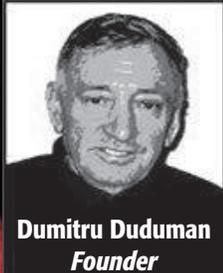




Hand of Help
Ministries

September–October
2019



Dumitru Duduman
Founder

Hand of **HELP** CLOSER TO HOME



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CLOSER TO HOME

It used to be one would have to travel to the deepest jungles of Borneo or the Amazon, trek through uncharted territory, and brave indigenous animal species, to find people untouched and unaffected by the march of progress. That we found such a community only thirty miles from the city of Iasi, is still something we are wrapping our minds around.

No, we're not talking loincloths and blowguns, but let's face it, save for when the National Geographic camera crews are present, even the most indigenous tribes now wear jeans and flannel shirts. It is nevertheless jarring to meet someone in our modern era who does not know what a bottle of shampoo is, what

it's supposed to do, or who have never seen something as basic as a modern stove, when thirty miles away there is a bustling college town with trolleys, museums, and even a drive-through McDonald's.

The villages of Madarjac, Bojila and Frumusica have been forgotten by everyone except for those who live



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there, and one local who moved away thirty years ago to work abroad, but has been praying for revival in this remote community ever since.

To call them villages is generous. Hovels made of mud and straw pepper the landscape, and not much else. The entire community is in what is referred to as a level 5 disadvantaged zone, meaning that there are no paved roads, and the land is infertile. There isn't much that can be grown in this area, and what can be is very difficult to bring to harvest.

We have been working in this part of the country for well over a quarter-century, and we had never heard of these villages, but one day, providence made a way via the mayor of Madarjac who contacted us asking for help.

We did not fully grasp the extent of the need until we arrived. When he spoke to us of the desperate need in his community, we thought it was one or two families that found themselves in such dire straits. Once we made it to Madarjac, we realized it was everyone.



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There are a total of 1700 souls living in these three villages, and only one believer among them. We have seen a lot throughout the years, and few situations surprise us anymore, but the level of poverty in these communities bordered on overwhelming. Words cannot describe it, pictures do not suffice, and rather than become immobilized by the sheer volume of need, we began to triage the situation, focusing on the most immediate needs first.

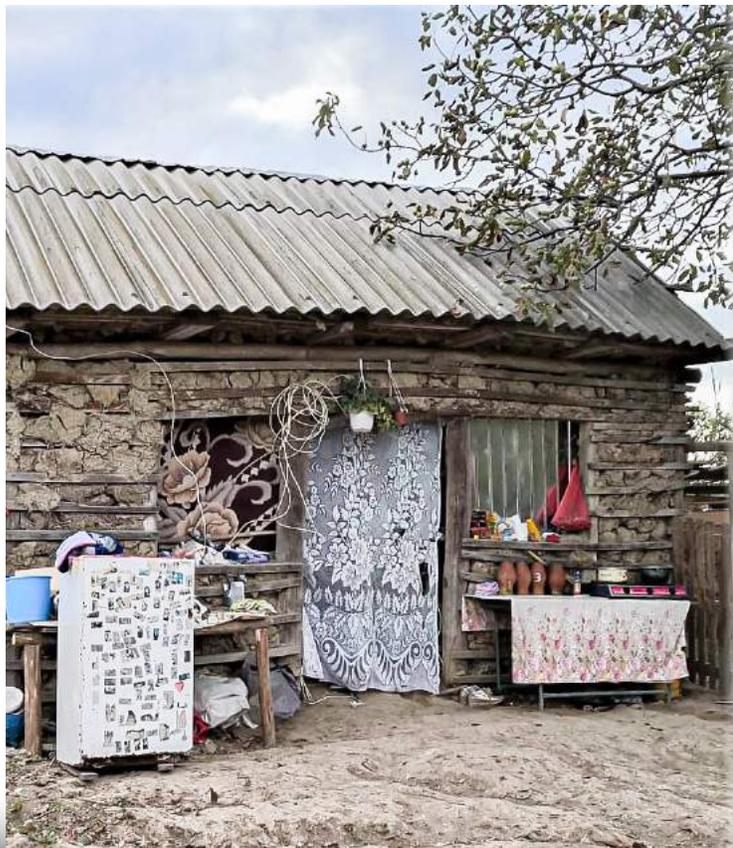
There were two families in particular who would not have survived the coming winter in their current condition, one having lost their house in a fire and the other never having much of a home to begin with, and decided to build two small homes for them. Construction has started, and this has caused quite the hubbub in this isolated community because unlike others who have come and gone never to return, we are doing something.

