



Dumitru Duduman  
Founder




Hand of Help  
Ministries

# Hand of **HELP**

*Thank You For Your Support!*

*November • December 2016*

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# A LIFETIME AGO

IF TIME IS CONSTANT, WHY DO SOME DAYS FEEL LONGER THAN OTHERS? Why is it that when you're waiting for the results from the test the doctor ran on the lump you discovered accidentally, a day seems like ten years, but in what seems like the blink of an eye, that little baby you held in the palm of your hand the day she was born is forming full sentences, and has her own quirky personality? It seems the moments we wish would last a lifetime pass in a flash, and those moments we wish we could readily forget linger for far longer than we would like them to.

Time is a fleeting thing, and although the popular adage nowadays is that you are only as old as you feel, a close inspection of the nearest mirror confirms that pleasant as the adage may sound, it is a half-truth at best. I may feel a spry and springy twenty-five, but the wrinkles and the graying temples won't let me for one second forget that I'm all of forty and change.

This past month the ministry celebrated its thirty-year anniversary. Even with my rudimentary math skills, that tells me I was all of twelve years old when the Hand of Help Ministry began its labors in a two-bedroom apartment in Southern California that also served as our family's living quarters. I remember the genesis of the ministry all too well, because it was also around the same time that I became my grandfather's translator, something I would do for the next ten years.

There is this almost inexplicable sense of nostalgia and disbelief when I look back on all that we've been through as a ministry, the fact that two generations of my family have gone to their reward since it began, and that contrary to all probability and expectation, we are still here, still

doing the work, and still being faithful to the initial mission statement of preaching the gospel, and helping the orphan and the widow.

I know that some of you who have been with us going on decades now know all the ups and downs we've had as a ministry, and the fact that it hasn't always been easy. No one ever said it would be, and we did not enter ministry with this misguided expectation. We knew full well that when you tried to do good, the devil would try to stop it, and when you tried to preach the Gospel, the devil would try to silence you.

Because we knew what to expect we were never really caught off guard, although we did feel the sting of disappointment and betrayal more times than we care to remember. Through it all, through all its seasons, and its growing pains, through all the experiences that seem like they happened to somebody else a lifetime ago, God has been faithful, and He has held us up when we had neither the strength nor the energy to go on another step.

Because it was such a milestone, we decided to have an impromptu sort of gathering, simply to remember the goodness of the Lord, and all the good He has done for us. Those who were able to attend did so, and we had a good time in the Lord, not highlighting the accomplishments of any one individual, but rather the faithfulness of our God and King.

This has always been a God centered ministry and not a man centered ministry. We do not build upon the reputation or the namesake of any one individual, but rather we build upon the unshakeable foundation of the God of all creation, who has seen us through thus far, and who will see us through until our work is done.

To those of you who were able to attend, thank you for making the sacrifice, and coming to fellowship with us. To those of you who were unable to attend, know that we were with you in spirit, and we remembered you fondly.

It is always humbling to see how far God has brought you, even more so when the span of time is not a few



months, or a few years, but three whole decades. Since we do not quantify blessing as some other ministries might, the only metric that we use to define whether the Hand of God is still upon this work is if more people are getting clothed and fed and cared for today than they were yesterday, and the answer is a consistent and resounding, yes!

Over the course of thirty years we moved from the two-bedroom apartment in California to a cold warehouse in Wisconsin, which by the most generous of accounting can be construed as a lateral move, but this work was never about our comfort, or what we could amass as far as material things goes.

No, at first glance, from a purely human standpoint, in the physical, it doesn't seem like we accomplished all that much over the course of thirty years, but when you start accounting for the thousands upon thousands of families who were helped through this ministry, the generations of orphans who grew up in our orphanage and now have families of their own, the countless cows we've purchased, the countless hearths we've warmed, the countless mouths we've fed, the countless bodies we've clothed, the countless widows we've comforted, you start to get a picture of just how great our God truly is, and how much He can do through a handful of servants who simply want to serve. Thank you!

With love in Christ,  
Michael Boldea Jr.



## A TIME TO...

The third chapter of Ecclesiastes reminds us that, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. . . ."

"A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. He hath made everything beautiful in His time."

A time to praise. . .

A time to give thanks. . .

A time to rejoice. . .

And yet still now, more than ever, a time to be watchful, steadfast, and holy.

While we stand in the shadow of the election, we recognize a loving Savior who has allowed His mercy to be extended towards us.

