

Evangelistically Speaking

Volume 18
Issues 1/2

January/February
2009

*Please join us in prayer
for the following items:*

- Pray that God will send forth workers to help in the harvest
- Praise God for His bountiful blessings in this day and age
- Ask God to bless those in the mission field with strength, health, wisdom, and opportunity
- Pray for the church in Cluj, Romania and for the preacher and his family, Claudiu and Anca Murtaza.

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From Ted's Pen

A LOOK BACK

There is a great deal of profit in looking at the past as we plan for the future. There are lessons that can be learned from failures and from successes upon which we may build a more successful future. We are constantly striving to improve in areas where improvement is needed and to strengthen the areas of our work where success has been extended.

2008 was a good year and a productive one in the Masters' work. I have never reached the point where I have been satisfied with what has been accomplished and do not expect to ever reach that level. However, I am challenged every day to strive for more successful and



A LOOK FORWARD

I have heard it said that when it comes to the future there are three types of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wander what happened.

In Luke 14, Jesus introduced to His disciples the concept of first counting the cost before undertaking a major task. His intent was to help them understand the

fruitful endeavors. With God's help and the prayers and support of so many of you and with diligence on our part in teaching the fresh and sound gospel of Christ, I believe that much more can be done to His glory.

On November 17 we began our 18th year of full-time Evangelism and Mission work throughout the world. I have preached the gospel in 41 States, if my memory serves me correctly.

When I started this work I believed that there was a great need for the preaching of the gospel in the United States and I believe that even more strongly today. As we have traveled throughout this country working with congregations in areas where the church is very weak

depth of the commitment that would be required from them as disciples of Him. But, another lesson can be drawn from this text concerning the necessity of planning.

In his article, Dad covered some of the things that have been accomplished in Cluj, Romania during the past year. My task is to share with you our plans for the future.

When we assumed leadership of the work in Cluj, one of our top priorities was to identify a Romanian brother who could move to Cluj and work with the church on a full-time basis. We are thrilled that God has blessed us in this regard over the past 14 months.

Without a doubt, our highest priority at this point is to find new Bible students. Toward the end of 2009 Romanians will



and is struggling with all kinds of challenges, we have been brought to our knees time and time again pleading for the Lord's direction and assistance in presenting the message of grace and hope to so many who have never heard. I have been overwhelmed by the spiritual ignorance of the vast majority of our population. Our growing up in an area where the church was strong and numbered among the fastest

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mark the 20th anniversary of the revolution that resulted in the fall of Communism. During the early years of the new Romanian democracy there was a genuine thirst for God's word. Literally hundreds would line up for the opportunity to study the Bible for the first time.

In some cases, people were intrigued by the notion of interacting with Americans for the first time. I remember, vividly, the reaction of people when they were offered a Bible of their very own. For many that was a first.

Nearly two decades have passed and the novelty has worn off for many. For others, the future appeared bright in 1989 and the years that followed brought difficulty and hardship. Their disillusionment has become great. So, you see our challenge.

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From Ted's Pen (Continued)

growing religious bodies in the U.S. and assuming that every area was the same way has been a terrific awakening for us. So, we have pressed harder and harder as the years have gone by to seek means and methods of presenting the unchanging message of salvation to as many as possible here in our precious homeland.

One of the most discouraging things about our work is to witness the decline of the church in some areas and to note the "graying" of the church all over the land. I am so thankful for the men and women who have fought the battles of the past and I thrill to look out over an audience and see many gray heads who are maintaining their faithfulness in service to the Lord.

However, I often ask myself, "What is going to happen as these beloved brethren pass on?" In many congregations the number of older people is far greater than the number of younger brothers and

sisters. In many cases the congregations are decreasing in number rather than increasing because of the loss of so many of our older warriors. This presents us with some tremendous challenges.

Our work in Romania continues to be a blessing to us and we trust that it brings glory to God. In some ways it is more difficult than it was when we began 14 years ago. The economic crisis is more troubling there than it is here. That produces an atmosphere where it is much more difficult to get the attention of people because they are working so diligently to scrape out a living for their families. It is hard for them to believe that a solid relationship with the Lord will make life better for them.

They have never had anything but hardship in most cases and they find it hard to believe that things will ever change. But, it is a joy to find a few who are still interested and some who are searching diligently for the truth.

In 2008 we had two men in particular who had been studying the Bible for some time and had been searching diligently for the church that they read about in the Bible when they found us. It was such a joy to study with them and now they are faithful Christians. Others were baptized as well, but these two had been trying to find the Lord's church and you cannot imagine the joy they expressed when they found it.

In Romania in 2008 there were many good works done. We have just concluded our first year of work with Brother Claudiu Murtaza preaching for the church in Cluj. It has been a good year.

Marty and I made two trips each to Romania. The first Young Adult Retreat for Christians from across the entire country was conducted at Cluj with 59 Christians participating and Robert and Michal Swain going to work with them. Robert also made a second trip to Romania in November. The annual camp for teens from across the country was also conducted in Cluj.

There were two campaigns, plus other teams of 2-4 teachers who studied the word with students interested in the gospel. We helped people with food, medicine, and other things that they so badly needed. We gave Bibles to some who were interested in studying on their own. At least one Christian who had stopped worshipping the Lord came back home to the Lord. Five were baptized into Christ. There were three or four times of fellowship with Christians from other congregations, especially Oradea.

I could go on and on but I want to leave space for Marty to talk about our future plans. I want to thank you so much on behalf of the church in Romania for your prayers, for sending us, for your encouragement and every way that you have blessed our lives and theirs.

May God bless you and keep you safely in His care.