We have become known as the Christians, and the entire community is abuzz with whispers that the Christians are helping the poor, and not just talking about helping the poor.

If ever there was a time for us to step up, it is now, and if ever there was a community in need, it is this one. There are numerous needs, each with varying degrees of urgency, and our hope and prayer is to be able to tackle the most urgent ones first.

Since winter is fast approaching, the most urgent need is heat. Even those who have something closely resembling homes have no source of heat. Their makeshift stoves are made of mud-brick, with an iron grate on top, and though they can cook on them, they emanate little to no heat.

We have found stoves that both give off heat and can be used as a cooktop and oven for the equivalent of \$450 a



CLOSER TO HOME



piece. This is an immediate need, and ideally, we would like to purchase as many stoves as are needed in this community and make sure that everyone survives the winter.

Beyond the immediate, there is also a vision emerging after much prayerfulness, as to our role as a ministry in this forsaken community. It is an ambitious vision, but every vision God has birthed in this ministry has been ambitious.

Faith has guided us from the inception of this work, going back as far as purchasing hundreds of large print Bibles in Romanian, packing them in suitcases, and purchasing plane tickets, while the Communist regime was still in power, and going back while they still held power would have meant a death sentence. It was through eyes of faith that we acquired the land to build an orphanage



when we had less than a thousand dollars in the bank and no earthly expectation of being able to finish it.

A big vision requires a big God, but our God has proven Himself time and again.

The broad outline of our vision for this community is threefold: spiritual, physical and educational.

As far as the physical is concerned, the need is obvious and multifaceted. From providing clothing and food, building homes, purchasing stoves, to helping insulate the livable adobes from the elements, we will go down the list from greatest to least urgent, and systematically meet as many of the needs as we are able.

As for the spiritual aspect of the vision, not only do we want to do a crusade in the community, we hope to be able to send a missionary team to evangelize and preach the gospel long term.

Then there is the educational aspect of the vision, which requires basic, practical lessons in personal hygiene, homesteading, and other simple aspects of everyday life this community was never taught.

Finally, we hope to be able to build a building that can serve as both a house of worship and an educational hub for the entire community.

Yes, it is a big vision, it is a bold vision, but even the mighty oak began as a seedling, and a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

With God's help and yours, we can change the lives of an entire community. Please keep this project in your prayers, and if the Lord leads to help with the most immediate of needs, which are the stoves and relief goods, it would be an untold blessing.

