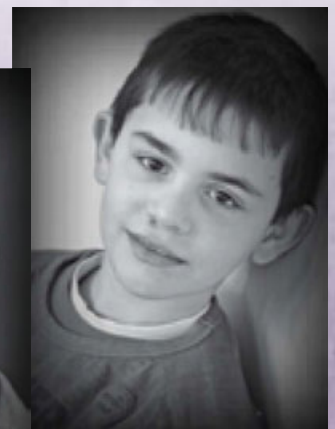
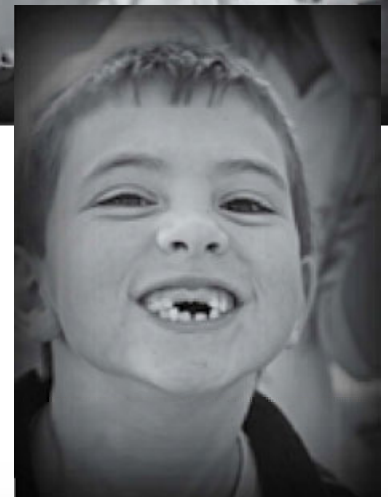
and faithfully rewards those who obey Him.

As the staff here in Romania got together to celebrate our fifteenth year anniversary, to remember those who are no longer with us and the sacrifices they made in order to see this vision come to fruition, one of our directors asked me what I felt our greatest accomplishment as a ministry was throughout this time.

After thinking about it for a breath, I looked him in the eye and said, 'our greatest accomplishment after all these years is that we are still able to look every single supporter in the eye, shake their hand, and tell them honestly that their sacrifice was not in vain, that their money went where it was supposed to, and the fact that we're still here when so many other ministries are no more is a testament to this.'

We love you, we appreciate you, and we pray for you.

With love in Christ, Michael Boldea Jr.



THEN

Winter Came



Even those in the twilight of their lives are hard pressed to remember a winter like this. By all accounts, it seemed as though we would have a mild winter season, since as late as the first week of January there was still no snow on the ground. Nature itself seemed to confirm that winter had forgotten to arrive, as trees began to bloom, and the temperature was warm enough wherein a light coat would suffice for the outdoors.

Some who had not prepared for winter were thankful for the lack of snow, while others shrugged their shoulders and began to murmur that perhaps this whole thing about climate change and global warming wasn't really a crock after all.

While distributing blankets and firewood in the rural areas, there were even those who quipped that they would likely leave the blankets in their wrapping, and have enough firewood for an entire year since it did not seem that winter would come,

and if something likened to it did arrive, it would be a mild and docile version of winters past.

Rather than cold or snow the lack of precipitation was foremost on people's minds since due to a dry summer and an even dryer autumn, wells throughout the country were running low or drying up altogether. Wells are the primary source of water for those living in rural areas, and when a well in a village dries up it's not merely an inconvenience but an outright tragedy.

Preoccupied with lack of water, believing that if it hadn't snowed by now it likely wouldn't snow at all, most people were caught wholly unaware and wholly unprepared for what descended upon the nation of Romania with a ferocity unseen in the last seventy years.

The suddenness with which the cold descended and snow began to fall was perhaps the most unnerving aspect, at least in the beginning. Within a matter of hours, temperatures went from the low 50's to below freezing, reaching -22 degrees over the course of the first night of snow storms.

Because the storms came on so suddenly there were countless people stranded on the roads, blizzard conditions making traffic impossible. The first night, four people froze to death in their cars, entombed in ice and snow, only to be found days later by army and gendarme personnel traveling the closed roads in heavy duty trucks looking for stranded motorists.

The second day of the storm the snows ceased for

a brief while only to give way to freezing rain, which encased vehicles in ice, and turned every street into a makeshift skating rink. Emergency response units were instantly overwhelmed by calls from individuals suffering from twisted ankles, broken limbs, fractured skulls and scores of other injuries associated with slipping on the ice as they attempted to make their way to work, or the local grocery store.

