



Hand of **HELP**

The Truth for Today



Dumitru Duduman
Founder

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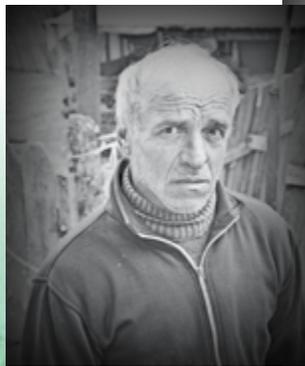
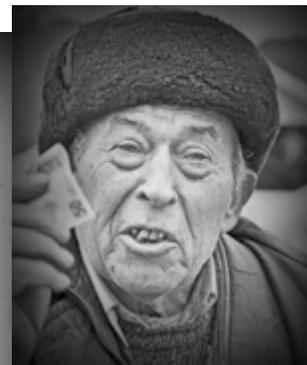
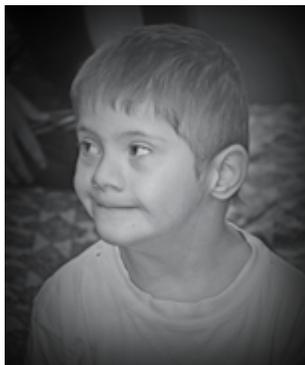
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APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2011

UNTO

The Least of These



UNTO

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MY *Trip*



In March I spent a few days at the Hand of Help, Botosani, Romania. I went there primarily to check-out the two children that I sponsor. Were they healthy? Were they happy? Were they well-fed? Were they well-treated? The answers to those four questions were emphatically “Yes”, “Yes”, “Yes” and “Yes”. But there is more: the children are obviously loved by the staff — and that goes some way in helping to replace what they have lost in their young lives.

Some children are there because both of their parents are dead. Some are there because one of their parents is dead, and the surviving one can no longer cope. Some children are there because the authorities have taken them away from abusive parents who have betrayed the fundamental task of being parents — namely to give their children unconditional love, even when the going gets tough.

These children have to heal in an environment

where they will be given support and love to help the wounds of grief to heal, and to enable them to learn to trust adults all over again.

Over the last 21 years, since the 1990 revolution, I have visited many orphanages in Romania. They were characterized by the stench of urine and unwashed clothes and bodies. On top of that was the devastating sound of children and young people crying themselves to sleep in desperately cold and unloving institutions.

Hand of Help is just about as far as you can get from those appalling state institutions. The children (aged 5 to 18) are clean, and take pride in their appearance. Their food is of high-quality. Their home is beautifully clean and it is self-evident that they feel safe, secure and loved. The amazing staff led by members of the Boldea family, manage to instill high standards of behavior in the children: the children know what is expected of them and live up to those expectations. There is no regime of harsh discipline — just understanding, permeated by love.

New arrivals learn the culture and adapt: it may take a few months, but it happens.

Romania still has some dreadful social problems — but so do US and UK, and many other affluent countries. In Bucharest and other large Romania cities, children roam the streets with no home, no hope, and no future: this is a legacy of the appalling Ceausescu era. In those dreadful years there were thousands of state ‘orphanages’: I suppose that there may have been one or two good ones: it’s just that I never found it/them.

What I am certain about is that if the 85 children at the Hand of Help had been born thirty years earlier they too would have been consigned to the scrapheap of a heartless, arrogant and selfish regime. That regime would have been happy to blame the children for having parents who had died, or were inadequate.

Sadly, I am not even sure that those 85 children would be much better off in the ‘enlightened’ West,

with its vast resources. Here, we allow our obsession with political correctness to replace the need for stability, love and consistency in young lives that have fallen apart because of tragedy and abuse.

Replacing inadequate families with uncomprehending bureaucracy is not an exchange that is worth having. However much good will there may be behind any bureaucracy, the bottom line is that it often loses sight of the fundamental needs of children to have stability, love and consistency.

