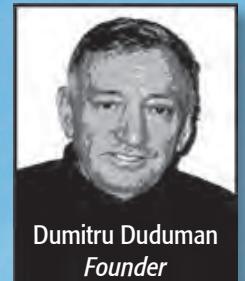


# Hand of **HELP**



June • July • August 2016



## *Answered Prayers*



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# Fruitful Labors

*H*e was an awkwardly quiet boy when he first arrived at the Hand of Help orphanage, but that was to be expected. He was among the first to call the Hand of Help orphanage his home, and until the summer of 1997, Marius Podiuc knew both joy and peace in sparse and very limited quantities.

While he was still just a baby, Marius's mother died unexpectedly, and for reasons as yet undetermined, his father abandoned him to the system which shuttled him around from children's home to children's home. Marius never quite fit in at those other places. He was always out of step with the other children, he always asked too many questions, and by the time he came to the Hand of Help orphanage, they had almost managed to beat the spirit out of him, almost.

I remember the first time I met Marius, and the one thing I recall most vividly is that he would not look me in the eye. There was always that fight or flight rigidity about him, always looking around, as if expecting someone to sneak up on him and slap him over the head, or twist his ear.

It took some time for Marius to adjust and realize that this was a safe place, a place where the children didn't get beat, abused, mistreated or starved. This was a place where you were free to smile, laugh, and even ask questions if something seemed unclear.

It is only in hindsight that we have the luxury of wondering where life would have taken some of our children if not for Hand of Help. From the start of the fourth grade to his eighteenth birthday, Marius was a member of the Hand of Help family. He was also among that first class of children to timidly venture out into the world, and try to survive with the skills, convictions, and principles that were taught here.

As with all our children, by example, tutelage and tirelessness, we managed to fan the flames of the love of God in Marius's heart, and from singing in the church choir, to consistently attending Bible study, to getting baptized and being an example to the other children, his love for God grew and blossomed.

It was this love and this dependence upon God that would carry Marius through some of the darker seasons of his life, from finding his biological father after a long search only to be rejected by him once more, to attempting to form a bond with his brother, only to be cast aside and told that it was not something he was interested in.

As most young people in Romania are wont to do, Marius had a difficult time being on his own, finding jobs in various places, but never really finding his place. Throughout, he learned the English language and practiced tirelessly until one day he came to say goodbye and informed us that he was moving to England. It was there that he would try to make a life for himself. It was there that he would try to find his purpose.

No longer a child, we said our goodbyes as men, and promised to keep in touch. Time passed, Marius found his place, and whenever he happened to be in Romania he would always visit the Hand of Help orphanage and take the younger children out for ice cream or hot cocoa, depending on the weather and what they were in the mood for.

Although he has been gone for many years, this was still his family. A few weeks ago we received an envelope in the mail informing us of his upcoming nuptials and inviting everyone who could attend to his wedding.

He had been searching for some time for the perfect helpmate, and finally, God had answered his prayers and brought the one who was to be his bride in his path. All the staff celebrated for Marius, and although the wedding was to take place some five hours away, we wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Weddings are very different in Romania than they are in the US. Whenever a young couple marries it is customary for the attendees of the wedding to ban together and give the young couple a head start by taking up a collection, or offering some sort of gift.

After getting together with our accountant, it was decided that we would gift the sum of 2000 lei, roughly \$500 to the newly minted family, because it is what family does here, and though he had not been a resident for going on ten years, Marius was still family.

The wedding was beautiful, the groom was emotional, the bride was resplendent as all brides throughout the world seem to be on their wedding day, and after all the festivities ended, Marius and his new bride came to me and said, "We've decided we want to give ten percent of what was gathered at our wedding to the Lord. We want to give five percent to the orphanage, and would like five percent to go toward the poor."

I had to bite my lip in order not to cry, because once more I was reminded, as I had been so many times previous, that our labors are not in vain, and though the fruit might not be evident instantly, the fruit will be evident nevertheless.