By the third day, the sheer scope of the storm became clear, and the trepidation among the population only grew upon realizing it blanketed the entire country from north to south and east to west. Those that were able began to stock up on supplies, and since the roads were already closed to any kind of traffic the stores ran out of food within a matter of hours. The breakdown in distribution has already led to price gouging by unscrupulous individuals, a loaf of stale bread selling for ten times what it sold for just a week ago.

Unrelenting snowfall coupled with winds upwards of sixty miles per hour created massive snow banks, covering many homes in rural areas up to their chimneys. Countless individuals were forced to tunnel their way out of their own homes, through windows, to keep from suffocating in their own adobes.

Due to the snow drifts caused by the high winds, many traveling by train were also stuck in the middle of nowhere as the tracks, covered by snow mounds made passage impossible. The stories of those stuck on trains for upwards of fifty hours, having long since run out of water or food are numerous and heartbreaking. Although their location was known, there was no way of getting to them, and all they could do was huddle

together, hope, pray and wait for someone to come and save them.

It has been a week since the storms began, and although it has finally, and mercifully stopped snowing many roads are still closed, tens of thousands of people are still without power, and countless souls, especially in the rural areas are still isolated and left to fend for themselves.





This storm has already claimed fifty seven lives in Romania, and a staggering five hundred lives throughout Europe. As officials begin to make their way into the villages however, this number is expected to rise exponentially. (Twenty four hours later, the death toll in Romania has reached eighty six.)

As I write these lines, it is noon, and the temperature is still well below freezing. The stores in many regions of the country are yet to be resupplied, the snows have yet to be cleared from many of the roads, and meteorologists are warning that a new wave of snowfall and plummeting temperatures are on the horizon.

Thankfully as yet, the Hand of Help orphanage has not lost power, we have enough food on hand to keep the children fed for at least three weeks, and our heating system is faring well even under the strain of the unprecedented cold.

I ask that you remember us in your prayers as we continue to do what we can, from distributing what food we can spare from our own reserves, delivering clothes, blankets and firewood to those

homes that are still accessible, and offering shelter from the storm to those who have no place to go.

It is in times such as these that the children of God must shine all the more, reaching out to the hurting, being the heart and hands of Christ, and tirelessly being about the work they have been called to do. Thank you for standing with us.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.



Making Music

Psalm 150:1-6, "Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the flute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with high sounding cymbals; Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"

It all began when Melody, one of our long term volunteers asked if she could start a music class with some of the children from the Hand of Help orphanage. Since we thought it was a good idea, and it would give the children something to do other than homework and chores, we agreed, as long as enough of the children were interested.

It turned out that our children were indeed interested in music, and they began attending weekly classes with Melody, an apropos name if ever there was one, learning music theory, how to read notes and sheet music, as well as the subtleties of rhythm.

Although they attended classes diligently and learned the theory of music, our children had no

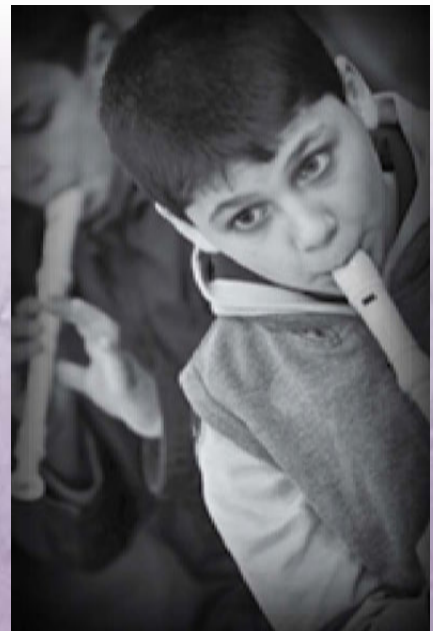
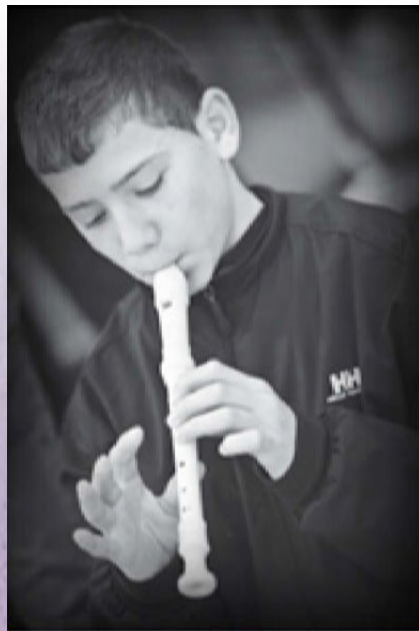
instruments with which to practice what they had learned. We realized keeping them interested in music without instruments would be an impossible task, akin to keeping a child interested in painting without providing brushes. Talking about music, learning to read music, even hearing music is very different than holding your chosen instrument in your hand and learning to play it. And so, after obsessively scrutinizing our budget we came up with enough funds to purchase some instruments.