*...Continued on page 4*

<http://www.theplathfamilyband.com>



Prior to the election, a gathering of saints in recognition for God's faithfulness toward this ministry for the last 30 years, poured out their hearts to God for His mercy to tarry.

I stand in awe of the power of prayer, praise, and unity among believers everywhere. Imagine what the church could accomplish if we practiced this on a regular basis!

It has been with this kinship of heart that we rejoice as we reflect on the families whose lives have first been touched by your generosity extended to them, and then secondly, their spirits who will reap eternal glory because you cared enough to invest in them.

If only you could have personally witnessed the *time to dance*, as the children received presents because of you

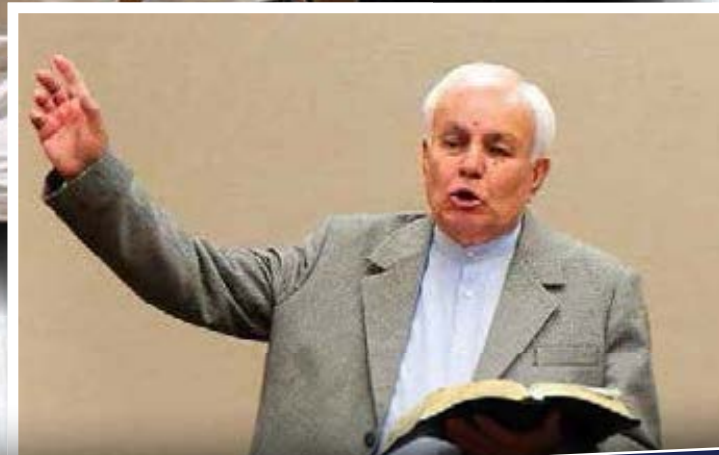
or the *time to cry*, as the elderly wept at receiving a blanket and load of firewood.

Oh, the many "a time to" you've made possible over these last 30 years!

May you take the time to count your blessings and give yourself permission to a time of praise and thanksgiving for all He has done through you, for you, and because of our Father finding His reflection in you.

*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.*

Anne Schmidt



# THE HOUSE OF SMILES



With every trip that we make to the secluded villages of northern Romania, there is one thing that becomes increasingly unequivocal: the amount of blessings that we bestow on the people we visit does not even begin to compare with the amount of blessings that we ourselves receive from the very least of these. I still remember the first time I had this humbling revelation – an elderly widow looking puzzled at my father-in-law when he asked her to name one experience with God that she will never forget and her shaking her head dramatically saying that that was an impossible task; all her experiences with God were unforgettable and she could not possibly choose just one. Her words still resound



with me as I sit at my desk this morning. I realize that the blessings that we have received so far from visiting the least of these, just like this sister, are indescribable. Words like these have shaped us and continue to teach us, bringing forth a different perspective regarding everything that we do.



When we finally caught a break from the drizzly days wherein the rain kept pouring and pouring with clouds drifting ominous and brisk, cold winds piercingly wailing outside, we knew we had to set off to the villages and try to get to as many families as possible. Our trailer was hastily filled with food packages, cleaning supplies, mattresses, doors, blankets and we started our journey. Our first stop was in the village of Durnesti, Ungureni. Three little girls welcomed us just as we were pulling up – Lidia (5 years old), Rebeca (4 years old) and Magdalena (2 years old). They were smiling at us, as the rays of sun finally broke through the clouds, warming their faces. It was by no means an uncommon picture – we have been greeted by the family's children on numerous occasions, but there was something disparate this time; we could all see a difference, although we could not point out exactly what it was. The girls



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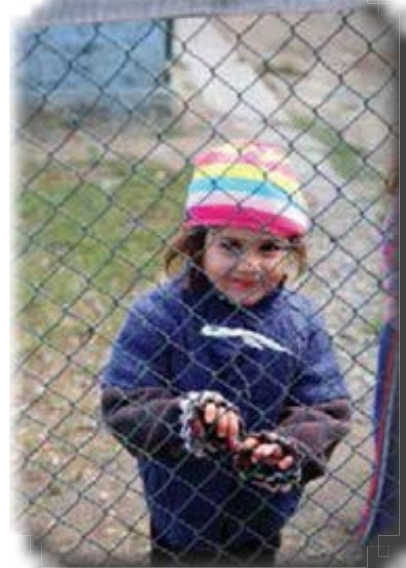
happily received the sweets we had brought them, then joyfully accompanied their father into the house as he was carrying a door unloaded from our trailer. Their tiny house, which is still under construction, is by no means appropriate for a family of six members (later on, we would meet their new born, just one week old).

