

COMMUNICATION WITH FELLOW WORKERS

March, April 2006

Dear brethren,

I usually like to write a personal note to everyone receiving this report from me, but I cannot sit up for long periods of time because I must keep my severely sprained ankle elevated. I never wanted a laptop, but this is one time that a laptop would be handy. Otherwise, we are doing fine. May the Lord bless you in your labors for Him.

Your brother, James

IN HIS TIME

According to the saying, "Timing is everything." It is amazing to look back on various events in life and see God's love, wisdom, and power work together to accomplish His will in our lives. We can see this in many details that involved our moving to Romania and working in southeastern Europe. Ecclesiastes 3:11 speaks of the beauty of God's wisdom at work in life. There is an appropriate time for everything. Several events have recently occurred that indicate to us that it is time for us to move back to the States. Please pray with us and for us as we try to do what is right. Also pray that the brethren in Constanta may receive what is most needed for them in the transition period that will shortly arrive. I feel concern for them as Moses did for Israel immediately before he departed from them and from this life.

Nonetheless, we put our trust in God who is able to do much beyond what we can even imagine. We know that He will be with us and help us if we are willing to do His will. He always has been, and always will be, good to us. It is a delight to be a child of God!

CONSTANTA

Maricica is the most consistent Bible study at this time. She was able to attend services once recently. Roxana has been to services only once, and she has not answered my last two e-mails. Please pray that we may be able to reach her. Lili cancelled our last two appointments, and now her phone number is not working. We receive a visit from Professor Stan whenever he comes to Constanta to visit his son the vice-mayor. Professor Stan became a member of a Pentecostal church in Bucharest about ten years ago. I try to emphasize scriptural authority in our discussions. I have had some chances to talk with Ronnie's friend Eddie sometimes, but he is not really interested in spiritual things. However, we try to plant the seed wherever we can and pray for God to give the increase.

Ion has gone to work in Germany, Marcela has gone to work in Italy, and Doru has gone to work in Spain. Only Doru has shown an interest in finding brethren to worship with (as he did when he was in the Bahamas). We are working to get him in contact with a Romanian Christian from Falfani who is working in Madrid. Hopefully, they can start meeting and strengthen each other spiritually if Doru decides to stay longer in Spain. He has expressed an interest in returning to Romania in time to attend the lectureship in Bucharest later this month.

Iulian has missed a few weeks. He says that his work schedule has been increased. We are concerned about him falling back into his old ways. Florin came forward and made a statement of repentance and rededication in March, but he has not borne fruits worthy of repentance. Eugen is still very ill, and we keep him in our prayers. His faith is very weak, too.

Vali has expressed a desire to rededicate his life to being a stronger Christian. We have special individual studies that are edifying for both of us. I am also having a special study with Iulian B. (George and Rodica's son). Because he is able to come to the adult classes, he no longer needs an extra study to fulfill an educational requirement, but we believe it is still good for him to have individualized attention.

The men try to meet every Tuesday, but Vali is called on emergencies quite often. We try to use this occasion not only to discuss the matters of the church but as a time for prayer and study.

We have received no response to our ads, and we are looking into putting notices in post boxes. I hope to get on the streets after my recovery. We are also looking forward to those who are planning to help us evangelize later in the year.

Ellen and Rodica continue to go to the ladies' class in Bucharest. It is very edifying for both of them, and the sisters in Bucharest also enjoy the extra interaction. Michele taught the class the last time Ellen went (Gabi usually teaches), and Ellen was impressed with the spiritual growth that Michele demonstrated in topic selection and ability to apply the Bible to her life.

We also had the pleasure of recently visiting with Michele when she and her son came to visit her mother in Constanta. She is a Christian who cares about others and has grown in spite of difficult circumstances.

Another former member who visited us since my last report is Nicoleta. This was her first visit since she left Romania to marry Terry McCall. She was a great encouragement to the ladies in particular. Terry and Nicoleta's visit was very good for everyone as they made time to visit individual families in the church and our get-togethers while still attending to important family and business matters in their short time here. The brethren appreciate them very much.

PERSONAL NOTES

I was trying to be a good boy and lose weight by diet and exercise. Ellen and I started walking several kilometers daily. Then I felt healthy enough to play

basketball with Ronnie, Iulian B., and Eddie. I thought it would be good exercise, and it always was my favorite way to exercise. Paul told Timothy that it profits a little. In this case, the profit turned out to be a net loss because I severely sprained my ankle. Dr. Tanase has been by the house and helped to treat it and tell me to stay off my feet. I need at least three weeks of keeping my ankle elevated. Professor Stan told me that he had a cast and leg elevated for four weeks after a soccer injury when he was much younger. This has prevented me from going out or sitting for very long at the computer. I hope to be able to walk sometime next week.

The government is in the process of updating our ID's. They are requiring us to get new photos, make a signature, and all but reapply for a new visa. The new regulations also require a medical checkup, Romanian medical insurance, and a couple of taxes. The biggest expense is one of the taxes for the new technology (\$135 per person). Then we would have to go through this whole process again (with extra paperwork and payment for visas) before our visas expire in the middle of January. This is one reason we have selected this time as the time to move back to the States.

My parents' health is a big concern of mine. It is very surprising that Dad's health has deteriorated as rapidly as it has in the past two years. Dad recently fainted and was hospitalized for the second time in six months. He was doing as best as he could to take care of Mom, who has needed help for several years. Mom seems to be doing okay right now, though she still needs help from others. Local church members are helping Mom now. My brothers and their families have done what they could to help them in spite of not living near them. Being aware that it is also my duty to provide for them after all they have done for me, I believe that I should move back to the States. I feel that they need for one of us to live closer to them, and I have decided that I should do this.

The need to care for my parents is a strong motive, but other factors contribute to our belief that moving is the right thing to do. These include family needs and the needs of the local church. Through my observations of almost every local church in Romania, I am convinced that the church in Constanta needs a Romanian to work full-time for the gospel. Of course, it is the brethren's decision to make. It would be great to work with a replacement in the time we have remaining, but I will not impose my wishes or will on the brethren in Constanta. We plan to move back sometime in January. Please pray that the Lord will supply the needs of the church in Constanta.

FELLOW WORKERS

Marian is organizing a conference for later this month. It is focused on helping Romanian men who are teachers to grow even more in their knowledge and ability to teach. The men who will provide good lessons and be good personal examples are: Greg Gravitt, Gardner Hall, Sewell Hall, and Buddy Payne. Except for Gardner, each of these men who will teach has previously been to Romania and is known by Romanian brethren across the country. Though the conference will be in Bucharest, we hope these men will have a chance to visit us in Constanta during their stay in Romania.

Members from the Southwest Church of Christ in Lakeland, FL are in Romania with Greg for a couple of weeks in May. This church is an excellent example of sending its own members to evangelize in other places in addition to supporting preachers overseas (including Marian in Bucharest and me in Constanta). The close relationship between the supporting church and the receiving worker strengthens everyone.

The church is also looking forward to all others who are planning to come and help us through the end of the year. We personally appreciate their help during the church's period of transition.

Thanks to all those who have supported my work and to those who continue to do so. This helps us, and it indirectly helps with the spiritual needs of brethren here. The Lord also blesses you for participating in this work.

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