We purchased violins, mandolins, guitars, and flutes, and our children began to practically apply the theory they had learned. Since our choir director is also well versed in playing stringed instruments, he offered to teach the requisite classes. Learning is a journey, and our children have started taking their first tentative steps. Excited and thankful as they are for having the new instruments, as yet they are still making joyful noises unto the Lord, rather than playing music, learning the basics like finger positioning and discovering the sensation of calloused fingers.

Since it is always good to set goals, our children have set a goal of their own, one that seems ambitious, but not impossible. The goal our children have set is to play as a band during church services on Easter weekend, which is coming up shortly. We will keep you apprised of their progress, and we ask that you continue to keep this ministry as well as the children which have been trusted into its care in your prayers.

In His Grace,
Hand of Help Staff

Making



Music



A PLACE

to Worship



Because we lack the power of God and the move of the Holy Spirit within many churches, we've taken to accommodating and appeasing those that still grace our congregations with their presence going so far as to have coffee breaks so those who want to stumble in just before the sermon can do so without feeling awkward. We find new ways of spending less and less time in the presence of God, new ways of spending less and less time in fellowship, woefully indifferent to the reality of things as pertains to the world around us. The hour grows late, the day grows dark, the future is taking on a grim and frightful appearance, yet many continue to dismiss or altogether ignore the One who is able to give us hope, and peace, and rest in a restless world.

We are living in a generation where more and more churches are closing their doors due to diminishing number of members, and shrinking congregations. The older generation is slowly shaking off its mortal coil, returning to the earth from which it came, and there is no one to take their place. The youth is not interested, the middle aged have more pressing matters to attend to such as making their monthly mortgage, and so, with each passing day, the empty pews are multiplying.

The churches that do survive are having to make services shorter and shorter to accommodate those who feel 90 minutes is asking too much of them. They are having to tweak the message in order not to challenge or offend. They are having to entertain in more blatantly worldly ways than ever before; in short they are having to compromise just to keep the doors open and the lights on.

It seems we have lost our first love, and our desire for the things of God has been replaced by a desire for anything other than Him. Though we all get excited when we hear the word revival, we prefer to sit back, relax and see what



will come of it before we take any part.

Lest I be misunderstood, the apathy and indifference of which I speak is not resigned to a certain geographical location, a certain nation or continent, but is a global epidemic within every nation of the world. I have been pastoring the congregation here in Romania for over a decade, and the lukewarm state of the church is direr than I've ever seen it.

It is in such a generation that I had the opportunity to hear what God was doing in Siminicea. It is in this nondescript little community in Suceava County where I was encouraged and refreshed to see the remnant of those seeking God with true passion. The church is growing rapidly and they are scheduling baptisms twice as often as before. As we met to fellowship and discuss the needs of his congregation, the pastor shared the story of the two newest converts to the faith in Christ. They were two young men who had been abroad looking for work, and upon their return, having received Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives, they were so excited and purposed to commit their lives to Christ that they would not wait until the next baptismal service and asked to be baptized in the local river the following day.

The church is full of hardworking individuals that provide free labor for their ongoing construction project. However, with little to no income, they are unable to support the church with the money necessary for construction materials. Due to lack of finances the church project has come to a halt. The congregation takes turns meeting in a small room that will be the church's nursery upon completion. Their current needs are related to the boiler for the restrooms, the completion of the sidewalks, and a new heating system, as the old one pictured used to fill the church with smoke but gave off little heat.