As I followed them with my camera, a sudden image made me stand still. Their front door was missing a window pane; however, to keep the cold from getting in, they used the only piece of cardboard they could muster, probably from the side of a banana box, to “replace” the pane. It took a few minutes

for this to sink in. I was barely holding my camera straight, trying to capture as vividly as possible the very essence of such a circumstance. We have all heard the proverbial phrase, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade”, but that day’s lesson seems to have been, when life gives you a broken window pane, make a happy face. Despite their precarious living conditions, despite all their needs and wants, despite all the sadness that they were surrounded by, the Istrate family put a smiley face on their front door. What a lesson!

And as if this very lesson was not humbling enough, when we all started praying with the family, the girls left us speechless again – they were praying together with their parents, not just mumbling words or murmuring syllables - no, they were loud words of praise and cries for help for our Lord – the only one able to keep them under the shelter of His wings.

These are those defining moments in life that one nev-



er forgets for as long as they live. I am grateful for the blessing of being able to be there and learn.

Costel and Maria Istrate have not asked for help. They showed us their “house” (if this might be considered a proper noun for the room that they all live in – a 120 sq ft space that they received as a wedding blessing from a Danish family), grateful that they have a roof above their heads and are not forced to sleep in a neighbor’s house. The father had started building an additional room, but the money soon ended and they had to stop their construction. It would be a miracle if they could finish this addition and acquire some much needed pieces of furniture.

We told them we would keep them in our prayers and as the Lord gives us the financial means, we would come back and help them as much as we could. To this day I hear the three little girls saying goodbye to us as we drove away, burdened with a heavy heart that we are not thanking our Lord as we should for everything that He has given us: *Bye, Alexandra! Bye, Alexandra!* The sweetest of voices echoed around that muddy lane and the warmest of smiles followed our car as it departed their house.

In Him,

Alexandra Boldea



# A STAY OF EXECUTION!

*I penned this article the morning after the presidential elections, and uploaded it to my blog the same day. After much prayer and introspection, I believe it is imperative that I include it in this issue of the newsletter just so we might better understand what exactly took place on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and what the implications are for us as believers and followers of Christ.*

A stay of execution does not a pardon make. I realize that for the individual being walked up the gallows, feeling the rough noose slipping over his head and feeling it tighten around his neck the distinction is meaningless at best, but once he has had time to process, once he has had time to assess, once he has had time to come to terms with the reality that he will live to see another sunrise, eventually, inevitably, he will be confronted with the unyielding reality that sooner or later the walk down the gallows will commence anew, and the feel of the tightening rope will once more be a reality.

What happened in America last night was a stay of execution. It was not a pardon. We must be very clear about this because I know as surely as I am sitting here that the voices will begin to chirp anew insisting that God has somehow forgiven a nation that never repented of its sins, and that He has somehow restored a nation that has never humbled itself. Just because we managed to dodge a protracted, painful, and pernicious suicide by political correctness last night, it does not mean that we have somehow come into fellowship with God anew as a nation.

It simply means that God has shown this nation grace, He has stayed its judgment for a season, and if true change is not evident beginning with the church and sweeping out from there, when next He weighs us, when next He will be called upon to once more, decide whether He will stay our execution or allow judgment to be poured forth, we will be judged not only for what we are profoundly guilty of up until this point, but also for the season of grace we will have once again squandered from here on in.

Yes, I do believe last night was an act of sovereign grace. If this election had gone the other way, I am certain we would have been at war with Russia within six months of Madame Chairman Rodham being sworn in, and that the persecution against the household of faith would have been accelerated to a breakneck speed.

A merciful God has once more shown this nation mercy, and now it is up to us to decide what we will do with the mercy we've been given. It is up to us to decide what we will do with the reprieve and stay of execution that was handed down by the Judge of the Universe.

This is just the first of many critical moments we will have to face as a nation, and if you think it will be rainbows and kittens from here on in, you are fooling yourself.

So, yes, take a second, breathe a sigh of relief, say a prayer of thanks, enjoy the sunshine on your face, but then roll up your sleeves and get to work. Not tonight, not tomorrow, not next week, not whenever we get around to it or we have nothing left on our agenda.