We raised another good one. We raised another young man who loves the Lord, who loves his wife, who's found his place, and who has the foundation of Christ in his life. The sum the Podiuc family gave to the ministry turned out to be 500 lei more than we had gifted them, and since they wouldn't take no for an answer, I made them promise they would come visit whenever they got a chance, and spend some time at the orphanage.

This ministry made a difference in the life of Marius Podiuc, as it has made a difference in countless other lives. This is not a boast; it is merely fact. We are ever thankful to the Father for not only providing us the opportunity to sow the seeds of His love in the hearts of these children, but also to see the harvest. Many sow but never have the



privilege to see what they have sown come to maturity. I consider it a great blessing and privilege to see the maturing of the seeds this ministry has planted throughout the years, and be witness to the lives that were transformed through its labors.

In Christ, Pastor Michael Boldea Sr



*Some of our previous orphanage children in attendance, Nicoleta, Catalin and Alina surrounding the bride, groom and myself.*



# Our Yearly Tradition



Wherever you happen to find yourself, whatever culture, whatever continent, you are always bound to run across some sort of tradition. All of us have traditions. Traditions are important. Traditions tether us to our past, and keep us from forgetting where we've come from, how far we've come, and all that has happened since our journey began.

Although our traditions are few, we here at Hand of Help have a couple traditions of our own, one of them being the end of the school year celebration. Ever since the orphanage started, ever since the first generation of children had their first summer vacation, before they would go off to visit family, or go to camp, or enroll in some sort of supplemental trade school, we would all gather together and celebrate those who graduated, who passed another class, and who were one year closer to being fully grown adults capable of being self-sufficient.

This year was no different, and on the last day of the school year, the children, along with their tutors and some of the teachers from the schools our children attend, gathered together to reminisce about the school year that was, have some cookies, some juice, and speak of the coming summer with excitement.

Since I happened to be in Romania, I too was invited to the festivities, and although I tried to be on time, due to a somewhat painful bout of gout, I ended up being late. Let's just say you don't make good time hobbling and trying to keep pressure off the big toe of your left foot.

By the time I entered the hall, the children were already looking at some slides of pictures the staff had taken of

them in various reposes, from doing school work, to playing outside, to singing in the choir, to riding their bicycles.

Not wanting to make my presence known or interrupt the proceedings in any way, I limped as close as I could get, standing behind one of our staff members, and one of the school teachers that were attending the celebration.

I wasn't eavesdropping. I really wasn't. I did not mean to overhear their conversation, but because all the children were watching the photo slide and there wasn't any ruckus, I overheard the conversation nonetheless.

"I have to tell you, the children that come from this place are some of the most well-mannered children I've ever taught. Even the rest of my colleagues who have children from your orphanage in their classes say the same thing," the teacher said to one of our tutors in a hushed tone.

"We do our best," the tutor replied, and turned her gaze back to the children.

"I mean it," the teacher said, "you treat these children as though they were your own."

"They are. Perhaps not biologically, but they are ours, and we care for them as such," the tutor replied.

Although they never saw me, and didn't know I was there, I had to smile at her answer, because she encapsulated the reason for our success with the children entrusted into our care, perfectly. It's not because we are smarter than other orphanages, it is not because we are better equipped, it is not because we have more money; it is because the staff, to the last, loves these children, and wants to see them succeed.

The children here are loved. It is not a secret, it is not a mystery, but love is also something you can't fake or manufacture. Love cannot be conjured up in a laboratory, and it cannot be mass produced in a sweatshop. It either simply exists, evident in every action and every undertaking, or it doesn't. We succeed where other children's homes have failed, we are able to get through to the most difficult of cases and see a positive change because the love of Christ that is in us flows outward, and even the most scarred and jaded child can see the authenticity of it.

I stayed a little while longer, looking over the faces of the children in our care, seeing the open smiles, and the flickers of joy passing across their faces, and even though the pain in my foot was getting worse, I had to smile. In a

world wherein more and more individuals are looking for meaning, fulfillment, purpose, and a reason not to look back on the years and count them as having been wasted, those smiles confirmed what I have known ever since the doors of this place first opened: there is nothing more fulfilling, more purposeful, more rewarding or satisfying than remaining in the will of God, and seeing Him working through you. Your obedience and ours makes all this possible, and I thank you for this humbling honor.

