

Hand of **HELP**



Blessings Delivered



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Blessings Delivered

Life is an amalgamation of lessons. We learn from our failures, we learn from our mistakes, but we also learn from our successes and our victories. While some men learn their lessons quickly, others get stuck in a loop of going through the same circumstances and reacting the same way, with no progress being made because the lesson has not been learned.

Some lessons are more easily learned than others. If you have ever interacted with Romanians, you might have noticed that they wear hats well into the 60s, while the sun is out. We're not talking cotton beanies or ball caps either. The hats they wear are heavy-duty lambskin, with lining, big enough to be mistaken for a full-sized raccoon in the right light. The kind of hats that could keep you nice and toasty in the arctic itself. They fear that a draft might cause Bell's palsy and beverages are never to be had with much ice, as an imminent illness would most certainly occur.

More often than not, I would hear my father say, "Daniel, put a hat on!" to which I responded, "Dad, but I'm not cold." He would conclude his admonishment with, "It's too late when you are cold."

Many times I would begrudgingly do something, not because I fully understood the reason why, but because I didn't want to challenge my parents' instruction.

As years go by, one gains better insight and fully comprehends why their folks were such sticklers about certain things. Worldview, upbringing, folktales, and anecdotal evidence of some sort, like the boy who rode in an air-conditioned car only to wake up paralyzed from the neck up, all played a role in why they insisted on what in hindsight seems like absurd practices. Regarding the draft or the dreaded "wind disease," that remains a mys-

tery to this day.

One of the hardest lessons I had to learn as a child was that of how one must sacrificially spend their time and not only their resources, for the Body of Christ, and fulfilling their Kingdom calling.

My parents and grandparents tirelessly spent the majority of their lives working on behalf of others, praying for them and with them, delivering relief, preaching, teaching, listening to their cries, often neglecting themselves and sometimes even us, their children.

The holidays, when one might expect things to wind down, get some much-needed rest, or just spend some genuine quality family time, were often the busiest times of the year for us.

My mother had a strict policy - there is no way that any of us, the family, could enjoy the holidays and the gift of a full dinner table if everyone that we knew did not benefit from the same blessings. Everyone she knew included the hundreds of families and widows we supported



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in the villages, the orphanage children, the elderly in the nursing homes, the young families, and the 40 widows in our local church.

I remember one Christmas more vividly than the rest. After making the trek from the US to Botosani, all in all, an approximately 24-hour journey, I was greeted with the common pleasantries, "Are you hungry, thirsty?" immediately followed by, "I need your help with carving some meat to give to the widows and the poor."

What better way to handle jet lag than to butcher meat? Her wording, though quickly chosen, was, in fact, purposely vague. I should have inquired as to what *some*

meat meant, but I had agreed to help before I had time to process.

Imagine my face when I walked into our dining area and found the entire floor covered with plastic tarps holding two huge pigs and a 1,700-pound steer waiting to be portioned off and distributed, 5-15 pounds for each family, depending on the size.

Sure, my mother could've paid a local \$30 to take care of this for her, but what if she was trying to teach me a life lesson? I don't know or ever will know if that was the case, maybe she was just trying to save \$30. Frugality had always been a way of life, and double coupon days at the grocery store were akin to winning a prize.



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In any case, those are the scenarios that play in my head when I ponder how much of ourselves do we need to give for others? Is it 10% of our wages and our time? Is it giving out of abundance? Is it to give until we feel good enough about ourselves that we can enjoy our various little luxuries?

John 3:16 depicts the gracious gift that God has bestowed for His people:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

1 John 3:16 paints a clear picture of what the life of a believer should look like:

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Colossians 3:17

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the

name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

We are so grateful for your self-sacrificial giving that has allowed us to make sure that the least of these are not lacking this holiday season. I pray that you have a blessed time with those God has given you and that you use it to encourage them to be more like Christ.

While I am far from living my life in the manner demonstrated by my grandparents and parents, I pray that the Lord continues to work in my heart, that all this world is stripped away, and that everything I do is done in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

As I reflect and cherish these memories, I might just wear a hat this winter, especially around my father, avoid a draft and stick to hot and lukewarm beverages to show that I was listening.