The countdown clock has already started ticking, and in what will seem like the blink of an eye, this nation's case will once more be up for review. What we do from this point to that will determine whether we still have a future, and whether our stay of execution will once more be extended.

Do I believe that we've avoided judgment altogether? No, I do not, but the best we could have ever hoped for was a reprieve, a delay, a season of grace wherein we could return to the purity of simply being about our Father's business and preaching Jesus unashamedly once more.

We have so much work to do, and time is shorter than we might think.

With love in Christ,

Michael Boldea Jr.



# DECEMBER'S CHILD OF THE MONTH



That fall of 2009 was Andreea's new start in life. She was taken care of now – and it was not just a duty performed, our staff was loving on her and embracing her with an affection and love that she had not known before.

Two years later, Lorena, their third sister, became part of the Hand of Help family. All three sisters were finally together.

Andreea is now in the fourth grade. She is studying hard in school, loves painting and plays the block flute in our orchestra.

Thank you for making stories like Andreea's possible. We oftentimes find ourselves limited in what we can do, but God has always proven limitless. We are grateful for your open heart and for listening to God's voice. Andreea is a true testimony of your obedience and faithfulness.

It was in the fall of 2009 when we first met Andreea Roman. She was three years old at the time and barely able to walk, let alone utter any words. The foster parent that received money to take care of her denied her the basic of nutrition and assistance. Financial gain was the primordial purpose and Andreea had to endure extreme poor living conditions. Her innocent face told a much deeper story than anyone could have ever imagined. We could see pain in her eyes, trauma was deep-rooted on her forehead. She was scared, she was afraid of the new people in front of her.

The local authorities asked us to take her into our care as Danuzia, her sister, was already in our center. For the first time in their lives, they were together at last.



## REMINDER:

If you would like your donation to be included with the 2016 year end receipt for tax purposes, please mail your contribution by December 31st.

# THE UPHILL CLIMB

Life has been an uphill climb for as long as Petru Chiras can remember. It's not as though his parents or his six siblings had it any easier, and one of the fondest memories he holds from when he was only sixteen years old was of Virginia Boldea blessing his parents and their family with a home of their own. This was sixteen years ago, his parents have gone on to their reward, and now the home Petru and his family have been living in is no longer habitable because each of the six remaining siblings want their equal share of the home.

If this were the only hardship that Petru Chiras, his wife Elena, and their three children were facing, although unpleasant and disheartening, it would be bearable, but along with the prospect of becoming homeless on the threshold of winter, the Chiras family also has to con-

tend with their youngest child's malady. It is what causes them many a sleepless night, and has them on the brink of despair. Eliza, who is a few months shy of three, was born without part of her right frontal lobe and without her entire left lobe. Because of this birth defect, Eliza suffers from something called West syndrome, which is a severe epilepsy syndrome composed of infantile spasms.

Petru is a hard worker and a good provider, having a horse, a cow, chickens and a pig. This may not sound like much but he is able to feed his family, and if not for the continual cost of having to go to Iasi for therapy with Eliza, they would not be in the dire straits they currently find themselves in.

Gabriel and Ruben, Eliza's siblings who are five and four respectively, take turns watching her during the day, as she does not have the muscle strength to sit up or roll over on her own, and during the night, Petru and Elena take turns as the seizures are unpredictable and can come at any moment.

It is difficult to process the level and constancy of the strain the Chiras family is under, and the fact that Petru's siblings are threatening to sue in order to have him vacate the home, is not helping matters any.

After assessing the situation and visiting the home itself, we have concluded that since the house was built of mud brick, and it would cost a substantial amount to bring it up to code, it would be unfeasible to attempt and reach a monetary settlement with Petru's siblings on his behalf.

Sixteen years ago mud brick was the material most readily available to build homes with here in Romania. Things have changed over the past sixteen years, and now we have access to cheaper and sturdier materials which last much longer than the mud brick with which the Chiras family's home was built with.

After running the numbers and assessing all the expenses, it would cost just as much to build a home for the Chiras family, as it would to pay



the siblings their share and try and rehabilitate the home they are currently inhabiting.

What is certain is that the Chiras family desperately needs help, and we saw the fact that this ministry built a home for Petru's parents sixteen years ago as neither chance nor happenstance. It is with the utmost faith that we believe God has brought this family in our path again so that we might once more be a hand of help for them, and assist them along the uphill climb with which they must contend.