I stayed a while longer, then slowly shuffled out of the hall, still smiling.

With love in Christ,  
Michael Boldea Jr.



# *A Bed to Lay My Head*

*D*oing the work we do makes it easy not to take things for granted. It is neigh to impossible not to be thankful for your health when you visit brothers and sisters far younger than you who have to breathe via an apparatus in their nose, who are bedridden or who have been told that they are terminal. It is neigh to impossible not to be thankful for having a roof over your head when you visit family after family who lives in someone's barn, or in some dilapidated shack that would be nothing more than rubble save for a swift kick or a strong wind.

As human beings it is easy to fall into patterns. It is easy to have one's health for so long that we feel we are entitled to it. It is easy to not have gone hungry for so long that we feel as though we are entitled to having bread on our table every day. It is easy to stop being thankful for the little things, and shifting one's focus and desires to wanting more, especially when preachers and evangelists the world over insist that if perchance you are not blessed with abundance you are not a child of God, or in the least have some insurmountable sin in your life that keeps God from sending you a million-dollar check.

I have been doing this long enough to know that the people we help, the people we visit, the people we reach out to aren't in sin, aren't forsaken, nor are they closet heretics; they're just poor. God is not punishing them or judging them, although, perhaps He is testing them as well as us through their circumstances, but being poor or lacking something by way of the material does not remove one from the love of God, nor does it signify that they are somehow living outside of His will.

Salvation is not about obtaining things. Salvation is about obtaining *the one thing!* Salvation is about obtaining *the prize*, and not just any prize. Salvation is about eternity, about being welcomed into the home that He has gone to prepare, and not about living lives of excess here on earth.

I do not mean to rant, but the hearts of the righteous are being grieved by certain teachings making their way into our region, and besides having to comfort and console brothers and sisters in Christ in their time of need, I find myself having to reassure them of God's love for them

because of what they heard from so-called evangelists and men of God from abroad.

Recently, as I was visiting a handful of families in a few villages, I was taught a lesson on thankfulness that has stayed with me and has only continued to blossom and solidify with the passing of time. I've come to realize that God will continually teach us deeper truths if we remain teachable, if we remain humble, and if we don't presume to know everything already.

I've also come to realize that the older I get, the more He teaches me, the more nuanced His lessons become, as though the lightest touch, the softest whisper can open up an infinite universe of possibility before me.

It was getting late, the sun was giving way to the moon, and with just two families left on the list, the entire team was looking forward to a little quiet time, or at least not bouncing around trying to avoid the big potholes for the smaller ones. We had started out early and it had been a full day.

My ledger was full of needs as is often the case whenever we go out, and in the morning to come we would get together and figure out which families we could help, which we would prioritize, and which we would have to give a partial help to. As I've said before, you can't help everyone with everything, but it doesn't mean we should stop trying.





The second to last home on the list was the home of the Gigica family. Their home had partially burned earlier in the year due to a hay fire, and now they were rebuilding and putting their life back together. Since we'd already helped them with the purchase of material for the rebuilding, and some brothers in the village volunteered the labor, we wanted to see if there was anything more they needed, or any other areas wherein we could be a blessing.

Although they haven't even started on the plumbing and electrical, and even the construction isn't completed, when I asked Mihaela Gigica what her greatest need was, she smiled, and said, "A mattress would be nice. I haven't slept on a mattress in four months. It would be nice to sleep on one again."

For an instant I didn't know what to say, but after a second's thought I asked the next logical question, "What exactly are you sleeping on if you don't have a mattress?"

"We laid out blankets on the floor of the room that was not affected by the fire, and we all sleep there," she said smiling. "It's not as soft as a mattress."

It was then that I realized that although I am thankful for the big things in life such as shelter, sustenance, family and health, there is so much more I ought to be thankful and

grateful for on a daily basis that I just don't consider as deeply as I ought.

