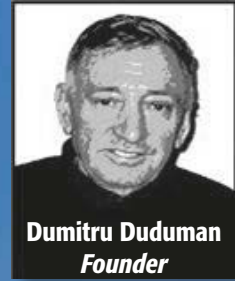


# Hand of **HELP**



Dumitru Duduman  
Founder



Hand of Help  
Ministries

May  
June • July 2017

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*Dirt Roads Leading  
Nowhere .....*



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# Dirt Roads Leading Nowhere...

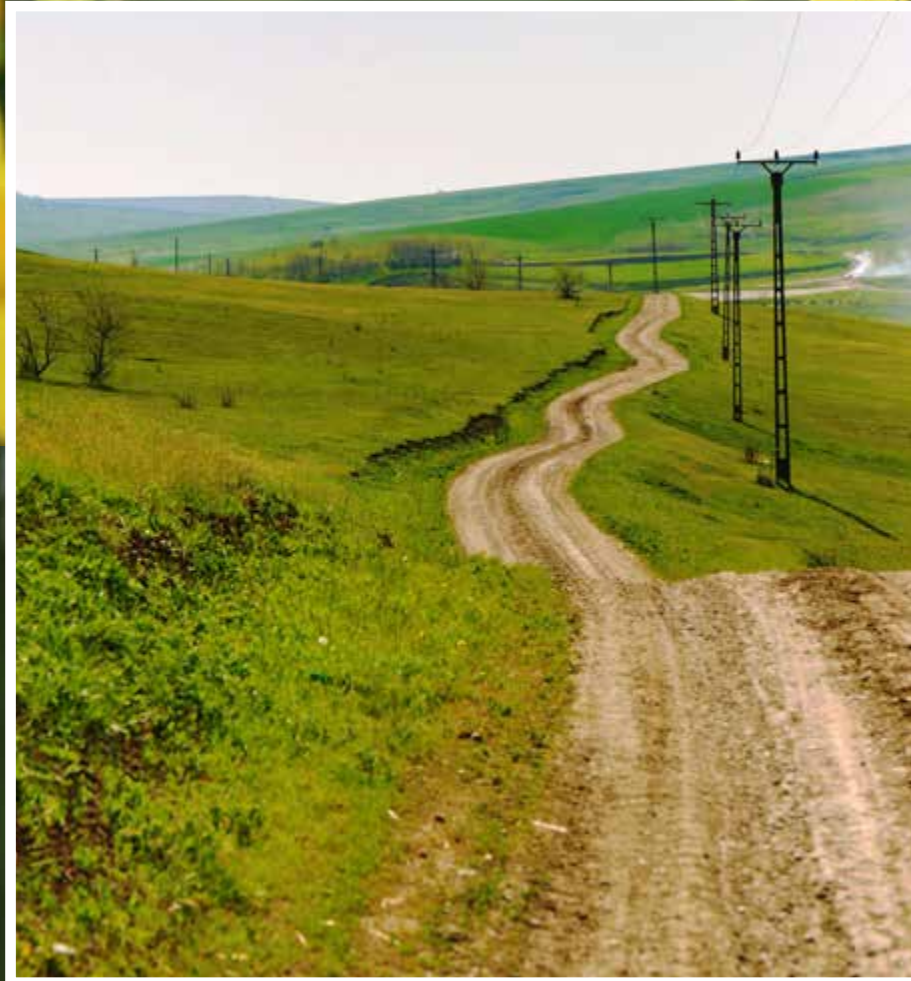
**M**y wife Alexandra and I are once more fortunate enough to have come to Romania and experience firsthand what our heavenly Father is doing through Hand of Help. After many months of being away, a time when we can be on the frontlines ministering to people is coveted and of profound importance for refocusing and amplifying the ministerial spring in our step.

Oftentimes being away from those whose lives we touch in Romania, and having to dwell more on logistics than hands on in the field outreach, our vision becomes blurred and our drive is weakened. It is out on the dirt

roads where we are reminded of the bottom line, people seeing our Jesus in action and then, having been touched by His boundless love, people desiring to follow our precious Lord and King!

