



Hand of Help
Ministries

Hand of **HELP**



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Keeping Promises

The Doubting Thomas of

Baranca

During our initial visit to the other Baranca I ran across a man named Ilie. For some reason he reminded me of my grandfather. Whether due to his smile, the twinkle in his eye or the weathered face that spoke of knowing hardship and trials, I warmed up to the man instantly and we began to chat. Ilie was visiting one of the families we had come to see, and as I snapped a couple shots of the family and asked what their needs were, I noticed Ilie's smile slip off his face.

Although the man had said nothing, I felt an awkwardness settle between us and I began to wonder what I did or if I'd inadvertently said something to sour his mood so quickly. I continued to speak to the head of the household inquiring as to what their most immediate necessities were, but out of the corner of my eye I kept watching Ilie, arms crossed and an unsettled look on his countenance.

The list was long, as one would expect when the family in question has next to nothing, and as I was leaving, I informed them that although I could not promise to bring everything on the list, I would do my best to bring a mattress and some pots and pans.

As I turned to leave, Ilie touched my arm, looked me in the eye and said, 'Keep your promise; please keep your promise. Over the years others have come and they've just taken pictures of these families, and were never heard from again. They live with expectation, and they're always disappointed in the end.'

I assured Ilie I was not like the others who had come, and if I gave my word, I would do my utmost to keep it. Although this seemed like little assurance to him, he nodded and said, 'We will see.'

Three weeks later we returned with a truckload of supplies, bringing more than just mattresses and pots and pans, but also bringing potatoes, and sheets, and dressers, and everything else we could fit into the truck.

Although we'd only told the local pastor we were coming, during the first stop of the day in the village of Baranca, Ilie was there with a smile on his face, nodding approvingly.

Since we'd brought extra, I asked him if he needed a mattress as well, and after nodding in the affirmative, we gave him one, and offered to take it to where he lived or at least have someone carry it for him.

With a large grin on his face he said, 'First, I won't give up my shade and let someone else carry it for me, and second, if I can do it on my own why shouldn't I?'

For the next couple of hours we made our way through the list of families, delivering to each what we had brought for them, and when we reached the last house, there was Ilie again, still smiling.

As we walked in with the last mattress, food package, and sack of potatoes, I asked Ilie, 'So, did I keep my word?'

'No,' he said with a stern face then broke into a smile. 'You went far beyond anything you promised these people, and exceeded even the loftiest of expectations.'

Ilie extended his hand still smiling and I took it, then simply said, 'Thank you.'

As we were driving away, the local pastor who had been with us the entire day turned to me and said, 'I see you've won Thomas over. That, my brother, is a difficult thing to do and I know many who have tried and failed.'

'Who's Thomas?' I asked turning on my blinker and pulling over to the side to let the pastor out in front of his home.

'Ilie,' he said smiling again, 'everyone in town calls him doubting Thomas because unless you show him proof of your assertions, he just won't believe you. He takes the passage in Jeremiah about a man who trusts in man being cursed very literally.'

At that, I smiled, thanked the man for taking the day and roaming the villages with us, and with a promise to return, said our goodbyes.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.



One Need Among *Many*

When we went to visit a pastor on the Moldovan border, who always takes us out to see people from his church, we asked him if there were any new families we had never met and who really needed help. He said yes, but they were in the village of Ghireni, about 15 kilometers (9-10 miles) away. He asked if we were willing to go there with him and we said we would be happy to! One of the places he took us was to see Maria Stratulat, a single mom, and her two young children, Elisaveta (3 1/2 years old) and Andrei (2 1/2 years old).

Her husband was very violent, so she moved back in with her parents and grandfather when she was pregnant with her second child. The house where they are living is very small and they have 4 generations living under the same roof. When the baby was born, the father did not even come for the birth so little Andrei has never met his daddy. The father has not tried to contact them at all and is now applying for a divorce.

Maria prays for him every day. He had a rough childhood himself. He was raised by his grandparents, and he couldn't handle being a father since he didn't have a father figure



when he was growing up. She has no way to provide for her children. All income that the government provides for the children (which is a very small amount) goes to the husband since they have his last name and she never gets any of it.