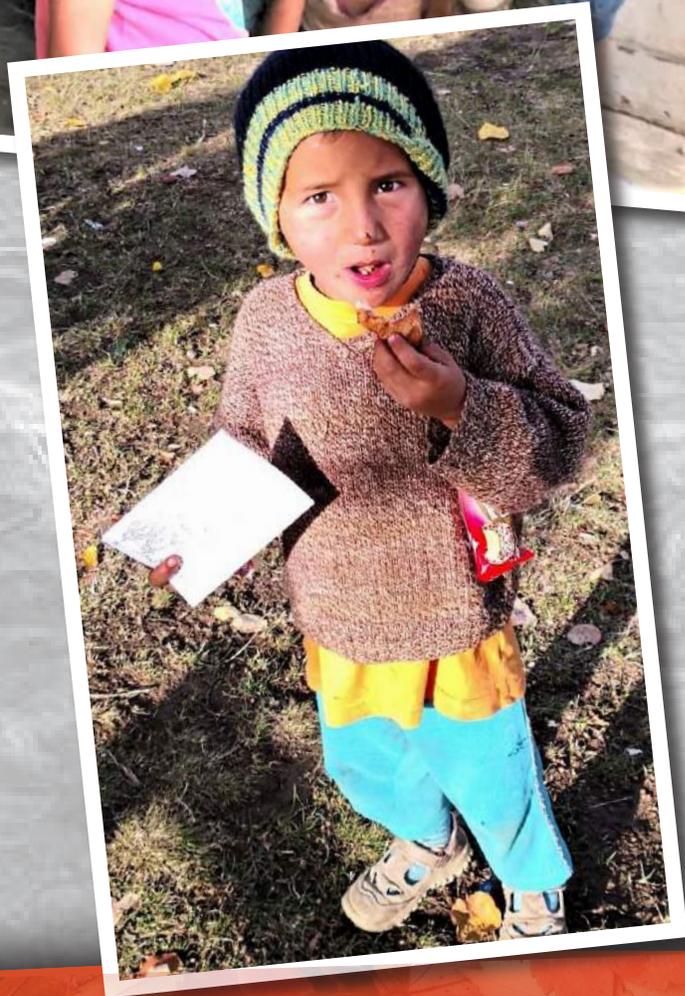
In His Grace,

Hand of Help Staff

CLOSER



TO HOME





Life's Twilight

None of us are getting any younger. The best we can hope for is to age gracefully, and perhaps hear a remark offhand – genuine or otherwise – about how we don't look our age or look good for our age. I don't really mind the first one, but as far as looking good for my age, who am I being compared to, and if they think I look good for my age, what does the other guy look like?

This present life is all the more precious because it is temporary. If man lived forever, he would not appreciate life nearly as much as when he knows it has a finality. Even so, most often, youth is wasted on the young, and by the time we get around to appreciating the simple things in life, we're nearing the finish line.

Maybe it's because I feel myself slowing down, getting older that the plight of the elderly here in Romania is ever more often at the forefront of my mind. Between their children moving to other countries in the hope of

making a better life for themselves, and the dwindling respect for one's father and mother, there is an all-out epidemic of lonely, desperate, helpless men and women in the twilight of their lives, having no one to turn to, no one to lean on, and no one to fellowship with.

Between my children, my grandchildren, and the children at the orphanage, I am never in want of human interaction. Someone is always about, always there to lend an ear, or sit a

spell, and I could just imagine how lonesome it would be with no one to talk to for weeks, and sometimes months on end.

For many of the seniors we visit, the loneliness is almost as bad as the hunger, or the cold, or running out of an entire month's pension before the first week of the month is ended. Choosing between paying for one's prescription medication or buying bread, or firewood for when it gets too cold to huddle under a blanket isn't a choice anyone who worked and paid into the system all of their adult life ought to be forced to make. Yet, it is such choices that the aging population of Romania is forced to make on a disturbingly regular basis.

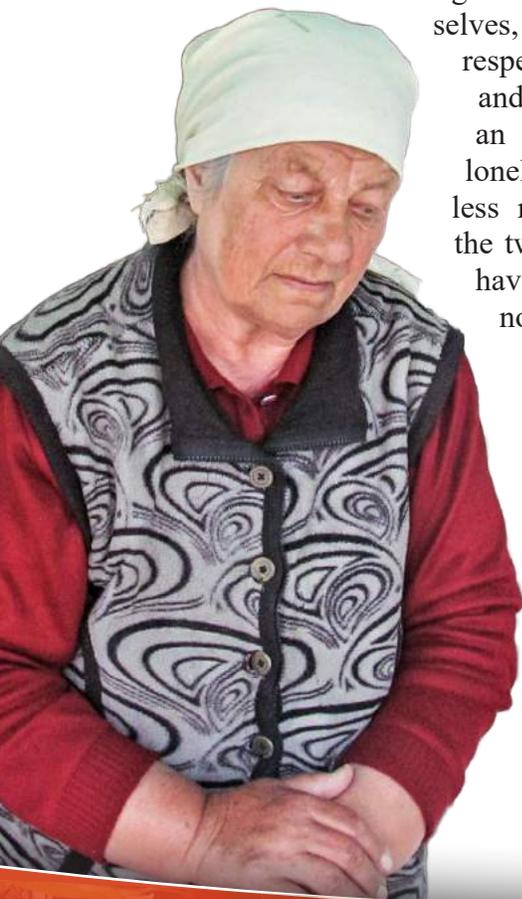
Maria is 83 years old and has a pension of 300 lei (approximately \$75 USD) from collective farming, where she worked for more years than she can count. Things used to be easier, but they've grown markedly more difficult since Maria suffered a stroke, and is paralyzed on her right side, able to move only with the aid of crutches.

Not only must Maria support herself from her stipend but also her son Cristinel who was born with Down's syndrome. They live in a small room, which would be easy enough to keep warm if they had any wood that they could burn. Although it was not mentioned, I looked around the property to see if there was firewood anywhere, and as I suspected, there was not.

Maria's need is not an isolated case, and there are countless others in similar situations, from sister Furnica, who lives alone in the village of Vanatori, to sister Berghian in Dumbravita, all widows whom we've helped, and continue to help because you make it possible.