A woman and her family sleep on an earthen floor and all she wanted is a mattress. I've had a mattress for many a year, have never done without it, so if one were to ask what I wanted, it surely wouldn't be a mattress.

I believe it's all about perspective. When you no longer have a mattress you realize just how much you took it for granted, as is the case with one's health, place of employment, and hundreds upon hundreds of other things.

At the tail end of a long day doing God's work I learned to be thankful for all things and not just some things; even the weariness I was feeling in my bones for having been able to spend the day being a present help in time of need.

Not only will we be purchasing a mattress for the Gigica family, with God's help we will be purchasing them a bed, and not only them but many other families who have similar needs and prayers.

In Christ,

Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.

# The Building Season

*I*t took the smartest man to ever walk the earth to put into writing what mankind has known instinctively since the dawn of time. We knew inherently that there was a time to plant, and so we planted. There was a time to reap the harvest, so we gathered in the sheaves. We knew there was a time to laugh, and so we laughed, but we likewise knew there was a time to mourn, and so we mourned as well.

As life's journey neared its twilight we also know that we must die, and so we go back to the earth from whence we came, and though men have tried, no one can escape this absolute reality.

Here, where winters can be long and brutal, we know that when the spring showers cease and give way to the summer sun, it is building season. There is only a small window wherein we can build in Romania, at least as far as exterior walls, foundations, and roofs are concerned, and we take full advantage of the time we've been allotted to do as much as we can toward this regard.

Since most of the renovations to the orphanage are of the interior we can work pretty much all year round, but that cannot be said for the handful of building projects we have throughout the region of both family homes and churches.

The time for building an entire church or even an entire home for someone is long past, but we still try to do as much as we can, coming alongside fellowships and families and purchasing either the lumber, the cement, the bricks, the flooring, or whatever else they might need at the moment. If the finances are available we always do more, but there is far less pressure on us as a ministry when we target a specific area of need rather than take on the entire project.

Yes, in the bygone days you could erect a decent sized church for around ten thousand dollars, but that hasn't been the case for a very long time. Even then we knew it couldn't last, so we built as many houses of worship as our ministry could afford which when all was said and done ended up being north of fifty churches. Nowadays, due to the normalization of prices throughout Europe, what would have built an entire church will likely only suffice

for the bricks and the lumber of a single family home. It is a setback, but not an insurmountable one. Just because the dollar doesn't stretch as far as it used to doesn't mean we pick up our ball and go home. We continue to labor because it is what we were called to do, and with God's help and yours this summer there are a handful of projects we would like to complete before the winter season arrives.

Costel and Maria Istrate have four children ranging between eight months and five years of age. The entire family lives in one room of a small home that was gifted to them by a Danish ministry upon their marriage, and though they have another room in the home, it needs to be renovated, plastered, and painted.

It may not seem like much of a task, but seeing as the Istrate family has no income to speak of, for them it is an impossibility. The cost of finishing this room and purchasing a dresser for the family, something they desperately need for their clothing and personal effects, is \$1000.

The story of Sanduleac Catalin is a unique one in that two of his children, Robert and Ionela are currently residing at



the Hand of Help orphanage. We visited the family recently, and discovered that they had inherited their ancestral home, a small, rickety homestead that Catalin and his eight siblings were born and raised in.

Upon further discussion, Catalin made it known that he would like to reunite his family, and bring all five of his children under one roof. Since we strive for family reunification whenever possible, we asked Catalin what he would need in order to make this happen, and without hesitation he simply said, "more room."

Although ambitious, we would like to build an annex on Catalin's old family homestead, and this would give the family enough room to live together under one roof and be reunited. Because there was never any sort of abuse but simply poverty as far as the children are concerned, we are amenable to this idea, and are praying for the finances to make this project possible. The cost of the annex is around \$3000.

