

Evangelistically Speaking

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Update your prayer list:

- Please remember the brethren in Moreni and Cluj as they stand for the Lord.
- Pray for laborers who are willing to work the harvest in the U.S. and Romania.
- Pray that churches with resources will feel the call to send workers into the field.

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From Ted's Pen

"Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."
2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

You cannot know how often and how fervently we do pray for all of you and how much you mean to us. We simply could not do the work that we do without your support, prayers, and encouragement.

We had to postpone our trip to Romania the last of August and first of September due to so many difficulties here at home that required our attention. It

seemed that our world just fell apart for several weeks beginning in early July. We learned that our good friend and brother in Christ, Doug Roberson, became suddenly very sick and he only lived for a few days before death released him from agonizing suffering. Our hearts were broken and we wanted so much to be with his family, but other family conflicts made it impossible to go at that time.

On July 21 we surprisingly learned that we were going to have a new baby born into our family. On July 24, our wedding anniversary, I became ill with some heart complications and had to spend almost the entire week with doctors. After a lot of tests and changing some medications, I feel much, much better



I write these words while watching the Ryder Cup, an annual golf event that pits 12 of the finest golfers from the United States against 12 of the best from the European continent. It is conducted every two years and for the past 20 years it has been totally dominated by the Europeans. The Europeans are winning in a rout. A similar, negative fate recently befell the USA basketball team.



than I have in a long time. On July 30 our precious little Dessie Ola Koone was born at 8:54 AM. What a delight she is to us. She and her Mom are both doing exceptionally well, in splendid health, and blessing our lives every day. Her Mom made a mistake and is keenly aware of it, but she has made it right with God and asked for forgiveness and prayers in two congregations where she has spent all

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Marty's Thoughts

I find it curious that American teams are now finding it difficult to be successful in sports they once dominated. Americans are as talented as ever, but they cannot win as a team.

As an American I must ask: what does this mean? Is it just a matter of one sports team being luckier? Or does it say something else about us as a society?

I believe it is the latter—and I also believe that it is an indicator of a problem that runs much deeper than meaningless sporting events.

There are many who read this publication online who are not Americans and I beg their indulgence as I address what I feel is becoming a major problem for us and I'm not talking about sports.

We Americans are losing our ability to work as a team! Now, I'm no sociologist, but it doesn't take a trained professional to recognize that Americans are becoming increasingly selfish. It would seem that our motto has become, "What's in this for me?"

Individuals jump from job to job in the workplace, without considering loyalty, because doing so increases their pay faster. Men and women leave relationships through divorce because they aren't getting what they want out of marriage. For many, opinions are formed and decisions made with a bent toward selfishness. And as a result, we are losing the ability to function as a team working toward a common goal.

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From Ted's Pen (Continued)

of her life in this area. The encouragement of Christians in this area has been overwhelming in spite of a few cruel, rude, and thoughtless comments from some who believed that they had the right to judge when that right belongs only to God. This spirit reflects the attitude in a song about forgiveness that was written and performed by Lyle Lovett. The song says, "God will, but I won't; God does, but I don't; That's the difference between God and me." We hope that you will pray for Melanie, Dessie, and our entire family.

The first part of August Barbara's sister, Jane Tipton, was taken to the VA Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She was very, very, ill. She has another sister, Shirley Throgmorton, who also became very sick. Two or three times the doctors have said that Jane would not live and the family should be called in. However, she continues to bounce back and at this writing continues to hang on to life. Shirley remains very sick and the doctors are contemplating exploratory surgery which will probably be done before you receive this newsletter. We ask for your prayers for these two precious sisters of Barbara.

In spite of these things we continued to make our plans to go to Romania. We had two of our three bags packed and sitting in the garage ready to be loaded the next morning, waiting for us to get dressed and leave for the airport. Less than 18 hours before our scheduled departure, our daughter Kathy called and told me, "Dad, I have a bad mammogram!" Just a few minutes later Melanie called and said, "Dessie has blood in her diaper!" Brethren, I simply said, "We have to draw the line somewhere and this is it. We are not leaving here with our family like this."

We called Delta airlines and in spite of the fact that our plane tickets were non-refundable and non-transferable, they gave us credit for our tickets and enough

credit not only for our next flight, but for one of us to go on another flight. I could not believe what they were saying, but it is true. Our next trip which will be in January 2007 is completely paid for and one of the tickets for a future trip is already paid for with the credit from this one flight. We thank God for good news.

Now, I am sure that you are tired of reading all of this, but there is some good news. The baby is fine! Kathy had further mammograms and ultrasounds and she is fine at this time. They are going to watch her closely, but right now everything is OK. We praise God for that and ask for your continued prayers for Kathy and Dessie.

Now, to our work for the month of September, It was a genuine pleasure to be with the congregation at Higden, Arkansas on September 10-13 for a gospel meeting. We have worked with Higden for many years and they have supported our work since the beginning. Brother Carroll Sites and his wife, Loreta, have served the church at Higden for 17 years, with Brother Sites preaching the gospel and serving as one of the elders. These brethren have been an encouragement to Barbara and me for many years and it is always a joy to be with them.

On September 17 we had the pleasure to be with the Valley View congregation at Jonesboro, Arkansas. This congregation is just a little over TWO years old, but already having over 500 in attendance. In October they will begin meeting in their beautiful new facility and I believe that the future is very bright for the church at Valley View. Our longtime good friend, David Gibson, preaches for the church and he and his wife, Cindy, are doing a great work.

On September 18-20 we were finally able to go to Dallas, Texas to visit our wonderful friends, Sam and Ardella Roberson, who lost their son, Doug in July.