I was refreshed to see hunger and zeal for God once more, to see men and women desiring all of God in their lives, and my hope is that we can help the congregation of



Siminicea complete their building project so that the entire body of believers can gather as one, and those new to the household of faith will have a place to worship. The cost of completing the work on the church building, as well as acquiring a new heating system is \$3000. Please pray for the necessary means to bring this building project to completion and that God continues to call this community to eternal life.

In Christ,
Michael Boldea Sr.

THE

Morning Call



It was the coldest day of the year up to that point. It also happened to be my father's birthday. As I was standing outside, hopping from one foot to the other hoping to get some feeling back into my numb toes, waiting for the jumper cables to do their job and hoping it wasn't anything more serious than a dead battery, my phone began to ring.

Being of the opinion that if someone takes the time to call you, you should answer, I didn't look to see who was calling, and answered the phone on the second ring. It was my father. He got as far as 'hello my son' before I interrupted him, wishing him a happy birthday and explaining the reason I hadn't called earlier was because I had been out in the cold for the better part of two hours trying to start the car.

'Thank you for the well wishes' he said, 'but

that is not why I am calling. I had a dream last night. I dreamt that the Popistica family was praying for God to send them firewood.'

I've met many a family throughout my years of ministry, and I will be the first to admit I don't remember all their names. I remember faces well enough, but names elude me for some reason. When I asked my father who the Popistica family was, he reminded me that they were an elderly couple from the village of Mascateni who donated their land, and borrowed \$2000 to begin building the first ever church in their community.

Although it was brutally cold, the snows had ceased, and when I asked my father what he had in mind, he simply said, 'to buy some wood, and go to Mascateni.'

We ended up purchasing eight tons of wood, and loading it onto the ancient truck we hired since its driver was the only one who would make the trip in such foul weather, only to stand around for an hour while he lit a fire under his gas tank to warm the diesel fuel so his truck could start. On what must have been the tenth try, the truck rumbled to life like some beast waking from its slumber, and my father, myself, and my brother Sergiu followed after it in the ministry vehicle.

A journey that would have normally taken us forty minutes ended up being a little over two hours long, the icy roads and snow drifts in the middle of the street making it impossible to travel with any significant speed.

Once we arrived in Mascateni however, the long

trek was forgotten, as was the cold that seemed to have wormed its way into our bones. We found Costica Popistica, who just turned eighty, and his wife Eugenia who is seventy nine, huddled in the one room that serves as their kitchen, living room, dining room and bedroom.

Both Costica and Eugenia are lucid in spite of their advanced age, and as it turned out quite chatty. When we informed them that we had brought firewood, Costica's smile stretched from ear to ear, and turning to Eugenia said, 'see wife, I told you if we prayed God would send us help.'

As it turned out, Eugenia had placed their last log on the fire that morning, and ever since they had been praying for God to send someone to their aid. Eugenia and Costica have no one to rely on, their children having moved away from the village in

the hopes of finding employment, and countless souls in the twilight of their life are in the same precarious position.

As we continued talking to Costica, and telling him how much wood we brought, his brow furrowed, and he began to shake his head. 'Too much' he said, 'too much for the two of us, but I know a woman with three children whose husband abandoned her that could use some firewood too. She doesn't have the money to buy any, and I know she's been praying just as hard as we have.'

The woman he was referring to, lived in the same village, just a few houses down, and after unloading half the contents of the truck, we went to visit her as well. Her name is Lacramioara Botan, and she has three children. Luca, who is three, was diagnosed with hydro encephalitis, a



condition where fluid builds up around the brain, and Benjamin who just turned two is anemic and suffers from epileptic seizures. Thankfully, Gabriela, the oldest of the siblings at five years of age, has no health issues. Lacramioara's husband left for Italy in order to find a job two years and nine months ago, and she has not heard from him since.

Both my brother Sergiu and I fell in love with Luca instantly. We asked him what kind of toys he liked to play with, and he was quick to answer that he liked cars, and trucks, but any toys would do since he didn't have any of his own. We promised we would return, and bring him some toys, and as soon as the weather allows we will stay true to our word.

Lacramioara's demeanor also impressed us, because in spite of all the tragedies she has gone through

in her twenty seven years on this earth, she still has enough strength to smile, and the joy in her eyes was sincere. 'Life is hard, but no one ever promised it would be easy', she said, 'but with God's help we see a new sunrise each morning, and a new sunset each evening. They told me Luca wouldn't live past his first year, and here he is at age three, so I know God still works miracles.'

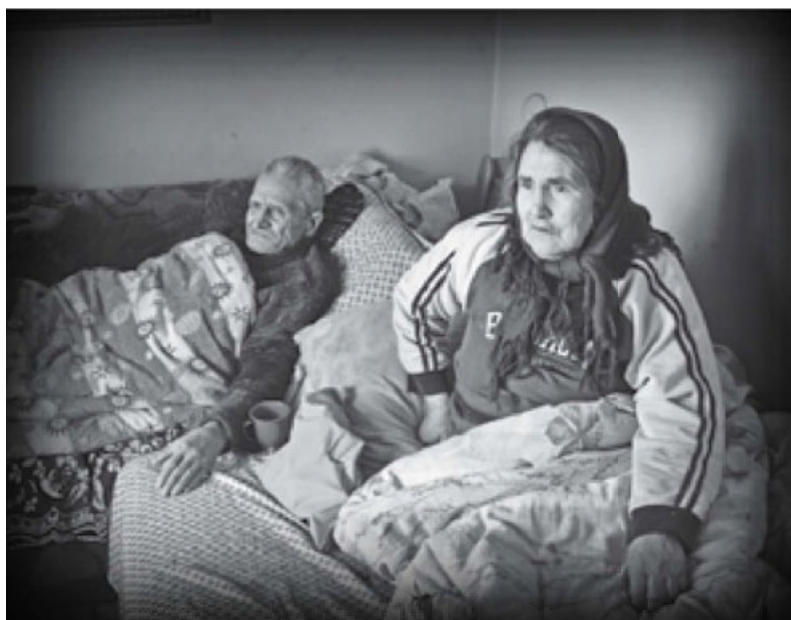


We left the firewood, some food, and a few blankets for the Botan family, as well as some money for other essentials, and with the promise to Luca that we would return we began our journey back to Botosani, just as it began to snow again.

Although I already knew that servants of God don't get days off, and when God calls you drop everything and answer, seeing my dad out in the cold on his birthday brought this truth to remembrance in my heart.

As they dropped me off at my apartment, I turned to my father and told him I'd buy him dinner one of these nights as his present, and with a grin he arched his brows and said, 'I got to spend the day with two of my boys saving people from freezing to death, what better present could a man ask for?'

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.



Outreach



The outreach of our ministry has always been a twofold endeavor. While some ministries focus exclusively either on preaching the gospel, or on helping the poor, our calling from the beginning, was to do both. Every member of Hand of Help is faithful to this twofold calling and that includes me. When I am in the States I travel and preach, and when I am in Romania I occupy my time with the outreach side of our ministry traveling to villages and distributing food, clothing, firewood and blankets.

Since I've been in Romania these past couple of months I've had the opportunity to go on numerous trips with my brother Daniel, my brother Sergiu, and my father. The trips themselves are a good time of fellowship for us as a family, as we don't get to spend a lot of time together outside of ministry, and meeting the people we help, seeing their faces, hearing of their needs continually reminds me why we do what we do.

We encounter people not on their best days, but during their most desperate moments, during seasons of heartache, need and hopelessness. Sometimes all

you can do is weep with those who weep, and though a box of food or a little money might not seem like much to most, the fact that someone cares enough to come and seek them out and help them however they can means more to them than what we give them. The act of kindness itself, the expression of love itself, does more to comfort than the items or resources we bring.