Hand of Help does what it says. It provides a hand to help young people to rebuild their lives in an atmosphere of love, support and understanding. The staff provides great role models for making good things happen. The ethos is passionately Christian (in a country that was multicultural long before we

invented the word in the West). If ever you needed an example of Faith in Action, then this is it. Non-believers may scoff — but, of course, that is easy — scoffing does not require that you actually do anything useful. The only answer necessary to the scoffers is “come and see”.

Come and see what can be done with faith, passion and commitment. Hand of Help is the Golden Rule in action. It is the spirit of Christmas for the children. But, unlike Christmas in the West, Hand of Help does the spirit of Christmas 24/7, every day of the year.

Thank God for Hand of Help and the work that it does to change lives for the better.

Sincerely,
Dr. Stuart Newton



REMEMBERING
THE PAST

& Bracing for the Future



Even before I begin to write, I realize the title of my article is longwinded, but it is not every day that you have the opportunity to sit down and talk with believers that have been persecuted for their faith, that have endured for the cause of Christ, that have had to sell everything and be as outcasts among their own people in order to stand for what they believe in. Every time I have the honor of meeting those who have surrendered their lives in their entirety in response to God's call on their lives, I am humbled, and approach the encounter knowing that I will learn something, that I will be spiritually nourished, and inevitably challenged in my own walk with God.

Sadly, much of the old guard, those who endured untold hardships with nobility and faithfulness, have all but gone on to their eternal reward, and being able to fellowship with the few that remain is an honor in and of itself. Amidst a generation of self-obsession and self-indulgence, it

is a breath of fresh air to still run across those who exemplify the selfless character of Christ in their daily lives. The hours I spent talking to Florin and Florina Profeanu went by like minutes. Their lives are so complex that it would easily require a two volume biography just to scratch the surface.



I sat in awe listening to how brother Florin was saved, and how during the same church service the pastor who had received a word of knowledge that His calling was that of a pastor, had him read a Bible passage and explain what he understood. That was the first sermon he preached, embracing a calling that would guide him throughout 56 years of active pastoring.

In 1967 the local church was comprised of 20 members, and through God's grace in 1989 there were 360 adult members, making it the largest church in the county of Arges. Brother Florin's ministry led him to many villages throughout

Future

Romania, planting churches and sharing the living, eternal, and persecuted gospel alongside brothers like Richard Wurmbbrand.

Among the many memories he shared, Pastor Florin related how one day he was summoned to come to the secret police for questioning. Upon his arrival he was promptly informed that he would have to pay a fine for leading a congregation without the necessary permits, or approval of the government.

“It was a large fine”, Pastor Florin said, “and I realized the only way I would be able to pay it is if we sold our family home. My heart sank, and I struggled not with the thought of having to lose our home, but of how I would break the news to my wife.”

When he got home, he asked his wife Florina, “What would you say if one day we would have to give up our furniture, our accordion, and even our home?”

“If it is for our Lord, let them take away everything!” she boldly responded.

Such a passion and love for God is surely the secret to the longevity of their 63 years of marriage together. After paying their fine, with the little money that was left over from the sale of their home, the Profeanu family purchased musical instruments and an amplifier for the church so they could continue praising God all the more.

It was from a friend of the Profeanu family that we heard of the need for a boiler in their church. The elderly in the church had put money aside from their very small pensions and were able to cover the plumbing which was more than half of the cost, but they had exhausted their limited finances, and couldn't afford the boiler. The Hand of Help staff decided to step out in faith and

purchase the boiler for the church and deliver it the same day. Tears of joy filled their eyes as they agreed that only God could answer their prayer in such a manner. They quickly called the associate pastor up and he ran to the church to meet us there. This was a man who had been getting up every Sunday at 4:00 am for countless years to start the fire in the wood stove that would barely heat the room before church let out. He too joined the celebration and praised God for all those who had been a part of this blessing.

Listening to their experiences, hearing of how they met in hiding, how they had to have nocturnal baptisms so they would not be discovered, how they were persecuted and despised, then dwelling on current events where believers in the United States are having to fight for their Constitutional rights, I can't help to feel an urgency to likewise prepare for such persecution.

Ecclesiastes 1:9, “The thing that hath been, it (is that) which shall be; and that which is done (is) that which shall be done: and (there is) no new (thing) under the sun.”

In closing, Pastor Florin humbly spoke and said, “when I finish my work here, nothing of me will remain. What will remain however are the testimonies of struggles, the testimonies of faith and endurance, and these are what define the Church.”

Daniel Boldea

LOVE
COVERED

and Will Again

If you've ever been cold then you know how comforting the simple act of wrapping yourself in a warm blanket can be. It is such a simple act in fact that we all take it for granted, never really contemplating what we would do if we didn't have that blanket to wrap ourselves in.

Some months ago we made you aware of our newest project entitled 'love covers'. It was a simple premise, to buy blankets, and then distribute them to the poor and needy as the need arose. What we did not foresee, is just how successful this project would be. There was no way to predict how many of you would respond to this need, nor was there a way to predict the reaction on people's faces when we would give them a blanket. Even though we would give out a food package along with the blanket, most often it was the blanket people would thank us for with tears in their eyes.

Seeing how successful the project was, as well as the continued need for blankets especially in the villages and communities where the only source of heat during winter is a wood burning stove, we've decided to continue the 'love covers' project into this year, and have made inquiries as to what price we could get for another shipment of blankets. Human logic would find a reasonable explanation for the miracle that occurred. Perhaps it's the fact that summer is just around the corner and nobody buys blankets in the summer, or he had too many on hand, but to our surprise, one of the vendors offered us a steep discount. We however, knew right away it was God who opened this door, and stepping out in faith we've already ordered 300 blankets to be shipped to the Wisconsin warehouse, then loaded onto a container so that they arrive in Romania before autumn.



There are only so many ways one can say 'thank you', so even at the risk of sounding redundant, thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you for making this project the success that it was, thank you for opening your heart to this need, and thank you for being obedient to the leading of the Lord.

You may never know just how many people are blessed through your support of this ministry; you may never know just how many lives you've saved; you may never know how many smiles you've prompted, but the heavenly Father keeps strict records and on that glorious day He will faithfully reward every effort, every sacrifice, and every act of obedience.

In His Grace, Hand of Help Staff



ACCORDING *to Need*



Ever since this ministry began, we have always strived to help each family according to their individual need. Although it is far more time consuming than to just drop off a box of clothing and a food package to each family, it is when God meets a specific need through this ministry that those who are helped realize their prayers have been answered, and that God is not silent to their pleas.

Since I spent more time than I usually do in Romania on this last trip, I got the opportunity to participate in the outreach side of our ministry more than I had on previous visits. There are many memorable moments that will stay with me for years to come, from the family of five whose youngest has Down's syndrome, to the family of ten that lives in a one room shack, to the selfless sister who adopted a baby girl after her mother died even though she has very little herself, to the joy and the tears and the hugs and the handshakes, and yes, even trying to push the car out of a ditch after my brother Sergiv accidentally backed into it.

It is a grace and a gift to know that you are doing what God put you on this earth to do, and it's only during those moments when I'm either teaching the

Word, or extending a hand of help to the helpless that the thought runs through my mind unhindered, 'there's nowhere I'd rather be!'

During the last full day of my stay in Romania, one of our staff members approached me about two families he had heard about that really needed help. He knew I was leaving the next day, so he said, 'pray about it, and maybe when you come back we can go visit them.'

'We still have today' I answered, 'why not use it to do some good.'

After calling his wife and telling her he wouldn't be home for dinner, Nicu, myself and my brother Sergiu got in the car and headed for Gura Solcii, the village where these two families resided. Since getting to Gura Solcii meant we would have to go through Suceava a larger city than our own, we decided to stop there for supplies. As we were pulling into the parking lot of the supermarket, Nicu looked at me sheepishly and said, 'did I mention one family has eleven children, and the other family has eighteen?'

When I heard this, I realized a regular food package just wouldn't cut it, since they are made to feed a family of four, so two shopping carts were needed. We began to go through the list of what such large families would need; from ten bars of soap, to five kilograms of oil, to ten kilograms of rice, to ten kilograms of flour, to five kilograms of bananas, to deli meats, sweets for the children and everything in between, we supersized what would normally go into a food package, and by the time we got into the checkout line people were giving us strange looks.

Neither myself, my brother or Nicu had ever been to Gura Solcii, but as we followed the signs we realized it was nowhere near the main road. Twenty minutes into driving down a muddy alley and not seeing another living thing, we came upon what was once a bridge, but which had at some point collapsed.



Since the idea of turning back never crossed our minds, we crossed the river at a shallow point where the villagers had brought rocks and dirt and made a makeshift bridge of their own, and were finally greeted by the sign informing us that we had indeed entered Gura Solcii.

After asking for directions we pulled up to the Cimopiesu home, only to hear prayer coming through the open windows. We waited until the prayer abated, knocked on the door, and brother Ilie came out wiping tears from his eyes. When we told him who we were, and why we were there, brother Ilie began to sob and said, 'my family and I just finished praying for the Lord to send us some food. We ran out yesterday, and there was nothing we could do but pray to God.'

As we began unloading the bags of food and the clothing, brother Ilie grabbed my arm and said, 'I know it may be bold of me, but there is another family in our village with 18 children, and if you only brought food for us I would ask that you divide it and visit them as well.'

I smiled at brother Ilie and asked, 'is it the Cozarchievici family that you're referring to?' With a surprised look on his face, brother Ilie simply nodded.

'We're visiting them next' I said, and there is no need to divide the food, we brought enough for everyone.'

Brother Ilie volunteered to show us where the

Cozarchevici family lived, and as we pulled up to their home, and Elena, came out, brother Ilie jumped out and cried aloud, 'the Lord has answered our prayers, and He has sent His servants.'

With love in Christ, Michael Boldea Jr.

BLESSING *Unguroaia*



Every time brother Willy comes to visit our humble work in Romania, the project God puts on his heart for the duration of his stay seems to grow both in size and in scope compared to his last visit. This time was no different as he and his team comprising of four Dutch brothers and sisters, came with the intent of blessing an entire community all at once. Besides his tireless selflessness, another thing that we've always appreciated about brother Willy is that he comes prepared. Having driven two vans and towing two trailers for almost two thousand miles, brother Willy and his team brought portable stoves, hot chocolate, graham cakes and clothing, and the day before we set out for Unguroaia we went on an epic shopping spree for perishable items such as lunchmeat, bread and cheese.

The rainstorm the night before, the frigid cold and biting wind did nothing to lessen the excitement of the day, as we packed up the vans, added some clothing and blankets of our own and headed out for Unguroaia Cristesti a village far off the beaten path. Since the roads were muddy, and

over half our journey took us on country roads that had never seen pavement, the drive itself was a teachable moment, an exercise in overcoming fear and pressing ever onward although human reason would dictate otherwise.

With God's help and a little elbow grease, we reached our destination, only to find not only the people of Unguroaia but also those of two neighboring villages gathered in front of the local church. Word had spread, and some had walked five and six kilometers on muddy roads and alleyways just to see who would brave such weather simply to come and help them.

It was a curious sight to be sure, two vans with trailers pulling up in front of the church, pulling back the tarp, and setting about preparing sandwiches, hot chocolate and cake. At first there was somewhat of a tumult, as everyone tried to get in line, but as soon as we assured them that there





was enough for everyone, the crowd calmed down and the team went about their duties.

Although the children of the community enjoyed the hot chocolate and snacks, their parents appreciated the food packages we had brought to distribute as well as the blankets and the clothes a little more. Even though the crowd was larger than we had anticipated, everyone got blessed, as we distributed one food package per household, a blanket per household, and clothing for those that needed it.

At least half the crowd was comprised of unbelievers, and we could overhear conversations as they waited, wondering why we would do such a thing for them, what it was we were looking to get out of it, and why the Orthodox church had never done anything remotely close to this.

‘The only time we’ve seen anything even close to this’ a man said as he stood with hot chocolate in hand, ‘was when the politicians came two years ago to ask for our vote. They were not as generous though, they gave us a bag of sugar and a bucket with their political party’s logo on the side.’

The people of Unguroaia and the surrounding villages live hard lives, and they are not accustomed

to anyone showing them love or charity without wanting something in return. By the look on their faces, this is what impressed them most, the fact that we had come to freely give, and unconditionally sow of everything the Lord had provided.

Jesus said we would always have the poor among us, but as long as His servants continue to be selfless and give of themselves, as long as their desire remains to be the hands and heart of Christ, the poor will always be cared for.

Thank you for continuing to consider the poor, thank you for continuing to open your heart to the needs of others, and thank you for continuing to obey the leading of the Lord; we could not do what we do without all that you do.

In His Grace,
Hand of Help Staff



HYPERBOLE

It Is Not

Luke 21:25-26, 'And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.'

There are certain passages in scripture that a great many souls assume are merely exaggerated for effect. They skim through the Word, happen upon something their physical mind cannot compute, comprehend or come to terms with and with a nonchalant shrug of the shoulders go on to the next passage, hopefully the one about all having sinned and fallen short, or the other one about not judging lest you likewise be judged. Without a second thought or a hint of desire to peer deeper, to press in and go beyond the surface of words written upon a page many have lost the will, desire or motivation to take a second and meditate on a difficult to understand scripture.

If it is not readily understood during the first read-through, then it's either symbolic, hyperbolic, or beyond the scope of human understanding.

Especially within the context of the end times, and the prophecies contained in the Bible concerning this most turbulent season, too few today take the Word of God at face value, believe it as it is written, prepare their hearts, cement their relationships with the heavenly Father, and possess the certitude that come what may they are safe under the shadow of His wings. It's allot less taxing to shrug our shoulders, or roll our eyes and think to ourselves that such things couldn't really happen in our day and age, than to fall to our knees in repentance, to mature in our faith, and to know the peace that can only be found in an intimate relationship with Christ.

Unless you've been totally removed from all the

trappings of our modern era these past months it is inevitable that either tangentially or in great depth you've heard about what is happening in Japan. It would seem the earthquake was just the beginning of a chain reaction that has as yet not abated. Each time I check the news, something new is happening, more worrisome than the previous update, from the tsunami, to the first nuclear reactor fire, then the second, and so on.

If you've ever wondered whether the words of Jesus in the gospel according to Luke were exaggeration or hyperbole, recent events ought to crystallize the reality that they are not.

Jesus was never one to exaggerate, He was never one to make a mountain out of a molehill as the saying goes, and if Jesus said that men's hearts will be failing them for fear and the expectation of those things which are coming upon the earth, then it will most assuredly come to pass.

Other than praying for the people of Japan, there is one thing we as individuals who have not been directly affected by these disasters must take away from all this. Prepared as we might be, or think ourselves to be for any eventuality, for any calamity, for any cataclysm or natural disaster, there will come a point wherein if we trust in our preparedness and not God, our hearts will likewise fail us for fear.

There is nothing wrong in being prepared. There is nothing wrong in having some food, water, and medical supplies set aside for any eventuality, but if these things which we've amassed become a crutch, if we think we can replace true faith in God with a bomb shelter and some ready to eat meals, then we are deceiving ourselves, and are in the words of Paul the Apostle 'of all men most pitiable.'

The issue is not whether or not we should prepare, the issue is whether or not we should place our trust in the preparations we've made. The

answer to that question is an unequivocal no! Yes, by all means be wise, yes, by all means be prudent, but under no circumstance should you neglect your relationship with God, your need for spiritual growth, and your need for intimacy with the heavenly Father thinking that your provisions will sustain you.

I wish I could say we've seen the worst of it, but you and I both know this is just the beginning. We must for the sake of our sanity, do away with the 'it could never happen here, it could never happen to us' mentality, because if God is anything He is righteous

and just, and this just and righteous God judges without partiality.

It is time to cut away any and all things that weigh us down, that impede our progress, and that hinder our walk, it is time to gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober and vigilant and walk with confidence the narrow path of faith, because God will no longer tarry, and what has been happening throughout the world in recent months is proof positive of this.

With love in Christ, Michael Boldea Jr.

DEAR *Brethren*

Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."

Daniel 12:10, "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

As little as two years ago it seemed we had ascended to the heights of utopia. After generations of ignorance, and intolerance, after generations of clinging to God rather than believing that we are ourselves the makers of our destiny thereby little gods ourselves, we finally saw the light, and exited the darkened tunnel of subservience to sovereignty into the bright sunny tomorrow of our own making. As none others before us had, at least in our own estimation, we had scaled to the peak of our glorious tomorrow, squarely planted out flag, grasped the brass ring,



and witnessed with our own tear filled eyes not only the zenith of acceptance, understanding and all-inclusiveness, but that we managed to transcend it with seemingly little effort.

We were one, united in purpose, blinded by the light of tomorrow's bright possibilities,

and if anyone dared mention the notion of civil unrest, or class warfare in this nation back then, they would have been labeled disturbed and summarily institutionalized for further testing and observation.

Two years later, the landscape is very different indeed, and what was deemed improbable seems all the more probable with each passing day. The illusion is crumbling, and the mask of civility and brotherhood, is slipping off inch by inch to reveal the ugly truth that lies beneath. Common sense is becoming less common, and reason has been abandoned along with the hope that our children will have a better and more prosperous life than our own.

Having become a nation of up to the minute news, and headline readers, we see pieces of the puzzle but fail to take the time to see what all these pieces are forming right before our very eyes. For now protesters descending on the capitol of any given state are isolated incidents, but soon they will be common place, even daily occurrences, that will only grow in intensity and vitriol.

“It will begin with an internal revolution” these are words I repeated often enough in the ten years I was my grandfather’s translator. Every time he gave his testimony, and shared the vision God gave him for America, this is how it started, “it will begin with an internal revolution.”

One thing he did not share as often, but is common knowledge nevertheless because he shared it with family, friends, and those he spent any considerable amount of time with, is that before the civil unrest would begin in America, our homeland, the nation of Romania would have yet another revolution to contend with.

In the twenty one years since the last revolution in Romania the people have never been as angry, despondent and given to violent rhetoric as they are now. Some are already calling for the overthrow of the present government, there is already talk of revolution, and union leaders who have the ear of

tens of thousands of individuals continue to stoke the fires encouraging their people to march in the streets, and let nothing stand in their way.

The path this ministry has walked since its inception some twenty seven years ago has been a long and lonely one. We have been attacked, maligned, abused, and not by those of the world but must often by those who call themselves brothers. It has not been easy, and I along with my family have thought about quitting more times than I can count, but in the end it is long term, consistent and perpetual obedience that God rewards, and it is our desire to please the Father that has kept us faithful all these years.

Even now, it is not a message that many want to hear, even now they shake their heads and say ‘improbable, impossible, not here, not us’, yet all that we see happening in the world heralds the coming of the dark days which God foretold.

I write this article with a heavy heart because recent events in the world reveal that the season of sorrow is closer than I first thought it to be, and the church is nowhere ready for what is about to descend upon it. It is a fearful thing to consider the words of Jesus, wherein He warns His beloved that there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be again, then juxtapose His words with the reality that there has never been a generation less spiritually prepared than this one.

If we have eyes to see, and ears to hear, it is undeniable that the harbingers of what is to come are all around us, and all we can do in times such as these is pray for strength, pray for boldness, pray for peace, and pray for endurance.

Revelation 3:21, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.