It's difficult enough getting old, frail, sickly, and watching the world pass you by without having to worry about whether or not you will survive the night because you ran out of wood to put on the fire, or suffer hunger pangs because you haven't eaten in a couple of days.

Helping the most vulnerable among us has become a mission within a mission for this ministry, and who is more vulnerable than the very young, and the very old?



Life's Twilight



This year, as in years past, we want to purchase a substantial amount of firewood and distribute it before the cold weather sets in, beginning with the widows and the elderly, as well as large families.

This is an immediate need, one that cannot wait due to the soon coming winter. Please keep this need in your prayers, and if the Lord leads you to help, know that it is a worthwhile cause.

Pastor Mircea Boldea, Sr.



Heavy Burdens

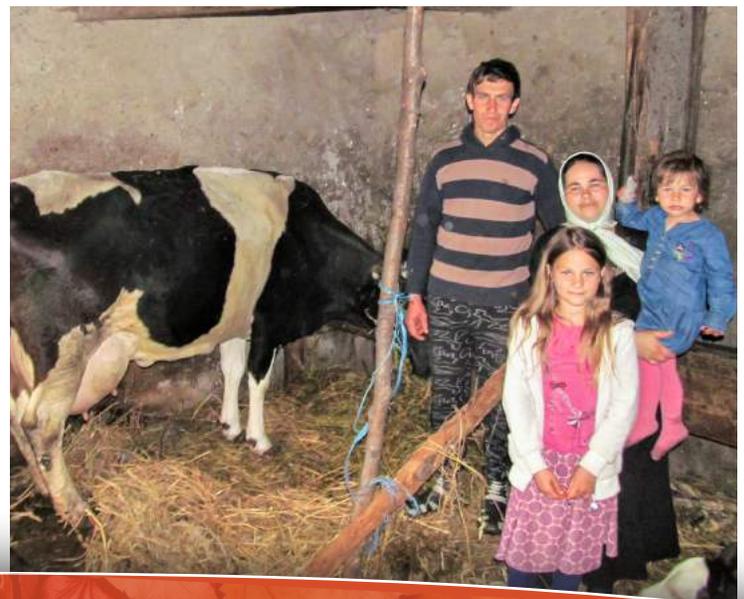
We've all been there at some point in life. The weight of the world on our shoulders gets heavy and burdensome, and all we can do is put one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward. Life's burdens might be different for everyone, from lack of basic necessities to an unexpected illness, to seeing a pink slip on our desk on a perfectly nondescript Friday morning. The weight, however, is the same. It pushes down, it grinds our bones into dust, it makes the most basic functions like breathing cumbersome, and oftentimes relief is slow in coming.

Some men are better suited to carry the heavy burdens than others, at least it would seem so from the outside looking in. They seem to have an enviable, innate ability to carry on, to barrel through, to fix their gaze on a far off destination, and unrelentingly press toward their destination. Even those who seem well suited, however, feel the weight, and though they may not show it, or talk about it, if you pay close enough attention, you can catch glimpses of it when their guard is down, when they think no one is watching.

Dumitru Atomei is from a different generation. He is from a generation that didn't bellyache about blisters or splinters, sprained wrists, or bloodied lips. You pull

out the splinter, you wash off the blood, you bandage the blister, rub some dirt on the wrist, and you get back to work, because your kids have to eat, and the bills have to get paid.

That mindset worked for a good while, until Dumitru was diagnosed with diabetes, and became insulin-dependent. It was then that reality set in, and he realized this wasn't something he could rub some dirt on, or ignore, at least if he wanted to be around to see his ten children grow up.



Heavy Burdens

It was also around this time that he realized he couldn't carry the burden all on his own, but that God was there, waiting patiently to be called upon that He might answer.

Few men call on God in their abundance, but many call on Him in their moment of hardship. Thankfully, God simply said to call on Him, and He would answer. There were no addendums or riders to this promise; it was a blanket statement, all-inclusive and all-encompassing.

Whether joyful or hurting, in times of peace or in times of war, on a normal afternoon, or in an impossible situation, if you call on Him, He will answer.

Our visit to the Atomei family home was seen as that answer. We have visited before, and each time it seemed as nothing less than a divine appointment. Even with the small allotment they get for the children, and the halfway decent vegetable crop this harvest season, they are still struggling, and Dumitru is doing all he can to keep his head above water.