This past Friday was no different. We set out on some of the better country roads in our county and after about 30 miles my father said, "Turn here". I had to stop for a moment and arching my eyebrows, I asked if he was sure this was the right way. It had been years since I had seen a road in such a deplorable condition. Thankful for a break in the rain that was long

enough to dry the roads, we proceeded at a snail's pace for about 4 miles, but even with the slow going it felt more like 15. The path, only wide enough for one car to drive at a time, was completely destroyed by erosion and it was no longer about choosing the good side of the road, but about choosing the pothole that was less likely to damage the vehicle and leave the undercarriage unscathed. As my father later told us, the mostly used method of transportation in those parts is by horse. It was perfectly quiet, with a mild breeze causing some of the dirt and dust to rise for a few seconds, just enough to cover everything in a light veil. I had never been more grateful for my grandfather insisting that I learn to drive on similar roads in my teens, all while navigating through livestock. If anyone has a teenage student driver, you can



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# Dirt Roads Leading Nowhere continued.....

# When Mud and Straw Won't Do

relate to what a blessing it is to keep a teen full of zeal and a lead foot going under 10mph.

As we continued down the road, the local pastor informed us that this is the only way to get to the families in the area, that it is a dead end and that any sort of weather, be it snow or rain, shuts the area down for days or weeks on end.

We pulled up to a small, passable home for a family of 4, and were greeted by Lacramioara Tapalaga, mother of 11 and Mihaela Tanase, mother of 3, and immediately realized that we were not looking at a home for a family of 4 as we first thought, but at a modest dwelling that was by no means built for the 18 people currently residing in it. When hardship came and desperation had taken over, Mihaela and her husband graciously allowed Lacramioara and her family to live in the second room of their home, measuring around 250 sqft, until they could figure something out. Years have gone by and regardless of how hard the Tapalagas worked, they could never save up enough to find a place of their own and relinquish half of the home back to Tanase family.

What spoke to us the most during this visit was their dedication in pursuing faith in Jesus. While they have not committed their lives to the Lord as of yet, we believe it is only a matter of time. Lacramioara gathers all of her 11 children and hitchhikes to the local church for all of its services. Whether it be a Sunday morn-



ing, Sunday evening, a midweek service or a special prayer night, Lacramioara and all of her children can be found in church, fellowshiping and learning about what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

We humbly ask that you pray with us, first and foremost for the salvation of these two families, that they commit their lives to the Lord and follow Him with all of their heart, soul and mind.

Secondly, please keep their housing situation in your prayers as we look into finding a simple village home for the relocation of one of the families.

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Thank you for the intercession, generosity and love that you have shown the orphaned, widowed and desolate of Romania! Your gift not only allows for the survival of countless souls, but extends past what our eyes can see, sparking a genuine love for Jesus, and reconciliations with our Father in many a heart, which carry with them eternal repercussions.

Daniel Boldea

The Istrate family members are no strangers to us. We have been visiting the tight knit family for years now, helping them inch out of inhumane living conditions and poverty. Until our most recent visit, we never thought to ask why the wall toward the back of their house is covered in dried reeds.

When they removed the reeds for our viewing, we were shocked to see the condition of the back wall. What was immediately evident were years after years of trying to patch the wall up using nothing but mud. Years of hoping and praying that somehow their best efforts would keep the structure together.