It was a joy to be with the Ben's Branch congregation near Harrison, Arkansas September 22-24. The brethren there meet in one of the most beautiful places in the country and what a wonderful group of people they are. There are three congregations in the area: Ben's Branch, Mt. Judea, and Bass. They support meetings at each place so very well. The singing is wonderful and the fellowship outstanding. God has blessed us tremendously with

opportunities to teach the word and we are thankful. The months of October and November are full of opportunities to preach the gospel and we will have a very busy month. Most of the month will find us coming home each Thursday to unpack, only to pack and leave again each Saturday. We pray that God will bless the efforts which are made and that many will be caused to walk with Jesus every day.

- Ted

News from Romania

We continue to be encouraged by reports that we are receiving from the small congregation in Moreni, Romania. Marty and team worked there in July and August and good fruit continues to come from their efforts. Attendance is averaging about 20 each Lord's day. Brother Ioan Dragomir, who was baptized into Christ in July, is continuing to grow and is very faithful in attending the services. Brother Cristi Dumitriu leads the Bible study each week and brings the lesson during the worship hour. Sister Mihaela Dumitriu teaches the children's class which has an attendance of about eight students.

They are still looking for a place to meet because they have outgrown the Dumitriu's apartment. We hope that soon we will be able to buy a place for the church to meet and also to house workers who go there to help with the work.

Marty's team and Brother Ray Kesler from Casa Grande, Arizona who followed the team in August, have provided school supplies for children and these have been distributed to some students where Mihaela's mother is a teacher. We are really excited about the prospects for the future of the church at Moreni.

Brother Will Odom from Normangee, Texas is currently in Cluj, Romania and will be there until October 24 working with the brethren. Brother Dan Davis and his wife, Jan, will be returning to the States on September 25.

An unused part of the building in Cluj has been set up as living quarters suitable for us to live in while we are there and that will reduce expense. Brother Odom is staying in the living area now and tells me that it is nice and comfortable. Barbara and I plan to be there January 10-29, 2007, Lord willing.

Marty will also be there in January so that we can take care of legal paperwork that will give us the authority to work with the **Asociatia Biserica Iui Hristos**. In English that means "Association of the church of Christ." We are very excited about the future in Cluj. We want to have about six teaching teams who will commit to go and work at various times of the year. We believe that God will provide those teams and that a great work is going to be done to His honor and glory. Look for further information soon.

Let me close by expressing our deepest gratitude to you for your help and prayers. May God bless you for sending us to so many places both here in the U.S. and in Romania. We love you.



Marty's Thoughts (Continued)

Does this have any affect on us within the body of Christ? It has the potential to do so and, indeed, I believe we are seeing the first vestiges of this within the church. Think about these things:

Why are so many churches changing worship styles? Many churches are introducing practices that are, at best, controversial and, in some cases, unscriptural. Why, you ask? Because so many individual Christians aren't getting what they want from worship.

Why are so many churches struggling to grow? Because church is a place where we go to get something instead of a place where we go to honor our God through servicing others!

Why is the "mega-church" trend so prominent? Because it is much easier to be a member of a large, usually urban, church with an emphasis on one worship service a week—heavy on entertainment—and little commitment to service. Blend into the thousands!

You may or may not agree with my speculation on this issue. But, one thing is certain. The problems that I describe exist, regardless of their root cause. I believe that most individuals care deeply about these problems, but they are helpless when it comes to identifying and addressing the cause of the

problem. I would suggest that we look to the first century Church as an example.

Acts 2:44-47

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

I hope you make note of the recurring theme—words and phrases such as "together", "in common", "one accord", and "having favor with all people." It is no accident that the LAST phrase is the result—the church in the first century grew daily.

Do we want that type of growth? If we want that type of unity—and that's another current topic of great concern—it begins with teamwork. It starts with a commitment to God and a willingness to sacrifice our own wants, needs, and wishes for the common good. Let's be a team for God!

- Marty

Schedule for Ted

October 1

Levy—North Little Rock, Arkansas

October 8-11

Charleston, Mississippi

October 15-18

Gainesville, Missouri

October 22-27

Casa Grande, Arizona

Operation Outreach Update

2007 SCHEDULE

The 2007 schedule of opportunities with Operation Outreach is quickly forming with great promise! I plan to have the schedule completed by the end of October so that there is sufficient time to share the opportunities with those who may be interested in participating.

As Ted mentioned in the Romanian Update, we hope to build a minimum of six teams who will travel to Cluj and Moreni during 2007. Not only will we need individuals to step us as workers, we will also need experienced team leaders. As it will not be possible for Ted and I to personally lead each team. We ask you to begin giving this your most prayerful consideration, especially if you are a candidate for either of these roles.

We will also conduct two domestic Operation Outreach campaigns during 2007. While details are not finalized, I can tell you that one of these campaigns will be conducted in New England during the month of March. The second will likely be held in the state of Wyoming sometime during the summer. This will open the door

for many of you who have indicated that you would like to work with an Operation Outreach team, but don't want to travel internationally.

I will conduct two of the Operation Outreach Orientation Sessions during the months of January and February. These will familiarize you with the work and our methods. In the meantime, if you have questions that you would like to ask before making a commitment, please feel free to contact me. And keep in mind that there are no dumb questions, just unasked ones!

2006 DEFICIT

A number have responded to my request for help with the financial deficit from this summer's campaigns. To those who helped: we're grateful for you! The deficit, which started at \$5,500, now stands at \$3,150. I hope that others will give this consideration. As I stated last month, Lisa and I have personally covered this expense in the interim and would greatly appreciate your help, if possible.

- Marty

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