A work in progress, Daniel Boldea

Harvest

If you’ve taken the time to till the soil, remove the rocks, plant the seed, water regularly, remove the weeds, and do all that is required, harvest never comes as a surprise. Thankfully, there are times when the abundance of the harvest makes us do a double-take, and gives us reason to pause, reflect, and wonder if we really did plant that much seed.

Being the Lord of the Harvest, I have come to realize that He not only ensures that if we are diligent in doing our part He will do His, but oftentimes the handful of seed we planted is multiplied over and over so that by the time the harvest rolls around its abundance is humbling.

Many years ago, with the help of a ministry out of Holland, we built a small sanctuary in the village of Mindresti. It was a seed, a small one at that, and if ever a harvest materialized, our expectations in the physical were neither grandiose nor unrealistic. We built the sanctuary

a bit larger than what the current numbers of believers at the time required, and the local pastor, a brother by the name of Abuziloaie, faithfully shepherded his flock until his passing six years ago.

The church remained roughly the same size; a new pastor was chosen, a faithful brother by the name of Axinte, and he, along with brother Abuziloaie’s children, continued the work in Mindresti.

Then, roughly two years ago, everything changed. The spark of revival turned into a fire, which quickly turned into a blaze in Mindresti, and the harvest God began to bring in called for a bigger granary.

The congregation has outgrown the sanctuary, and they have banded together to build a bigger building. It was during a visit to inspect the new church site and see where we could be of help that I first met Adrian and

Nicoleta Sasu. They have five children ranging in age from 2 to 11.

It was during the initial spark of revival that some two years ago, Nicoleta surrendered her life to God. From the moment she dedicated her life to Christ, her constant, fervent prayer was for her husband Adrian, who had been less than exemplary.

Looking back, Adrian freely admits to what he once was, in his words, a degenerate gambler, an alcoholic, and an adulterer.

“It’s hard to imagine someone more thoroughly given over to vice,” he said, “and even in my condition, I wouldn’t have blamed Nicoleta if she had packed up and left. I didn’t make life easy for her, and it just got harder once she started going to church.”

Rather than give up, rather than throw in the towel, Nicoleta prayed and waited. After almost two years of praying and waiting, on an unassuming Saturday morning, Adrian came to his wife and said, “Tomorrow I am coming to church with you, and I am giving my life to Christ.”

She wanted to believe him, but Nicoleta had her doubts. Even though it was the one thing she had been praying for, it seemed too good to be true. Could it be? Would her prayers finally be answered in such a dramatic fashion?

Sure enough, the next morning Adrian put on the nicest clothes he owned, waited patiently for his wife to finish getting ready, then accompanied her to church. When the altar call was put forth, Adrian stood up with tears in his eyes and received Jesus as Lord and Savior of his life.

“Everything in my life has changed from that moment forward,”



Adrian said. “I cannot put into words what God has done for me, nor can I ever express my gratitude for His lovingkindness and patience.”

Brother Adrian works short term jobs in Germany and Italy as often as he is able, and that along with their 900 lei (\$225) allocation for the children allows them to get by.

On the day we went to visit their home, they were tearing down an old mud-brick stove to replace it with one that gives off heat, preparing for the coming winter and the plunging temperatures. They’ve laid the foundation for a new home on their property as their current home is not only old and falling apart, but also too small to hold their ever-growing family.

It all began with a seed planted in good soil. It began with a small sanctuary being built by brothers and sisters abroad, a sanctuary that would have otherwise not existed save for the selflessness of others. That seed was planted long ago, and many who were there during the planting season never got to see the harvest their seed produced. The Lord of the Harvest, however, knew what would become of this labor of love, and the countless hearts that would be reached and won for His kingdom.

Please keep the Sasu family, as well as the ever-growing church body of Mindresti in your prayers, and for those of you who helped plant this seed so many years ago, know that the harvest has come.

Pastor Mircea Boldea, Sr.

Blessings in Disguise



Blessings in Disguise

I believe that certain situations in life are allowed to test our faith. I believe this because one cannot read the book of Job without reaching this conclusion. Our faith is often tested because, without testing, one's faith cannot be proven. When we are first confronted with the unexpected, our bodies trigger a fight or flight response, causing the release of adrenaline and noradrenaline, which then leads to a cascade of symptoms.