Ionel and Laura Trinisor along with their five children have been praying for a home to call their own for a very long time. Oddly enough, the answer to their prayer came by way of a government funded program, wherein they received a two-bedroom apartment. The only issue is that the apartment itself is in a deplorable state, having been uninhabited for many a year and used as a squatting station by the homeless, by transients, and by substance abusers. As it currently stands the apartment is not inhabitable, although we have started the renovation process on behalf of the Trinisor family due to the fact that they have no other place to go, and are currently staying with some brothers who opened their hearts and homes to them. The cost to renovate and furnish the apartment the Trinisor family will call home is around \$1500.

These are just a few of the projects we hope and pray we can complete this summer, but they are by no means all the projects we have undertaken or plan to bring to completion. From buying animals, feed, furniture and firewood, to paying for wells and a dozen other specific needs we run across, there is never a lack of projects, and the need is constant.

Please keep these needs and the Hand of Help ministry in your prayers, and if the Lord leads you to come alongside us on any of these projects, know that your reward will not be small.

In Christ,

Pastor Michael Boldea Sr.



# *July's Children of the Month*

The Arama children, comprised of Irina Elena (born July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004), Dumitru Alexandru (October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005), Andreea (September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006), Iosif Stefan (November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009) and Maria Gabriela (November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013), have touched the hearts of their village neighbors after their father lost a long battle with cancer. Immediately after burying her husband, the siblings' mother left her home and entrusted Irina, at only 12 years of age, with the care and provision of her brothers and sisters.

For a whole month, the children lived on their neighbors' compassion. The mother collected all the state allowance for the children and spent it on alcohol. When they were left with no electricity and the living environment became inhumane, they were forced to abandon school also.

Some of you may remember Irina, Alexandru and Andreea – they have been a part of Hand of Help's family before (for three years) when their father left abroad for work and their mother, an alcoholic back then too, refused to take care of them. Upon his return, he found a job near his house and together with his wife, decided to take their children back home. We continued to support them and with our contributors' help, we were even able to bless them with a cow. Everything seemed to be working out well in their family until the father got sick and was unable to function, spending all his days in bed. Heart wrenched and having to cope with his inability to support his family, the father was also faced with his wife leaving him and the children for days. Even though the older children tried their best at taking care of him and the family (a task no child should be put up to), their efforts were soon to cease as they were faced with a new abandonment, their father's death.

Irina, Alexandru and Andreea are in back in school now and Iosif and Maria will soon be enrolled in kindergarten. Alexandru is suffering from strabismus and needs special medical care and his younger siblings will need one on one speech classes (having been deprived of proper development conditions, they manifest major speech problems).

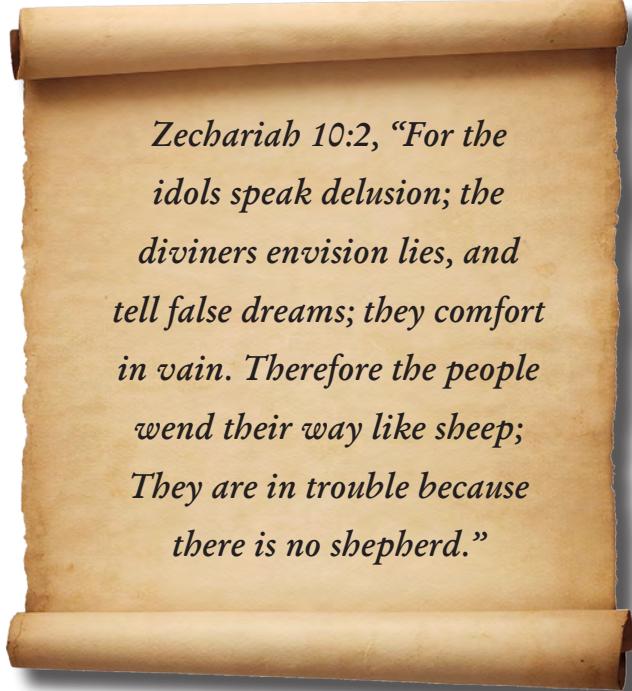
Please keep these five children in your prayers! They have found comfort now and they can rejoice in the safety and hope they have in Jesus.