Given the incline of the terrain, the mud and straw bricks originally used, and the age of the home, which some believe to be over one hundred years old, it was a miracle that the house was still standing. Exposed to the fierce elements of nature in an open field, we could only imagine how many a winter the bare wall had to endure or how many nights the Istrates had to rely on

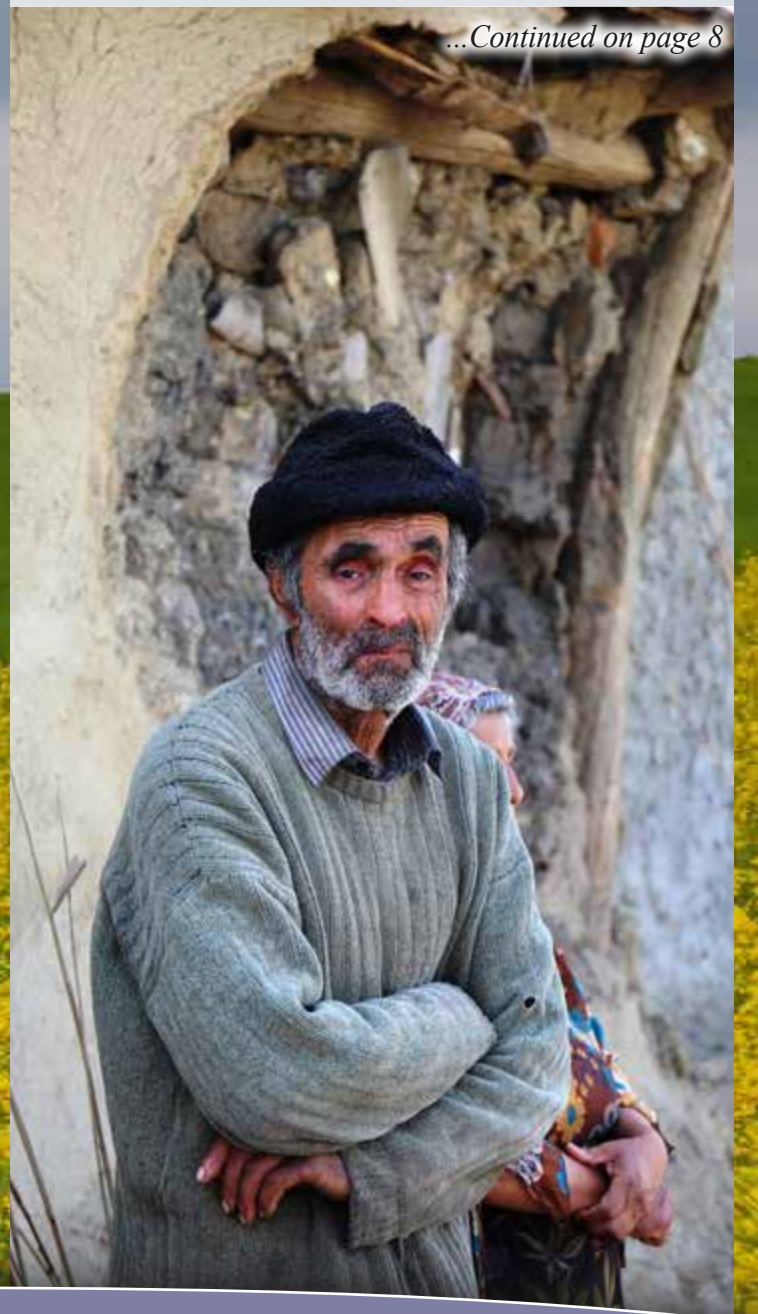


each other's body heat to survive, pondering why their shelter would not keep warmth.

A passing gaze into the eyes of the family's patriarch sufficed in order to comprehend the years of acute suffering and yet faithful, weathered endurance this feeble body endured.

There is a certain strength that comes with being the one responsible for a very large family, however internally it comes with a great toll on one's heart.

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# OUR CHILDREN

## The Touch of his Hand ... Before and After



Diana



Diana



Carla



Catalina



Florin



Gabriel



Maria



Mihaela



Rares



Stefana



Violeta



Vlad

It is hard to imagine the impotence one feels when they have to explain to their young children or grandchildren that warmth will come by rubbing their hands together or that hunger will be stilled by adding an extra cup of water to the already clear broth.

The project at hand is an impossible one for the Istrate family but an easy fix for an Omnipotent God.

During the last visit with the family we promised in faith to provide them with the proper building materials to repair the home (cement, wire and wood), that it would be completed during the summer's dry season and that they would not have to withstand another harsh winter with a hole in their home.