While many of the situations we are confronted with might not rise to the level of an existential crisis, at the moment, as they are happening, they seem catastrophic and of great urgency.

It is in these moments that the seasoned believer can and should anchor oneself in Biblical truth, trusting in our omniscient and omnipotent God.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.



Psalms 91:1-2

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Oh, the grief I could've spared myself had I learned these lessons earlier in life!

The news of new EU regulations requiring a complete restructuring of the orphanage caught us all off guard. We were upset, dismayed, frustrated and could not see a way that we could possibly meet the new standards, subsequently forcing us to eventually shut our doors. Bureaucrats are bureaucrats the world over, so trying to reason with them is impossible. These are the new rules, and these are the new standards, abide by them, or else.



Blessings in Disguise

For those of you who haven't been to the orphanage, it was set up similar to a hotel layout, a large kitchen, and a dining area on the ground floors and bedrooms with adjacent bathrooms on the upper floors. There were also mixed purpose rooms for homework, counseling, activities, etc.

The new regulations required a complete overhaul of the layout of the building, forcing us to turn our spaces into a family home setting – each apartment with bedrooms, a living area, restroom, kitchen, laundry and dining areas. Since our electrical and plumbing needed to be updated and a new requirement for a fire alarm system was added to the list, it only made sense to take care of all these issues as we moved forward with the remodel.

Due to financial and logistic constraints, we opted to do one floor at a time, starting on the fourth floor and working our way down.

This year, just as anticipated, they have started enforcing the new regulations and are not renewing licenses to orphanages that do not meet their criteria.

Our application for license renewal, with the hundreds of pages of required documents, is pending, so please keep this situation in your prayers.

We have already started to function in the new format – instead of having one big facility, we are functioning as five apartment families, basically five orphanages within the same building.

All of the cooking, laundry, cleaning is now done in each individual apartment setting.

The best part of this update is the fruit that we are seeing in the lives of the children, making the excruciating task of completely changing every aspect of orphanage operations worthwhile.

We are seeing strong bonds form between the children within a “family” and their proxy parents. They are more disciplined now since they answer to 3-4 people rather than to the entire staff. We are seeing the older children



step up and approach the young ones, in their respective apartments, with parental care and affection.

The older boys and girls have developed a healthy level of pride and accomplishment for bettering their apartments, actively participating in cooking and cleaning without being asked to do so. Before the changes were made, these chores often required strenuous convincing.

Most importantly, the children are opening up. They now have fewer individuals of reference in their lives, making it more approachable to share their pain, their frustrations, and allowing the much needed time to our proxy parents to, on an individual level, share the love of Christ with them and the message of the Gospel.

Had we known then, before the overhaul, what we know now, this mountain would have been less daunting to move.

Twenty-two years in, we are still learning to trust, to believe, to steel our hearts that regardless of how dim the future, our God is in control, and He will fight on our behalf.

Thank you for being a part of the hundreds of testimonies arising from the children of the Hand of Help Orphanage!

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Blessings in Disguise



Please consider becoming a prayer intercessor for this work, for the salvation of our children, and if the Lord leads, an orphanage sponsor.

Blessings to you and yours,
Daniel Boldea



FOR MORE INFORMATION regarding sponsoring the Hand of Help Orphanage, please check out our website at www.handofhelp.com or email us at info@handofhelp.com.

The Unexpected Trials

There are certain trials in life we expect and prepare for to an extent. If you are driving a decades-old car with a quarter-million miles on it, you can expect that at some point it will fail, and it's only prudent and wise to invest in an AAA membership so you can get that free tow when the inevitable does occur. If you live in a flood zone, you will likely have flood insurance, and if you live in San Francisco you've likely invested in a pair of steel-toed hip waders. They might be pricy, but it's a small price to pay to keep from feeling the sting of a dirty needle burying itself into your heel.