It would be a huge blessing for her to have a cow so she could at least have the milk and dairy products for herself and the children and also be able to have a little money from selling whatever they don't use. Also, at some point, we would like to find a small house that is inexpensive for her and her children.

Please be praying for her! She is very sweet and she is really carrying a burden on her heart knowing that she can't provide for her children. If God leads you to help with this situation in any way, I know she would be extremely grateful and blessed!

Psalm 72:12 "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."

May God richly bless you all and keep you close to Him!

Hosanna Edman



A Chance *Encounter*

It is an odd feeling having a fully grown adult weep tears of joy in front of you, especially when it is done in the middle of a crowded supermarket with strangers walking by, unable to hide their surprise and astonishment.

It was a Sunday evening and my wife had asked if I would go to the store. Other than needing diapers, she'd also asked me to look for ripe avocados since Victoria seemed to have taken a liking to them, and when you are diversifying a baby's diet, any food they take a fondness to, is something you should have on hand permanently.

Although avocados are not as exotic as they once were here in Romania, finding ripe avocados is a difficult task to be sure. Most are green, hard, and even with wrapping them in newspaper and leaving them on the windowsill, most of them turn black on the inside and are not edible.

As I was making my way through the stack of avocados the store had available, squeezing each to see if there was at least one I could present to my wife without her pointing out that it wasn't soft enough, who do I see walking toward me but Verginel and his wife, pushing a shopping cart and looking over the bananas.

Verginel is the overseer of the Vladeni-Podeni senior facility, and since Vladeni is almost an hour's drive away he was the last person I expected to see in the store.

He smiled when he saw me, we shook hands, and after having a brief conversation I found out they made the drive out to the city every week to buy supplies, since they were far cheaper and more readily available than if they tried to acquire them locally.

As we continued our conversation Verginel asked if we'd made any headway with the adult diapers I promised we would look into, and as it turned out we had.

I informed Verginel we had ordered a large quantity of diapers a few days earlier, and we had been planning to come visit that following Tuesday. I'd intended to call him the next day, so this chance encounter was serendipitous.

When he heard we'd planned on coming to visit, and that we were bringing diapers, Verginel started to cry. The more tears he wiped from his face, the more the tears flowed, and soon enough we had people slowing down as they walked by to get a better look at the man who was sobbing in front of another man.

I smiled at Verginel, put my hand on his shoulder, and tried to calm him, but all he said was, 'You don't know what this means for us, you really don't. How can I thank you for this?'



The impact even the most mundane of gestures have upon others may forever remain obscure to us. Only once in a while do we get a full glimpse of just how great a blessing this ministry is to people.

In all honesty, who would have thought adult diapers, or the acquisition thereof would make a grown man cry, but here he was, crying, and not caring who saw him do it or what they thought of him for doing it.

Whether in smaller or greater measure we touch the lives of all we come in contact with. We sow into them, and they likewise touch our lives, and sow into us. We can either sow blessing or cursing, joy or pain, hope or desperation.

I am ever grateful to the Father in Heaven that we are still able to sow joy, blessing, and hope into the lives of those with whom we come in contact with, and this would not be possible without your help.

Thank you for responding to the needs we present. I hope and pray you see the fruit of your sacrifice in what we do and what we are able to accomplish here.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.

Keeping Promises



Keeping Promises

Long before I was able to read and understand the Word of God for myself, I learned the importance of keeping one's word from my grandfather and my mother. My father was always at work, trying to keep a roof over our heads and food in our bellies, but grandpa and mom were always around, and even from an early age I understood that if either of them promised they would do something, no matter how difficult, arduous or inconvenient it might have been for them, they followed through on their promise.

Seeing the consistency of their character inspired me to follow in their footsteps, and now, being a fully grown adult with a child of my own my desire is to have my daughter one day see this trait in me and follow in my footsteps..

There is untold virtue in keeping one's promises, and though the saying 'all a man has is his word' has been repeated so often it has become cliché, it is nevertheless true.

It's all well and good when a promise is easy to keep, but when there are bumps in the road and unexpected setbacks is when your character is tested, and when it is determined whether or not one keeps their word only when it's easy for them to do so, or every time without fail, no matter the obstacle.

While traveling out to the villages with my dad the past couple months I made two promises to two different people, and both of them ended up being more difficult to keep than I had envisioned. It's an easy thing to give your word; it's keeping it that's a struggle sometimes.

The first promise I made was to Verginel, a former employee of *Hand of Help* who now runs the retirement home in

Vladeni. I promised I would look into some adult diapers for them, and hopefully get a company to donate some. Either way, we would do our utmost to make sure we brought them some diapers even if we had to pay for them ourselves.

The second promise I made was to a few families in Baranca regarding mattresses, giving my word that we would find a way to get some mattresses to them sooner rather than later.

With each promise made, there were heretofore unseen obstacles waiting just around the bend. After making a few calls and sending out a few e-mails, I discovered that there are no local manufacturers of adult diapers and that the wholesale distributors of these products would not consider donating them. They have a built in customer base, so even wrangling a discount out of them was a feat of herculean proportions.

If we were a different kind of ministry we could just throw money at the problem, but as it is we are on a shoestring budget, we had to find a way to acquire the diapers I promised Verginel without cutting into other funds already budgeted for other projects. As is often the case, if you look hard enough you will always find a way to do some good, and after going back and forth with the wholesaler, we were able to acquire two months' worth of diapers for the Vladeni senior facility, deliver them, and also bring along bags of fruit, sweets and other goodies the residents have likely not seen in some time.

As far as the second promise is concerned, it was not the acquisition of the mattresses that was the difficult part – they are readily available second hand – but what we had not factored was finding a way to get the mattresses to Baranca.



The vehicles we have just wouldn't cut it, as you could only fit two, perhaps three mattresses in each, so that left us with only one viable option: that of renting a large truck. The cost of renting the truck was not prohibitive, and since it was a Christian brother who owned it, he worked with us, but seeing as we would be taking an entire truck to Baranca it would have been wasteful not to fill it, and fill it we did.

Since we'd already visited the place we knew the people of Baranca could use anything and everything we could spare, so we loaded the truck with sofa beds, dressers, new and used mattresses, potatoes, blankets, clothing, as well as many odds and ends one might need in the home.

What started out as an obstacle turned out to be an opportunity to be an even greater blessing for Baranca than we had first planned, and oftentimes it is the selfsame obstacles we grow frustrated over that are blessings in disguise.

By the end of the day we were all dusty, sweaty and tired, but it was a day I will remember fondly for a long time to come.

When the desire of our hearts is to be men and women of our word, God makes a way, and aids us in accomplishing what we set out to accomplish.

Thank you for making days such as this possible, as well as keeping this work and those who labor therein in your prayers.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.



Trip to *Romania*

Oh, how we thank God for the opportunities He gives us to represent Him and His Kingdom as ambassadors....opportunities to show how loving, kind, and faithful He is.

Most of our days in Romania are spent visiting widows and poor families. Often times the local pastors will take us around to visit the neediest of their congregations. It brings such joy to these families to know they are not forgotten and they are reminded each time that God loves them, in very practical ways.

This trip included buying a cow for a large family, having a well dug for a family, building a 5-room home to replace a very old 1-room home, and buying building supplies for 2 large families needing to add rooms onto their small homes due to insufficient



space for their families. We were also able to buy seed for some of the farming families so they could plant their fields. We visited between 80 and 90 families, each receiving food and money for various needs.

The children at the orphanage are doing well. They are healthy, active, and happy. They know they are loved by the ones God has called to care for them.

Thank you for your prayers and financial help in the ongoing work of the Hand of Help ministry. Your monies are being well spent.

Blessings,
*Dave, Cheryl, and Rosanna Edman
HalisPELL, NJ*



July's Child of the Month

Condurache George, born June 5th, 2005 is the newest member of our family. George's parents divorced when he was only a few months old. The separation enabled his father to start a new life abroad, in Russia, from where he never showed any interest whatsoever in his son. George and his mother went to live with their maternal relatives. However, soon afterwards, faced with the lack of material and financial resources, George's mom also went abroad to look for a job.

Left alone with only his grandparents, George was often found in strangers' homes in nearby villages. His grandfather, suffering from diverse neurological and psychological sicknesses, used to beat him regularly and apply inhumane treatments and severe punishments.

It did not take George too long to desire to start skipping school and



although he used to be a very smart child in his studies, his educational progress was visibly slowed down.

This year, his mother came back to Romania and upon seeing

everything that has happened to her child, she asked for our help, even if only for a season. Her promise was that she would continue to maintain a relationship with George and will strive to find a solution for the family to be reunited.

George is currently in the third grade and will attend one of the schools that our other children do. This will help him adjust more easily to his new environment. Please keep him in your prayers as he starts his life again!

He will have to work hard with our teachers to recuperate everything he has lost during his absence from school, and it will be a while until he learns to take joy in his childhood, but we believe that the love and harmony that will be shown toward him, will change his path and he will become a strong, believing individual, with hope of a renewed future and an eagerness to discover it.

Dear Brethren,

John 15:18-19, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

2 Timothy 3:12, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

I’ve been doing more praying than writing lately. I’ve been doing more praying than pretty much anything else if I am to be perfectly honest, and I think anyone seeing the world for what it has become, and watching the chess pieces moving on the chessboard with lightning fast speed can do nothing less.

We knew these things were coming, for long and long we knew. Seeing them up close, however, does make one catch their breath and realize these are just the outlying storm clouds. The brunt of the storm itself and the true fury thereof has not yet arrived.

My heart breaks as I watch more and more people tether their hopes to the church, thinking it a place of refuge and safety, only to have their hopes shattered at the revelation that the church is full to the rafters with godless wolves who are tirelessly bringing in destructive heresies, hoping to seduce, to tempt, to deceive, and to shipwreck faith in the Christ, as well as the Word.

It seems like every other day there is some Christian college somewhere

embracing what God abhors, and lest anyone have the temerity to say anything about it, they have already taken preemptive measures and painted any who would object as being bigoted knuckle draggers whose only place on this earth is a cave somewhere.

There no longer remains reverence for the Word of God, and as such we can call it a story book, the ramblings of long dead people who had nothing better to do than sit down and scrawl some chicken scratches on some parchment, or an antiquated tome likened to an instructional manual on making buggy whips.

There is no outrage, and this outrages me. There is no outcry, no call for the immediate dismissal of those who would slander the Word of God and compare it to nothing more than useless dross and filler.

With each passing day those who continue to cling to Christ and stand on the Word will be labeled outsiders. With each passing day those that refuse to be indoctrinated into the new and glorious heresy will be marginalized, shunned, and made out to be the worst kind of humans.

Most of you already know this; you’ve prepared your hearts for it. You’ve steeled your constitution, and are ready to brave the crashing waves of hatred and vitriol. This post is not so much for you, but for those who still walk about with their heads in the clouds thinking if only they make enough compromises, if

only they acquiesce enough, if only they become more and more like the world, the world will eventually embrace them. As long as you cling to Christ, you are a foreign entity and the world’s singular purpose is to expel you. The only way to be at peace with the world is to betray the cross, and sadly more and more ‘spiritual leaders’ and men of renown are doing exactly that.

For the past six years or so, I’ve been warning of coming persecution only to be mocked, ridiculed, and even laughed out of some churches. It’s good to see some are at least catching up, seeing what’s on the horizon, and beginning to sound the alarm.

Make your peace about being an outsider. Make your peace with the reality that you will be ostracized, maligned, marginalized and persecuted. Pray not to be spared these things, but rather pray for the boldness, courage, and strength to endure them.

The hour draws nigh, and He who sees all will judge in righteousness and holiness among His own. You will know when this has commenced from the wailing and mourning that will pierce the silence.

Matthew 24:13, “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.