The entire family of twelve lives in two rooms and it would be an answer to prayer to build an extra room for them, as well as an indoor bathroom. A cow would also bring untold blessing, as it would provide more stability as far as milk and cheese are concerned, year-round.

Please keep the Atomei family in your prayers.
Pastor Mircea Boldea, Sr.



Prayers Needed

Please pray for the team going over to the Ukraine November 21-28. We are petitioning God for protection during our travels and direction to minister most effectively. We pray to be an encouragement to

the 60 plus ministers we will be meeting with, to shine the light of Jesus into the lives of many and to sow the seed of the Gospel into their hearts.



Child of the Month



George C. has witnessed abandonment since infancy. His father, a foreigner, has never been a part of his life, while his mother left him in the care of his grandparents at an early age.

The grandparents were living in loathsome conditions. George, abandoned for the second time in his short life, had to get used to an abominable house, deprived of the most basic of care.

When we first met him, he was heart-wrenched, shy and barely had any confidence in himself. It was in June, 2015, at the age of 10, that he found a family, Hand of Help, to protect him and never leave him again.

We have seen tremendous growth in George. Once he understood he would not be forsaken once again, he started building relationships with the other children at the orphanage. We have also seen progress in his studies and in his involvement around our center. He was even elected the leader of his apartment, thus becoming the right hand of the social worker that cares for their small “family”.

He enjoys reading geography books, watering our plants, helping with cleaning and riding his bike.

His grandmother is the only one to visit him on occasion. He hasn't heard from his mother or other relatives.

Please join us in praying for George! May he understand that there will never be another moment of abandonment while in the arms of our Father. He is His child! May he rest securely on His promises while striving to be an obedient child and servant of our Lord!



FOR MORE INFORMATION regarding sponsoring the Hand of Help Orphanage, please check out our website at www.handofhelp.com or email us at info@handofhelp.com

Dear Brethren,

Hebrews 10:23, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

I don't know why you'd want to, but everyone seems to agree that there's more than one way to skin a cat. By the same token, there are infinitely more forms of currency than just the legal tender you have in your wallet or coin purse.

Position can be a currency; influence can be a currency, who you know can be a currency, even those you went to college with can be a currency if they're the right person, and you've kept in touch.

Of late, there is a new currency that is being traded, and no, I'm not talking about bitcoin, ethereum, or litecoin. The new currency I speak of is conformity. If you are willing to fall in line, assimilate, conform and go along, then in return for your subservience, you get the keys to the particular kingdom you are trying to gain entrance into.

Whether it's the right kind of business connections, a spot on television as a talking head, or membership into the cool kid gang, it's no longer about merit, it's no longer about ability, it's no longer about being most qualified, it's about whether or not you have conformed to the new normal, and are faithfully towing the line.

Once the narrative has been established, everyone must parrot it, mindlessly, soullessly, over and over, because all they have is the narrative itself. Name one of ten things currently in the headlines, parroted by B rate actors and newscasters alike, and when you drill down, you realize they are making it up out of whole cloth. If you present something as a statement of fact, it needs to be factual. If you reach a conclusion regarding something, then the evidentiary burden of proving your conclusion is on you.

Maybe it's just me, but I get the sense that most average folks are getting fed up, angry, and frustrated, and the pressure continues to build and build. There's only so much you can take. There are only so many times you

can be called a bigot for not putting your little boy in a dress or a planet murderer for not setting your gas-guzzling car on fire to save the environment or be told you're too ignorant to understand what your lying eyes are telling you.

Those who have chosen conformity for a seat at the table, and in the process abandoned reason and logic, feel that your conformity is owed them as well. They insist that you must do as they have done, that you must abandon principles, and morals for the sake of inclusivity and validation, because deep down, in those moments where they can be honest with themselves, they realize the mistake they made, and what their conformity cost them.

When you start selling your soul piecemeal, eventually, you run out of pieces. Once you run out of pieces, all you are is a disposable husk, something that can no longer be exploited, and as such useless to those who convinced you to make the bargain with darkness in the first place.

Stand on truth, and do not be swayed. Though storms may come, truth is a solid enough foundation to weather any storm, and once the storm passes, your soul will still be intact.

Psalm 27:4-5, “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that I will seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.”

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr

REMINDER:

If you would like your donation to be included with the 2019 year end receipt for tax purposes, please have your envelope postmarked by December 31st or processed via our website no later than December 31st.