Some trials, however, are wholly unexpected and try as we might to anticipate them, they blindsides us. Such was the case for the Lupan family. Marcel Lupan and his six children are not new to us. In 2016 we bought the family a cow that they adore and care for with familial dedication, and within the last year purchased a washing machine for them to help ease the burden of doing laundry by hand.

Their life was pleasantly uneventful, normal even for rural Romania until the day a neighbor's ill-fated decision to burn some wood too close to their haystack resulted in the haystack catching fire, then quickly spreading to the home.

Thankfully they were able to get the horse and cow out of the barn before it was engulfed in flames, but that was

all they were able to salvage. Everything else, including their home, caught fire, and by the time the local fire department made their way there, all that was left was to put out the smoldering beams.

It's not easy losing everything, and unless you've lived it, it is difficult to comprehend. Everything from toothbrushes to socks, to clothing, has to be replaced, and in many respects, it's like starting your life all over again. Thankfully, ministries like ours still exist, and we were able to help the Lupan family both financially, as well as with food, clothing, and whatever else they needed as they try to rebuild their life.

It's difficult to see the good in times such as these. It's difficult not to get discouraged and disheartened, but when everything in the physical seems dark and foreboding all we can do is stand on the promises of God and trust that He has a plan. Just because we can't see it in the present, does not mean it will not be clear and undeniable at some future time.

Please keep the Lupan family in your prayers as they begin to rebuild their lives. If the Lord leads you to help in any way, know that it is a worthwhile cause.

Pastor Mircea Boldea, Sr.



Dear Brethren,

Psalm 34:8, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”

I don't travel much anymore. I used to, once upon a time, long ago, before the children, but now I am very selective as to where I will go speak, and how many days I will be away. It was a choice made based on learning from the mistakes of others, men who were valiant and strong, well-spoken and passionate, but who in the latter years of their lives chocked down the bitter cup of seeing their families fall apart due to their not being present in the former years.

I've had this conversation with laymen and ministers alike, and no, I do not believe it is selfish, or rebellious of me not to be on the road nine months out of the year anymore. Nor do I believe it is something God requires of me. He gave a wife so that I might be a husband. He gave me daughters so that I might be a father, not so they would know me as the disembodied face on Skype.

Recently, I spoke in Indiana and had to spend a night away from home. Since I had to speak on Saturday night, then again on Sunday morning, it didn't make sense to drive the four or so hours back to do it again a couple of hours later. I started driving back right after Sunday service and was home by late afternoon.

As I walked through the door, my eldest came and gave me a big hug, and said, “I missed you, Tati,” while her little sister came and hugged my leg with a big smile on her face. I thought about that moment for most of the following day, trying to figure out why it had the effect it did on me.

It took me a while, but I think I've put enough of the pieces together to articulate why I believe my heart melted the way it did when my daughters came to hug me, and my eldest said she missed me.

Looking back at the moment, I couldn't help but note that my daughter didn't say ‘What did you bring me?’ She didn't look behind my back to see if I was hiding anything, she didn't arch her eyebrows and put her hands

on her hips waiting for me to produce something other than myself, it was me she missed. I would not love her any less if she'd asked what I'd brought her first; she is my daughter, and I love her to the moon and back. However, I don't believe it would have warmed my heart to the extent it did either.

I firmly believe that having children makes you understand the love of God on a whole new level, and this experience gave me some insight into how God sometimes feels as well.

Do we miss Him, His person, His presence, His embrace, His voice, or are we just interested in what He may have brought us? Do we miss Him whenever we are not in fellowship with Him, or is whether or not He brought us the right toy our only concern?

It's not that I didn't bring anything for my daughters. I stopped at a store along the way and bought a couple of plush toys because I always bring them something when I'm away, but the fact that they were more interested in my being there than what I had perchance brought them made my heart sing to no end.

No, God will not love you any less if all you do is ask what He brought you, but I promise it will make His heart sing if rather than inquiring about things, you rejoice in His presence alone. He is enough; more than enough, and when our desire becomes singular, in that He is all we need, we come to realize that all these other things will be added on but are ultimately utterly irrelevant.

When you are satisfied with His presence alone, though He might bless you in other ways, the blessings will not be the focal point of your relationship, His presence will be.

Psalm 34:4, “I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea, Jr.