Thank you for keeping this project and the many others we see on a daily basis in your prayers.

Alexandra and Daniel Boldea



I never assumed I'd seen it all, but I did believe wholeheartedly that I'd seen enough wherein nothing could shock or surprise me any longer. When poverty is a constant, and you are witness to the utmost of human desperation on a daily basis, it's not so much that you develop a callousness, but rather you come to expect it to the point of taking in stride situations that would leave the uninitiated and unfamiliar in a state of disbelief.

I've seen the shell-shocked look on enough faces throughout my many years of ministry here in Romania to know that having come from a Westernized country, a nation where paved roads and indoor plumbing is the norm, there is only so much that the human mind can process by way of seeing manifest suffering up close until it begins to actively protect itself against what it is seeing.



You can tell when it happens. You can see the unfocused look fall across the eyes, and the perplexed, quizzical arching of the eye brows, as though for an instant the person doesn't know where they are or cannot adequately define what they are seeing. It happens most often with those who are on their first ever missions trip, because anyone who has been on a missions trip anywhere in the world knows that a certain level of poverty is to be expected, and they come prepared.



There is no romance in poverty. There is no romance in hunger. The starving artist, the homeless poet, the poverty-stricken painter, these play well in the movies, but in the real world, in real life, hunger hurts, and cold seeps into your bones, and seeing your children go without, breaks your heart anew each time you gaze upon their gaunt faces.

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If someone else would have come to me and told me the story of the Ionda family, I would not have believed it. I would have automatically assumed that they were exaggerating for effect, that they were being hyperbolic in what they had seen, because even here, even in the most impoverished parts of the most remote villages, such lack is rarely found.

As the saying goes however, seeing is believing, and because I saw how this family lived with my own eyes, I have no option but to believe what my eyes have seen. The Ionda family is comprised of six children with another on the way. The father is currently incarcerated, and will continue to be for a minimum of another seven years.

The first thing I noticed upon arriving at what I will generously call the Ionda family home was a massive stockpile of manure. It stood out so prevalently that after a brief introduction I asked Elena Ionda what she was planning on doing with it, to which she shrugged and answered, "Make *tizic* so I can keep my babies warm."

*Tizic* is a mixture of straw and manure that gets made into small patties, which are then allowed to dry in the sun, and used as a substitute for firewood. Anyone that's ever lived on a farm knows that manure doesn't burn clean, so ever since the six children were born, they have been inhaling toxic fumes from what are essentially contained manure fires.

Promising that I would send enough firewood to keep them for the entire winter, I encouraged Elena to use the stockpiled manure as fertilizer as it would be more beneficial than drying it out and burning it in her stove.

I don't know if it's possible to have less than nothing, but this family came as close to it as I have ever seen. Their outhouse is nothing more than a shell, four crumbling walls with no roof, and this is what the family uses whether it's raining, sleeting, snowing, freezing or not.

We left whatever food we had with us with the promise to return and as we departed for our next destination, I couldn't help but wonder if I would ever see a more desperate situation than this. My hope and prayer is that I never will, but my fear is that at some point, in some long forgotten village, we will run across another desperate situation that will rival the Ionda family plight.

It is because of families and situations such as this that we are tireless in our outreach to the surrounding communities. It is because we know that such desperation exists that we venture out to villages no other ministries would hazard a journey to. It is because we know that if we won't go that extra mile, if we don't put in that extra effort, families such as the Iondas would never know that kindness still exists in this cruel world, and that there are those who still hold to the mandate of Jesus to go and care for the least among us. Thank you for your prayers, and for making this work possible.

In Christ,  
Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.



Filip Enache is now our youngest boy. Born on December 8th, 2013, he is the half-brother of the three Onofrei sisters. Our God has certainly heard the prayers of his sisters who have been asking for an opportunity to have their little brother close by, living in our center.

Filip's mother had no house of her own. She was living with Filip's father in a sheepfold, like a nomad, accompanying him when he had to move the livestock with the changing of seasons.