Having been taught that nothing in this world is free, many individuals whom we are visiting for the first time are skeptical of us, always waiting

for the other shoe to drop, wondering what we require in return for the kindness we have shown them. Unfortunately, their skepticism is well founded, since every four years during election time, politicians or their representatives visit bringing some flour or some sugar, but demanding their vote in return for the items they bring.

When I asked an elderly gentleman if he voted for the politician that brought him some cooking oil, he looked me in the eye and said, 'of course I did. Dignity is hard to cling to when you're starving to death.'

Due to the circumstances of their existence many people just can't reconcile the notion that someone would give them something, whether food, clothing, money or firewood, and not require anything in return. It is like a shock to their system, and when inevitably they ask why we would give them something for nothing, it gives us an opportunity to present them with the gospel of Christ, and His glorious love for mankind.

Since it is said that a picture's worth a thousand words, the following are just some of the people I've had the opportunity to meet, get to know, and thanks to your continued support, help wherever they needed it most during my time in Romania.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.







DEAR

Brethren

Proverbs 27:12, "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished."
Ezekiel 33:6, "But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand."

The war drums have grown too loud to ignore, and everywhere you look on the face of the earth, save perhaps for Switzerland, the situation is unstable, uncertain, and turbulent. If we were to isolate and discuss every prophetic event transpiring in the world, I would need a lot more paper, and you would need a lot more time.

Since time is a precious commodity for one and all, I will limit myself to discussing three critical events that have taken place within the last few weeks, two of them obvious, and one not so obvious, so we might better understand the times we are living in, and what is shortly, likely to transpire in the world.

The first event I want to discuss is the rising tensions between Israel and Iran. Although these two nations have never been what one might mistake for amicable, within the past few weeks it would seem that the anger, the rhetoric, and the tensions are reaching a fevered pitch. Inevitably, there will be a spark that sets off the powder keg, and once that occurs, there is no going back. Although it's easy to see that no good end will come of these tensions, it is still our duty as children of God to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

The second event I want to discuss is one that is ongoing and closer to home, at least for me. Some time back in one of my letters to you, I wrote that one of the signs that would precede the days of trouble in Romania would be another uprising or revolution in Romania. For the past thirty days, there have been protests in every major city in Romania, and neither snow, sleet, nor bone chilling cold, have kept the demonstrators from protesting on a daily basis. In order to appease the masses, the government began replacing members of parliament, and when that proved ineffective, they proceeded to change every Member of Parliament from the top down.

To the great dismay of the governing party, the people still continue to protest, demanding a change of governance from the president on down, and are unwilling to accept any concessions. As yet, the violence has been minimal, with gendarmes beating a few people, a man setting himself on fire trying to throw a Molotov cocktail, and a few hundred spending at least a night in custody, but I fear it's only a matter of time before the situation turns violent. The general

public is at the end of its rope, enduring both pay cuts and a two hundred percent spike in electricity and heating costs, seeing no other alternative than to take to the streets and demand change.

The third event is also the one that is less obvious than the other two, the ratcheting up of vitriol and outright hatred against Christians and Christianity in general. For the past few years the message that God has been putting on my heart whenever I would preach a sermon is that persecution is coming, and as children of God we must prepare for the eventuality of it. At first the blank stares and the doubting expressions were evident in every congregation, but with the passage of time, and the evident trajectory of outright hostility toward believers, the expressions of doubt grew fewer and fewer in number.

I believe we are well on our way to seeing persecution in America, as the verbal hostilities against believers and faith in Christ have become common place and widely accepted. The jump from words to deeds is not as big as one might think, and the enemy has been effective in marginalizing and demonizing the household of faith.

Seeing as we foresee the evil that is about to descend, and knowing ourselves as being prudent, one wonders where it is that we must hide ourselves. As children of God, we hide not in caves, or forests, clefts of rocks, or fallout shelters, our hiding place is not a geographical location, but rather our hiding place is Christ Jesus our Lord. The prudent man sees evil afar off, and hides himself deeper in Christ, for he knows that Jesus is the only refuge, and the only safe place.

Though the world might grow chaotic, fearful and unstable, we remain joyful, at peace and comforted, for our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-4, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.