*If after prayerful consideration you feel led to be a part of the child sponsorship program or orphanage sponsorship program, please contact us at [anne@handofhelp.com](mailto:anne@handofhelp.com).*

# *Dear Brethren,*

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*Zechariah 10:2, "For the idols speak delusion; the diviners envision lies, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; They are in trouble because there is no shepherd."*

If the Word of God does not allow for the belief of a certain theory or doctrine, then not only would I be disqualified from ministry if I were to endorse it, I would also be dabbling in falsehood and heresy. If I were to present you with a teaching contrary to Scripture, even if the teaching gave you a temporary comfort, it would be in vain. Truth is oftentimes painful. Truth is oftentimes hard to receive, but in order for us to do what we must in preparation of what is to come, we must receive the truth of Scripture no matter how difficult it may be to do so.

There are enough idols speaking delusion, there are enough diviners envisioning lies, there are enough dreamers telling false dreams, and I tell you this now, their judgment is not afar off. No matter how many people cease their support of this ministry, no matter how many people write angry letters, I will not have anyone's blood on my hands for having withheld the truth from them, and having lulled them into a false sense of security.

I can only tell you what the Bible says the future holds, not what I would like it to hold. Far too many today project their own desires and wants upon the Word of God, then go about dismantling it and putting it back together until it says what they want it to say rather than what it actually says.

This letter is difficult for me to write because I love and appreciate you and have no desire to see you angry with me. That said, I would rather have you be angry than comfort you in vain. The battle is coming whether we are ready for it or not. The devil rages, the darkness grows, and these precious few moments we have left to prepare and put on our armor cannot be squandered putting our hope in fanciful tales, and fables.

We must deal with the reality that is, the reality that was foretold in the Word, and not the reality we would like to see materialize. Neither you nor I can change what is by the force of our will alone. Neither you nor I can demand of God that He go back on His Word and do

*...Continued on page 12*

**E**very time I sit down to write to you I am confronted with a choice: Do I place truth above all else, or do I attempt to mollycoddle and obfuscate in order to spare feelings and make you feel at ease? Although on its surface the choice might seem easy enough, when you have eighty mouths to feed and you start getting barraged by angry letters from longtime supporters telling you they will no longer support your ministry because you spoke a difficult truth they did not agree with, the choice becomes far less easy.

It seems as though my last letter offended some of you, and I've even gotten requests to retract certain comments I made regarding the inevitability of having to endure persecution and be witness to the judgment of God upon the godless. If the Word of God allowed for this outcome, I would surely put pen to paper and retract my words, but the simple truth is, it does not.

as we demand, because He is not beholden to us, we are beholden to Him.

In all I have done I have tried to relay the urgency of the times and the lateness of the hour to you, and I pray that it has come across as such. Anything other than the question of whether or not we are ready to endure to the end is a distraction, and we have no time for distractions.

Within the pages of Scripture lays the roadmap to victory, and if we submit to its authority, following through with what it commands us to do, we will be among those who will have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

The way to victory is neither a secret nor is it a mystery. The only way to overcome is to not love our lives even unto death, having surrendered our all to Christ and Christ alone. Those who came before us, those who endured to the end, those who will forever remain forerunners of the faith were neither super human, nor were they more than mere men. What set them apart and marked them for greatness was their absolute refusal to compromise truth, having forfeited this present life for the life to come, and being willing to endure all things for the sake of Christ.

I realize full well that in modern Christianity this is not a popular position, but when has the truth ever been popular or wholly embraced by the masses? Though it may not be popular, it is nevertheless Scriptural, and I do not come to my conclusions lightly or flippantly.

My prayers are with you always. May you be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, may you put on the whole armor of God, and may you stand, having done all to stand in the evil day.

**Matthew 24:13-14, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."**

**Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."**

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr.

# *Prayer Requests*

*For God to touch each of the children's heart during our summer camp outreach.*

*For the upcoming conventions; “Hear the Watchmen” in September, and “Great Is His Faithfulness, Hand of Help Celebrating 30 Years”, in October.*

*For discernment and a sensitive ear to God's Holy Spirit,  
that we may be led during these changing times.*

*For peace and protection during times of persecution.*