Rarely has there been a more deserving family than this and their need is evident as well as immediate.

We can but pray, and ask you to pray, and if the Lord leads or puts it on your heart to help toward this project, know that it will be an answer to prayer, and a ray of hope in the life of a family that has seen enough hardship for two lifetimes.



In His Grace,  
Hand of Help Staff

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## *Dear Brethren,*

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**Acts 3:19-21, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."**

The world spins on, and broken people are still building broken things to honor their broken gods because they refuse to surrender their pride. I find myself oscillating from struggling with the sadness I feel for fear that it will overcome me, to wondering aloud how it is that people can be so blind, so obtuse, so unwilling to see what's in front of their faces.

Even believers seem to have been caught up in the malaise, whether on one side of the issue or the other, but all conveniently ignoring the hulking elephant in the room, which goes by the name of repentance.

Don't get me wrong, I breathed a sigh of relief simply because the alternative would have been exponentially more disastrous. To now claim that holiness has once more been attained, and that righteousness is the banner we wave as a nation is not only unrealistically optimistic, it is outright false.

The morning after the elections I published an article on my blog, which after much prayerful consideration, have decided to include in this issue of the newsletter as well. I do so simply because someone has to maintain scriptural balance, knowing full well that doing so will mean alienating some of you.

It is not my intention to rain on anyone's parade, nor is it my intention to be the discordant note in an otherwise celebratory symphony. I never set out to make anyone angry or upset with me, but in recent months it seems that this has been the inevitable conclusion more often than not.

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I have to speak the truth to you because it is what you have come to expect of me and of this ministry, but more importantly, because I will one day have to answer to an all knowing God for all that I have said or written, and if either distortion or omission is discovered therein, I know that His righteousness will demand an apt punishment. To put it bluntly, I would rather have you be upset with me, than for God to be upset with me.

So is it true? Does the result of the presidential election mean that God has wiped the slate clean and we get a fresh start as a nation? Does it mean that He has cast all the cumulative sin this nation has committed and continues to commit into the sea of forgetfulness without the advent of a stirring to national repentance?

If, as some insist this was the case, then God would be inconsistent, and God is anything but inconsistent. We cannot be so intellectually dishonest as to say that God is no respecter of persons, except in this one case. We cannot be so void of reason as to say that without repentance there is no remission of sins, except for this one time.

Whenever we read these passages in the Word, there are no exceptions, there are no addendums, there are no exclusions, whether for certain nations or individuals. When we read that without repentance there is no forgiveness or remission of sins, that is exactly what it means, and if repentance was not forthcoming, then the logical conclusion is that our sins were not forgiven, therefore judgment is still a reality with which we must contend.

If we tether our hope in anything or anyone other than the God of the Bible, then there is no difference between us and those who hope falsely in dead gods and rusty idols that will not answer or show any sign of life no matter how much their adherents bleed and wail.

If God has shown this nation an undeserved season of grace, then we who know the truth of His Word must use this time to pray as never before for true repentance to stir the hearts of this nation, beginning with the church, and those within the house of God who have, for long and long, lived lives of duplicity and lukewarm adherence. We must pray as never before that our eyes remain affixed on He who came to set us free, and having been made free, declare His righteousness among the people.

Graced abused is grace refused, and if we take for granted the grace we've been shown to try perhaps for the last time to insist upon the need for repentance, both on an individual level and a national one, then I fear we will be called to account for the wasted opportunity God has presented us with.

As an aside, as I write these lines, people are feverishly preparing for the Thanksgiving holiday, and the parking lots at the local grocery store are full to overflowing. Turkeys and sweet potatoes and stuffing mix are flying off the shelf, and millions of people are making plans to travel far distances just to be with family and friends.

There are many things I am thankful for today, but beyond those things we are generally thankful for like family, and health, and a roof over our heads, I am thankful for the extra time we've been given to labor on behalf of the Kingdom, and thankful for you who make our labors possible. Know that you are loved and appreciated.

**2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."**

**John 9:4, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."**

With love in Christ, Michael Boldea Jr.

## *Join Us....*

**January 29<sup>th</sup>** in Bellflower, California

Full Gospel Church of Bellflower  
9611 E. Alondra Blvd, Bellflower, CA 90706  
Services and times TBD

**January 25<sup>th</sup>** in Orlando, Florida

An evening of worship & fellowship  
with the Hand of Help Team  
Location and time TBD