It was midwinter when the authorities discovered Filip and his mother living in unspeakable conditions and took both of them in for 3 months at a center for single mothers and abused women. It was during this time that we started visiting Filip together with his sisters.



At the end of her time in the center, the authorities asked us to take Filip under our care as his mother was under no circumstance able to take care of him.

Filip came to us in April, 2017. He barely knew how to eat, let alone know the taste of certain foods. Our social workers spent hours slowly teaching him the basic notions of care, nutrition, hygiene, etc.

He is now enrolled in Kindergarten, interacting with and getting to know all his new friends and family at Hand of Help. We are blessed to receive such a young child under our wings and we pray that our God shows us how to best tend to his needs, make up for the years of neglect, and guide him according to His will and on His path.



## Dear Brethren,

Dear Brethren,

Luke 21:28, "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

There are only a handful of demonstrable certainties in this present life. It is both certain and demonstrable that water is wet, that fire burns, that politicians obfuscate and that no matter the circumstance of situation you will always find solace and comfort within the pages of Scripture.

There has never been a situation in my life, no matter how difficult or seemingly insurmountable, for which the Bible hasn't had an answer or in the least a word of comfort.

Although it was not a conscious endeavor, for the past few weeks during my morning time with the Word, I have been gravitating toward Scripture passages having to do with the last days. As I said, it was not something I set out to do, it is not something I consciously mapped out, but the way I approach my quiet time gives a lot

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of leeway to the unction and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There really isn't a rigid structure, I don't have a set amount of verses or chapters that I have to read on a certain morning, it could be as little as two or three words upon which I meditate and from which I draw wisdom and truth.

Of the four gospels, Matthew and Luke deal with the topic of the last days in a more pronounced fashion than the other two, and if we read the words of Jesus Himself regarding what the last days will look like, it is an undeniable reality that they will be difficult, tumultuous and chaotic days.

The tableau that Jesus paints regarding the last days is one which includes wars, rumors of war, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, deceivers and an unprecedented falling away from the truth. In His love and wisdom God chose to forewarn us of these days in His Word that we might not be ignorant of the events that are about to unravel, but also to give us instruction as to what we as children of God ought to be doing when we begin to see these things unfolding.

When we see these things begin to happen, our reaction ought not to be fear, it ought not to be distress, it ought not to be terror, dread, or trepidation. When we begin to see these things begin to happen, the instruction we've been given is to lift up our heads and look up.

In theory that sounds like a simple enough thing to do, but in practice it gets a little complicated. It's not so much the action of lifting our heads that is difficult, but understanding that there is a far deeper meaning to this seemingly simple instruction than the physical craning of our necks.

When Jesus tells us to lift our heads and look up, there is a spiritual underpinning to the exercise that overshadows simply looking at the sky until we start seeing shapes in the clouds or until we go sun blind from staring into the sun.

When we lift our heads and look up we must do so with a sense of expectation, a sense of anticipation, a sense of certainty, and a sense of vision.

We look up with the expectation that God will keep His promises toward His children and be with us whether through the flood or through the fire. We look up with anticipation of seeing His miracle-working Hand guiding us, covering us, and providing for us even in the darkest of days. We look up with certainty, knowing that because our Redeemer lives, He is able to do all things, even if it means suspending the natural laws that govern our existence. All things means ALL things! Not just some, not just most. God can do all things, and that includes keeping you safe from what will soon befall this world.

We also look up with vision, a vision not so much of what is, but of what will be. It is that sense of vision founded on the promises of God that propels us ever forward. It is with vision that we see beyond today, into the promise of the future glory that awaits all who remain faithful to the end. Jesus went to prepare a home not so He could keep it empty, or sell it to the highest bidder, but so that we may be with Him in glory.

Although the world seems to be spinning out of control, although uncertainty is the currency of the day, although the plans of men are falling by the wayside like so much chaff, let not your heart be troubled. Look up and lift up your heads because your redemption draws near.

John 14:3, "And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr.