



# Hand of **HELP**

*The Truth for Today*



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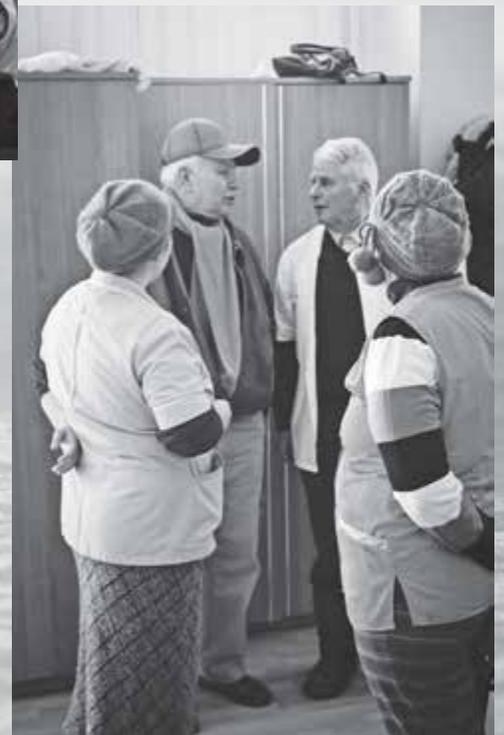
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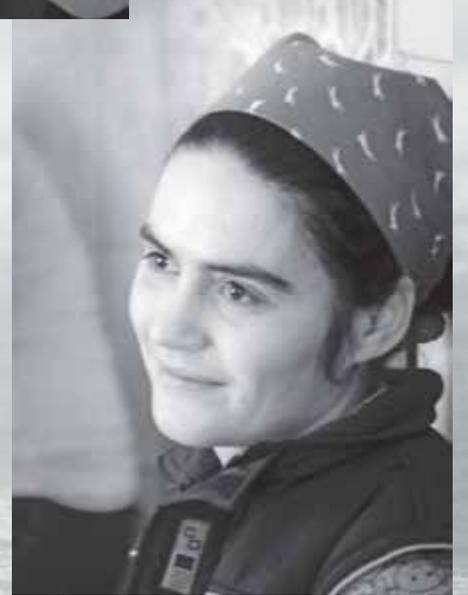
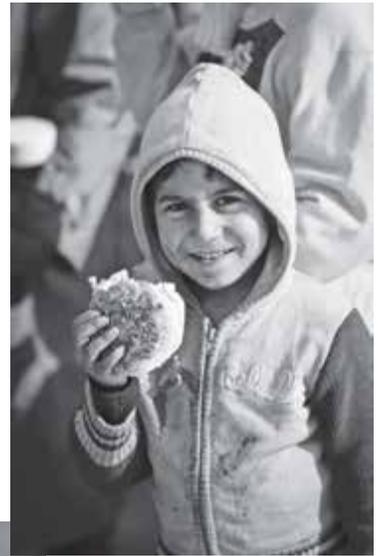
JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH 2013

REMEMBERING  
THE  
*Forgotten*



# Remembering the





# ... Forgotten

REMEMBERING

THE *Forgotten*



I believe being reminded of why we do what we do is an important aspect of any long term endeavor. Someone might do something just for the sake of doing it for a day or a week, but if you've put your hand to the plow and committed yourself to a work for decades, in order to remain as passionate as in the beginning, one must periodically be reminded of the "why" behind their labors.

Perhaps it's just me, but from time to time I need a refresher course on why it is I spend weeks and months away from my wife and family, why I drive tens of thousands of miles in any given year, and why I submit myself to the indecency of being manhandled by an over nourished, middle aged gentleman just because he's wearing a blue shirt and happens to work at an airport.

Towards this end, every time I return to Romania

a considerable amount of my time is spent traveling with my father and brothers, and distributing food and clothing to those long forgotten by the system and oftentimes their own families.

It doesn't take long, perhaps a handful of visits to a handful of homes to remember why we labor, and to see the fruits of our labors.

Although we'd visited new villages and new families throughout the weeks prior, toward the tail end of my stay in Romania I asked my father if we could go and revisit some of the families and places that had left their mark on me. Some situations are more impacting than others, and though two needs might be identical in some respects, there are certain emotions, certain words, phrases, or looks which have staying power beyond the initial event.

The first home I wanted to visit was the home of the Botan family. Ever since I met Luca, the Botan family's middle child who was also diagnosed with hydro encephalitis, my thoughts and prayers have been with him.

This would be my third visit to the Botan home, since I returned the previous year to bring Luca some toys I had promised. I wondered whether he would remember me or not, but as I walked through the door carrying a bag of food, and another bag of goodies such as bananas, oranges, and yes, candy bars and lollipops, Luca smiled and started waving as though it hadn't been almost a year since we'd seen each other.

During our visit, Lacramioara, Luca's mother, informed us her husband had sent her divorce papers in the mail, not bothering to make the trip from Italy in person. Despite her predicament, Lacramioara had not lost her smile, and during our conversation she said, 'as long as I have the Lord, I know my children and I will be fine.'

Luca is growing, and he is not showing any of the symptoms of his disease such as learning disabilities, irritability, or muscle spasticity.

After praying together and saying our goodbyes, our next stop was the retirement home in Vladeni-Plopeni. Upon our arrival we were greeted by some familiar faces, as well as some new ones. As we began distributing the bags of sweets, bananas and oranges we had brought with us – since we knew they were things the home could not afford to purchase on their own – I overheard one of the new residents asking who we were, and a lady whom I remembered from our very first visit there turned to her and said, 'these are the good people.'

We spent a considerable time in the Vladeni-Plopeni retirement home, as the Dutch team felt led to pray with some of the residents and we unloaded the other parcels we had brought consisting of clothing and nonperishable food items.

After many tears, just as many words of thanks, and a promise to return with some of the pictures I took of the residents, we continued on to Plopenii Mici, then to Borzesti, where we visited a church our ministry built and distributed some clothes and food. From there we went to Iliseu-Crisana, where we visited another house

of worship we helped build, and where the brothers and sisters gathered to have a worship service, and enjoy some hot cocoa and hot dogs courtesy of the team from Holland.

Throughout these journeys, I saw faces I remembered going as far back as when my mother was alive and traveled to these long forgotten parts of our nation, and I could see the fruits of our labors in the full churches, wholesome families, smiles, tears, and words of praise to God the Father for not forgetting them, and stirring our hearts to come visit yet again.

I know why I do what I do, and it's not for glory or fame or fortune or for the hope that some celebrity will one day hand me a plaque on some stage somewhere. I know why I labor, and lose sleep, and miss anniversaries, and spend more nights in hotel beds than in my own bed.

It is because it's what God has called me to. It is because He saw fit that this ministry remember the forgotten, and be there for those who have no one to plead their case.

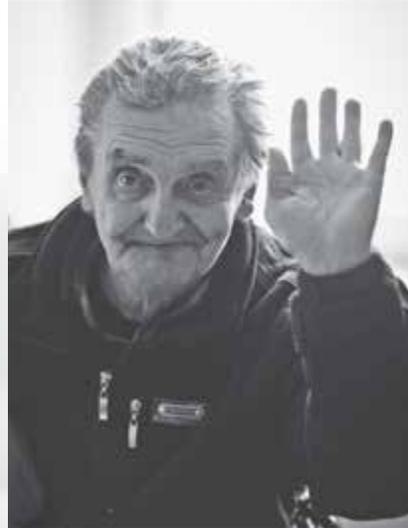
I hope and pray that by seeing the work through these pictures, you will likewise know why you do what you do, why you pray for this ministry, and support this ministry and tell others about this ministry.

I thank you for helping us to keep going during these difficult times of uncertainty. You are as always in my prayers, and I ask you for your prayers in kind.

With love in Christ,  
Michael Boldea Jr.







THE RETURN of

# Willy & Company

The older I get, the more I admire individuals of a certain age who can still keep up, and oftentimes outpace me when it comes to labor, physical or otherwise. Although the language barrier between us is still present and accounted for, it is always a blessed event when brother Willy and his friends come to visit, bringing their unique blend of Dutch humor and work ethic.

From the moment they arrived with a semi-truck full of supplies exceeding ten tons, their singular intent was to do as much as possible in as short a time as possible.

Being the naturally hospitable people we are, and knowing of their impending arrival, we prepared some food thinking they would sit down to lunch before anything else, but as is often the case, what we thought would happen and what actually happened were two very different things.

As the truck backed into the orphanage's side entrance, we greeted each other, shook hands, and mimicking the universal hand-to-mouth motion meaning 'do you want to eat,' Willy shook his finger and said, 'no vacation, work.'

If the words themselves weren't clear enough, Willy wasted no time in taking the lock off the trailer, opening the doors and pointing to the boxes, then to our storage room.

Dusk had come by the time we finished unloading the trailer and separating the boxes between what had been brought for the orphanage, and what we would end up distributing to the surrounding villages and communities.

From winter hats, to gloves, coats, shoes, and food, the team from Holland had brought the best of what they had, but when we tried to thank them for their sacrifice and their efforts, Willy pointed his index toward heaven and simply said, 'Jesus.'



Jesus is the universal singularity that brings us together and makes us brothers and sisters in Him. We need not share the same nationality, we need not share the same ethnicity, we need not share the same gender or even the same denomination, but as long as we have Jesus, He binds us together in His love and grace.

It was only after the last box was put away, and the trailer swept with a broom that Willy and his friends acquiesced to sitting down and having a meal. If the sun had not set, chances are good they would have insisted we go out to a village and pass out some food and clothing, but with dusk came the fog, and even though they would never admit it, it had been a long day for them.

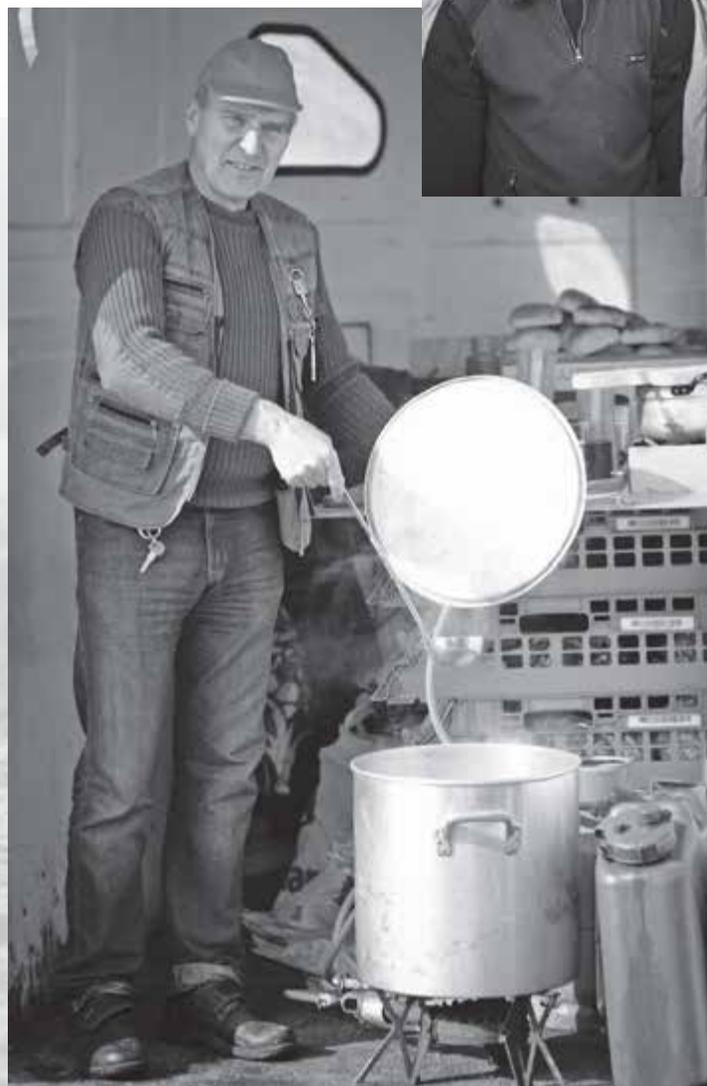
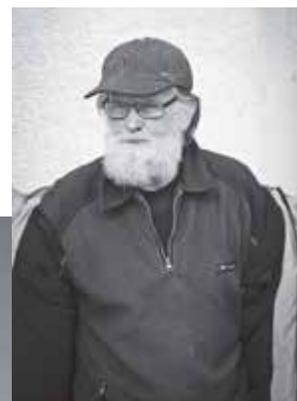
This was but the first day of what turned out to be a weeklong marathon of visiting villages, communities, retirement homes, and churches and giving freely of what the Lord provided.

Seeing as brother Willy is pushing eighty, and most of his friends are hot on his heels, it is humbling to see the tirelessness, passion, and selflessness with which they labor on behalf of those they've never met, and whose language they don't even speak.

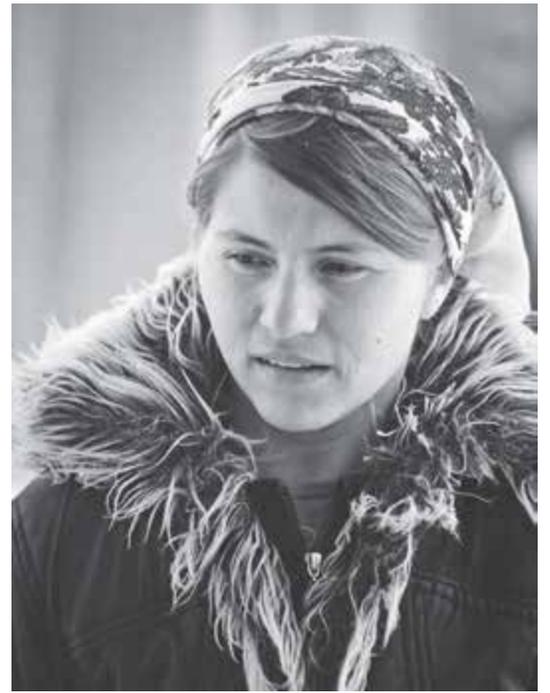
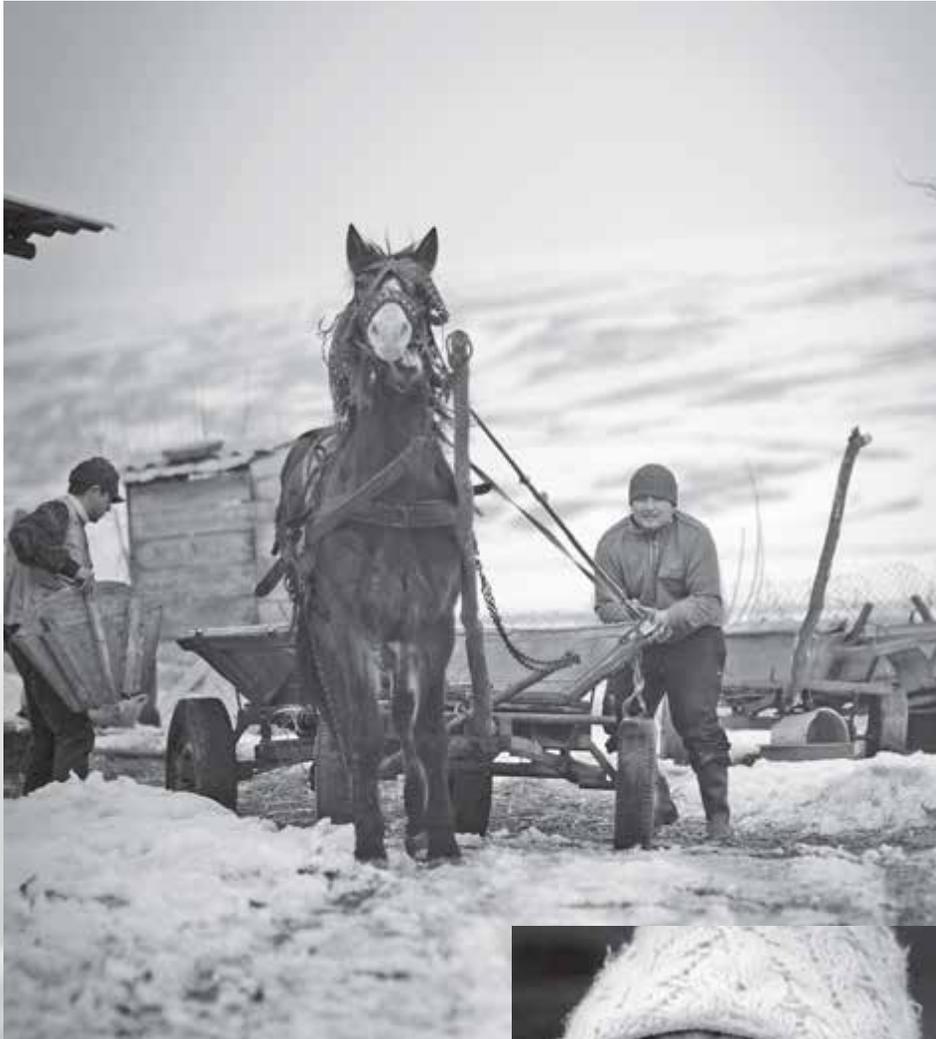
This is the love of God in action, this is true and undefiled worship, and though most of you will never come to visit us here in Romania personally, your prayers on behalf of this work and your selflessness in regards to keeping it afloat testify of the same love, passion and tirelessness.

Our prayers and thanks go out to the Dutch team as they return to Holland, and to those of you reading these words, and keeping us in your prayers.

In Christ,  
Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.



# Romania





# Romania

Winter came early this year and like an uninvited guest who has long overstayed their welcome it hung around far longer than anyone had envisioned. Just when the people would begin to breathe a sigh of relief, another storm rolled in, testing the fortitude and resources of even the most prepared of folks.

Because of the heavy snowfall, which was in certain areas unprecedented, even the major highways and thoroughfares were shut down for long periods of time, making supply convoys impossible to get through to their destination.

Traffic was also a nightmare especially since due to last year's high death count of individuals freezing in their cars, the police enforced no transit curfews with fevered consistency. The roadblocks would go up within a matter of minutes, and if you happened to be on the wrong side of one, all you could really do is get comfortable and hope the town you were in had a gas station or some sort of market. Spending six, eight, even twelve hours in the middle of nowhere because the police were blocking the road became commonplace, and eventually turned into a running joke and justification for someone's tardiness.

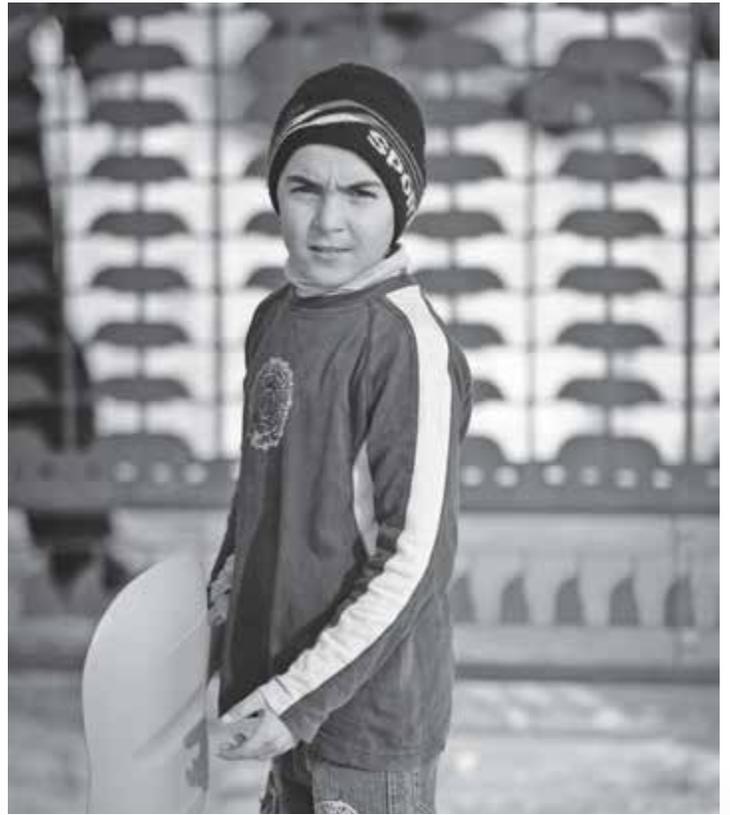
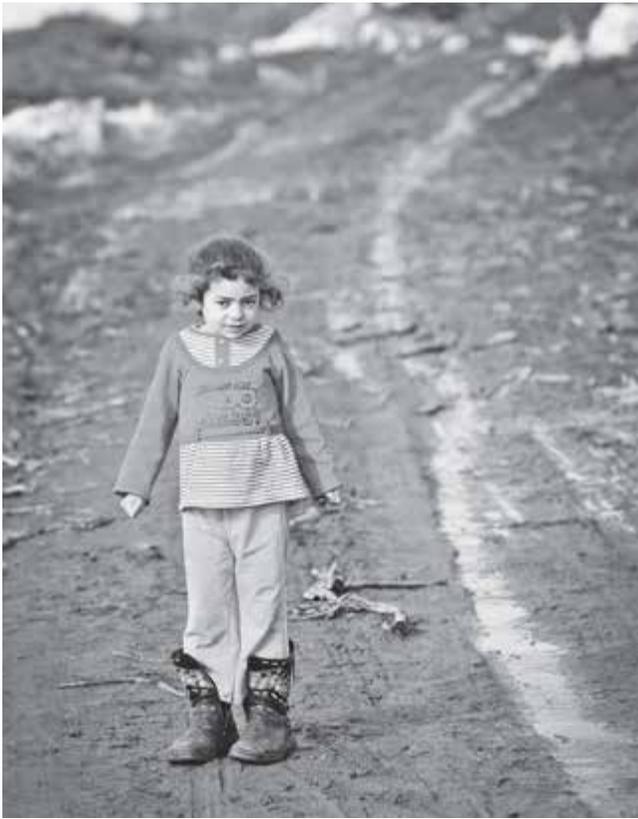
Admittedly, fewer people than last year perished of exposure due to the strict travel rules the police saw fit to enforce.

As is the case with men and women accustomed to hardship, those cut off from the rest of the world managed to keep themselves warm and fed.

Due to the abundance of snowfall and plummeting temperatures, electrical cables snapped by the dozens throughout the country, and especially in the northern regions, leaving thousands upon thousands of people without power. For those living in the villages the lack of electricity was no more than a mere nuisance, since wood burning stoves and kerosene lamps are the norm, but for those in the cities, especially those who had not had the presence of mind to purchase candles, flashlights, or lamps, it became troublesome, as their daily activities ended with the setting of the sun.

During one of the worst storms on record, the powers that be saw the perfect opportunity to inform the general public of a 30% hike in the price of heat and electricity effective immediately, which caused even more individuals to turn off their heat, and burn furniture in the middle of their living rooms like the nomads of yesteryear.





Gas has also gone up steadily, and though the average income of the Romanian citizen is 20% of what those in the westernized nations of the European Union are making, the cost of gas, food, clothing and pretty much anything else that isn't locally farmed, raised or butchered is on par with the rest of Europe and even a little more due to the value added tax of 24% on everything one buys in a store.

The thing about a global economy and a global marketplace is that everyone suffers globally when suffering is to be had. Although some are suffering less than others, the general sense of impending hardship is heavy in every nation, hanging like a shroud over the countenance of young and old alike.

Joblessness is likewise on an ascending trend, and those still fortunate enough to have a job are seeing their salaries cut repeatedly due to lack of orders, lack of funding, or just because some less than noble characters see an opportunity to profiteer off the misery of some, understanding that since they have nowhere else to go, they can abuse their employees at will.

As has been our calling going on thirty years now, we continue to stand in the gap and provide a hand of help and a ray of hope to those who have nowhere else to turn. The number of individuals the Lord is allowing us to help, whether with food packages, clothing, money, homes, or livestock is growing in proportion to the need, and this is something only the good Lord can bring to pass.

All we can do is relay the current conditions to those with ears to hear, and pray the Lord stir the hearts of those who are able to lend a hand. We learned long ago that only God is able to sustain us and see us through seasons of lack and need, but we've also learned that He is ever faithful no matter the circumstances the world finds itself in.

Thank you for standing with us during these increasingly difficult times, thank you for keeping us in your prayers, and thank you for your support. We labor as one for the glory of the Kingdom, knowing He who sees all will reward all in due season.

In His Grace,  
Hand of Help staff

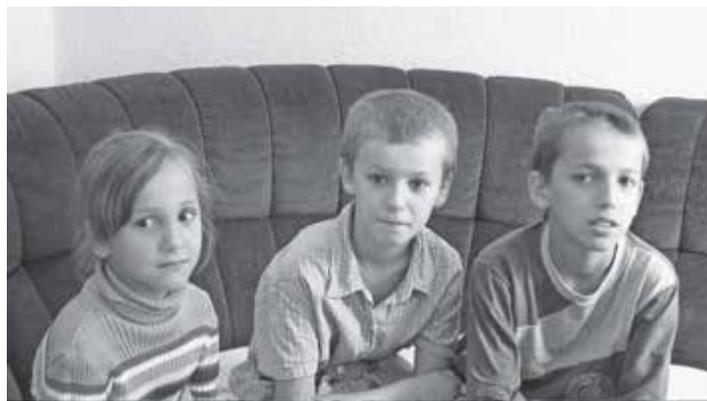
# MEETING THE *Poraicus*



There is a certain shadow that veils the light in a child's eyes when compelled to feel the cold touch of suffering on a daily basis. The smile is reserved, the look is lowered, the shoulders are slouched and the tender embrace of a stranger that wants to bring a sparkle of happiness in their life seems unreal. A certain degree of maturity is immediately revealed to the eyes of an adult that would have otherwise expected laughter, mangled words, and silly poses.

The Poraicu children greeted us with that exact discreet, shaded smile, likely for fear that we would just be an imaginary group, ready to see us vanish in an instant and leave them alone again, as they have been their entire childhood.

There have been numerous times when they had to learn to refrain themselves from asking their parents for things to eat, to wear, or to play with, and be satisfied with just seeing them in the shop windows as they passed by. It's a daily struggle, but with their



father being the only working parent, and with no other possibility of obtaining extra income, they had to learn how to be strong, and content with whatever their parents could provide for them.

The love that permeates their home could make anyone feel as though they have yet to experience all the manifestations of this godly gift. There is an almost heavenly love that the mother of these children expresses toward them. A single glance is sometimes enough to encourage, to support, and to confirm that everything is going to be all right for those who wait patiently.

On a different note, their father shows an equally tender love, but a love suppressed by the responsibility of providing for his family. The continuous fear that tomorrow he will no longer be able to take care of his family as a father and a husband should do, has a bearing on the comforting embrace he offers his children and wife at any given time. He smiles, yes, but a bitter feeling unwraps as he looks in his children's eyes.

Hard as times might be, the Poraicu family never forgets to be grateful and glorify our Lord for what He has done and will undoubtedly continue to do in their lives. They consider each day a blessing, and when evening comes they share all the small miracles of the day, many of which we often take for granted.

Meeting the Poraicus reminded me to be grateful for everything the Lord has done in my life as well as what He is yet to accomplish, and to rest fully in the knowledge that there is no deeper comfort than His daily presence in our lives.

In Him,  
Alexandra Boldea

A BELATED

# Thank You



Because this is the first chance we've had to communicate since the New Year began, and since it's never too late or an inopportune moment to see happy children receiving presents, we wanted to share a few pictures of our children receiving their gifts, and also of their school peers and neighborhood children receiving presents from our children.

We teach our children to give, and though there were grumbles at first, they've come to realize it is a blessing to be able to give of what you have to another, and their making presents and offering them to other children is a good way of teaching them this truth.

To all the child sponsors and those who sent in presents, a hearty if belated thank you, and may the Lord bless you in all your endeavors.

In His Grace,  
The children & Hand of Help staff



DEAR

# Brethren

If this is all there was, we would likely be as distraught and beside ourselves as the rest of the world seems to be. If, like the world we had no hope, or hoped in this life only, we would have every reason to run about aimlessly, and scream of the despair and meaninglessness of our present existence as the godless are beginning to do.

For those who have not known the love of Jesus, for those who have not known the redemptive and restorative power of His blood, these are dark days, and as dark days do, they are bringing dark thoughts.

The foundations are being shaken, and even the high and lofty among us are beginning to give in to the fear, doubt, and desperation defining so many individuals today. These things ought not to come as a surprise to us, for they were foretold long ago. We are seeing the fulfillment of what God said would come to pass, and seeing these things we must remember not only that we are not of the world and ought not to react as the world, but why we are no longer of the world.

We are no longer of the world and no longer subject to the world's uncertainty and doubt because we are of Christ. We are no longer of the world, because we are no longer in the world, and we are no longer in the world because we are in He who was beaten, bruised, bloodied, and broken for us.

I know of nothing more tragic than believers who live as though they have not been redeemed by the priceless blood of Christ, or act as though they are as hopeless as the world is.

It is in understanding what Jesus did on the cross, what He accomplished through the shedding of His blood that gives us a hope tethered not in the temporal, but in the eternal.

Jesus redeemed us. He bought us with His blood, He paid the price for our penalty, that we might be free

in Him, beholden to neither flesh, nor earth, nor vice, nor temptation. Jesus bought our freedom on Calvary's hill, and as the day of the remembrance of His death, burial and resurrection nears, may we acknowledge what He has done for us.

It is common practice for the extraordinary to become ordinary in the eyes of some due to overuse or overemployment. We speak of a certain thing so often and with such regularity that the extraordinary nature of that which we speak seems to escape us just a little more each time we mention it.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus cannot be one of the things that become ordinary, usual, or commonplace even though we speak of them often.

The Son of God bled and died upon a tree so we might have life in Him. The reality of His sacrifice changed the world forever, and it is the source of our hope and peace and joy and comfort in the midst of a world growing exceedingly more chaotic.

I wish I could say things are on the upswing or that they will get better from here, but you and I both know unless repentance is forthcoming in this nation, a repentance the church itself is unwilling to pursue in humility, the hand of God will continue to press down, and His judgment will continue to draw near.

What we as children of God can take solace in, what we as the saved, sanctified, and redeemed Bride of Christ can draw strength from, is that He will shelter those who are His. Though we will see with our eyes it will not come near us, for we are established in His righteousness.

Rejoice and be strong in the Lord for in the coming days He will do great exploits through those whose hearts belong to Him.

Isaiah 53:4-5, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

With love in Christ,  
Michael Boldea Jr.