- Ted

2009 Romania ♦ Albania Missions Conference

*"The Grace That Is Reaching
More and More People"*

JANUARY 11-13, 2008

North Stafford Church of Christ
Stafford, Virginia

Schedule

Ted and Barbara

JANUARY 4

Mars Hill - Vilonia, Arkansas (AM)
Liberty - Conway, Arkansas (PM)

JANUARY 11

Colony - Bee Branch, Arkansas (AM)
Harrison & Willow - Conway, Arkansas (PM)

JANUARY 18

Bay, Arkansas (AM)
Pocahontas, Arkansas (PM)

FEBRUARY

Casa Grande, Arizona

FEBRUARY

Cluj-Napoca, Romania



Members of the Cluj congregation, Liviu Oltean (back) and Dan David (far right) with one of the families to whom the church delivered food baskets during the month of December.

Marty's Thoughts (Continued)

There is, however, good news! There are still those who long for the Gospel - the truth! In the past year there were five who made the decision to give their lives to Christ. We must make every effort to find others! Here are some of the things that we have planned to accomplish that objective.

ENGLISH LESSONS

One of the most effective ministries in our brotherhood is the work being done by World English Institute. The approach, used successfully in over 200 nations, is to offer lessons in English as a second language using the Bible as a textbook.

This method was used widely in Romania during the early days of the church and is still being used in many places. There are many Christians around the world who came to know Jesus Christ by this method, including many faithful Christians in Romania.

Our plans are to begin offering English lessons in March with Claudiu and Anca Murtaza acting as the instructors. Extensive advertising will be done across the city to identify potential students. A team of teachers will go to Cluj for the month of September to follow-up with new students.

WEBSITE

During the months of January and February, Claudiu and I will publish a new website for the church in Cluj. This site, which will be a dual-language site in both Romanian and English, will be used widely to let the people of Cluj know about the church there. We plan to use the website in a number of advertising campaigns.

In addition to the usual features of a website, this site will include a series of online lessons in both Romanian and English. Students may enroll in a course and be assigned a teacher depending upon their language preference.

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

This will be the second year for this event, to be held on April 30-May 2 in Cluj. The 2008 event was held primarily for Christians from across the country. As we evaluated the work done in 2008, Claudiu recommended that this have more of an evangelistic focus. So, the program is being altered slightly to meet that need.

We have reserved a total of 50 spaces at the camp just outside of Cluj. A group of 12-15 Romanian Christians, most from the church in Cluj, will serve as hosts for the event. Our goal is to fill the remaining 30-35 slots with young adults who have not yet obeyed the Gospel. We are encouraging the Romanian brethren to invite their friends, fellow students, and co-workers to attend.

I will be in Cluj for this event and would like to take one to two young couples with me. If you are interested in participating, please let me know. The dates for travel are April 24 to May 4.

SUMMER BIBLE SCHOOL

Another event that will be held over the summer is a Bible school for children. This concept was used widely in the early days of the church in Romania (pre-2000) and was successful. For some reason, it is not as widely used as in the past.

A number of the most faithful Christians in Romania first came in contact with the church as children. Two couples from another church in Romania will be in Cluj during the month of July to help with the school. I will also be there for this event.

The dates for the Bible school are July 20-24. Workers are needed for this event, as well. We really need those who are experienced in working with a VBS here in the U.S. who can serve as mentors for the Romanian workers as

they lead the work. The travel dates for the American team are July 16 to July 27. Again, if you are interested, please contact Marty as soon as possible.

SONG BOOKS

For many years, Romanian churches have used a songbook that consists of some of our (American) old standards. As the words of these songs were translated into Romanian, they were not translated word-for-word.

Due to the differences in the language it was not possible for a literal translation to be done. So, for years our brothers and sisters have sung these tunes that are so familiar to us, but using words that, in some cases, did not really fit. For years I have prayed that a Romanian would be converted who possesses the talent and ability to better this situation.

Our brother, Liviu Oltean, who was baptized last August makes his living as an opera performer. He and Claudiu have worked diligently over the past several months, planning the publication of new song books. Liviu and his brother-in-law, a lyricist by trade, are correcting some of the translations and we look forward to these books becoming available during 2009.

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

One need that is universal, regardless of your location, is maintenance of a building. The church facility in Cluj is no different. The roof must be replaced on the church building and the apartment that serves as housing for the Murtaza family. The existing

roof is tile and has likely been in place for many years. We hope to replace it with a metal roof that will reduce leaks and be much more durable.

Other work must be done, but none as large in scope as the replacement of the roof.

Each of the items that I have listed here represent an opportunity for you to participate in the work financially. The estimated cost for the retreat is \$2,500. Two congregations helped support this event last year and I hope that they will do so again in 2009. The estimated expense for the Summer Bible School is \$1,500. Publication of the song books will cost another \$1,500. We still do not have estimates on the cost of the roof replacement, but it will be significant. Finally, our estimated budget for advertising - finding new students - is set at \$2,500.

We realize that times are hard here at home. Many are suffering due to the economic conditions and some from loss of job or income. But, we hope that you will prayerfully consider the opportunities that exist in Cluj.

As always, words are inadequate to express our gratitude for your participation in the past.

We are excited about the future and thankful that God has placed us in this place at this time. Keep these efforts - and especially the brethren in Cluj - in your prayers.

May 2009 be a blessed years for each of you as we serve God together!

- Marty

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JANUARY 23-25, 2008

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GIFTS OF MEMORIAL AND HONOR

In Honor of
J.J. AND ANNA MAE PACE
Marty and Eldean Coker

In Memory of
EUGENE STILL
Joyce Jackson

In Honor of
TED AND BARBARA KNIGHT
Ova Lea Leighton

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