To the Youth

A Call to Follow

Don’t Waste Your Life

Volume 47: February 2006 - March 2006
OUR PURPOSE

“For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My Name will be great among the nations...”
- Malachi 1:11

The chief end of all mission work is the Glory of God. Our greatest concern is that His Name be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun (Malachi 1:11). We find our great purpose and constant motivation not in man or his needs, but in God, His commitment to His own glory, and our God-given desire to see Him glorified in every nation, tribe, people, and language.

OUR MINISTRY

Although HeartCry recognizes the great importance of sending missionaries from the West to the unevangelized peoples throughout the world, we work in partnership with indigenous missionaries to plant churches among their own peoples.

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PRODUCTION STAFF

Editor-in-Chief: Paul Washer
Graphic Design: Jonathan Green
Copy Editors: Rita Douglas
Amanda Glass
Charo Washer

IDENTIFICATION

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CONTACT US

(618) 564-2770
info@heartcrymissionary.com
www.heartcrymissionary.com

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FOCUS, FOCUS

Paul David Washer

Dear HeartCry Family,

We hope this edition of the HeartCry magazine finds you growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray that your confidence is resting in Christ alone, that your eyes are set upon His specific will for your life, and that your heart and energies are surrendered to His leadership.

The word “Focus” has become the imperative for us here at HeartCry. Our greatest desire is to know exactly what God has called us to do, to focus our attention upon His perfect will, and to be blind to every other thing. We have no designs for greatness and no ambition but His glory. The end of our days is coming swiftly and the reality of the coming judgment leads us to disdain personal goals and ambitions as grotesque manifestations of self-will. It is better to serve the Lord according to His will in the smallest things, than to do “great things” in contradiction to His will.

In the last few months, we have decreased the number of missionaries we sponsor by approximately 25%. This is primarily due to the fact that several missionaries we have supported are now pastoring the churches they have planted. It is the responsibility of their churches to take over their full support.

Although the need is great and it would be possible to replace these men immediately with other worthy indigenous missionaries, we are restraining from this temptation. To be most effective in the Kingdom, we will work in fewer places and with fewer men and focus all our resources and energies in planting local churches and helping them to become autonomous (self-governing and self-supporting) as quickly as possible.

By God’s grace, we will redirect all the support, energy, and effort possible to meet the needs and promote the ministries of those missionaries that we are sponsoring. Our primary focus will be on the personal growth of our missionaries in the knowledge of God and true piety. The greatest need in the world today is for missionaries who are God-besought, Christlike, filled with the Holy Spirit, and who rightly handle the Word of Truth. One godly man or woman will have a greater impact upon the world than a thousand mediocre ministries, and one biblical church will do more to promote the advancement of the Kingdom than all the plans and strategies of men. In this new year, we will focus our attention on the following crucial areas:

**Planting Churches** - A mission agency can do many things on the field without drawing the attention of the devil, but planting a church will arouse the hordes of hell. We believe that we are only “playing missions” unless the end of all we do is the planting of biblical churches that are able to give birth to other biblical churches.

**Bible Conferences** - There is a great need for sound theological teaching and there are countless missionaries and pastors who are willing to travel great distances and suffer whatever hardship to refine their understanding of the great truths of Scripture. The greatest needs are expository preaching and systematic theology, with a special emphasis on soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) and ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church).

**A Systematic Training Program** - There is very little training provided for those in the ministry outside the West. We have written several studies that have been used in Peru and other Spanish-speaking countries, but our desire is to develop an entire systematic training program.

**Pastoral Libraries** - In recent years, we have not been able to invest in this worthy project because all funds (except those designated otherwise) were used to cover the monthly missionary support. There is a great need for biblical literature among indigenous workers. Many missionaries have nothing more than a Bible with a concordance in the back. Their usefulness in the Kingdom would be greatly enhanced with a few essential study aids: Bible dictionary, exhaustive concordance, one-volume commentary, etc.

**Tools for Evangelism** - The work of missions through indigenous missionaries is often limited by a lack of the necessary tools to carry out their work. Mountain missionaries need mules to travel, while missionaries in the jungle need boats, motors, and gasoline. Some of our church planters use tents to hold meetings in towns and villages where there are no churches. Others need only tracts, New Testaments, and disciple-making literature. There is an almost endless variety of needs that cross our desk each week. Most of them are valid and many of them should be met. I hope and pray that God will be gracious to us and allow us to serve those who have gone out “for the sake of the name.”

**Promoting Missions** - Every Spirit-filled Christian will have a heart for the Great Commission. The problem is that our lives are bombarded by so many other things and mission work is so far away that God’s people often forget about missions. It is our desire to be a constant reminder to God’s people that the task of preaching the Gospel to every creature is yet to be done!

Please pray for us as we seek to please the Lord in all things concerning His will. We count it the greatest of privileges to serve Him and work with you!

Your brother,
Paul David Washer
The One True God
A Biblical Study of the Doctrine of God

The great goal of this study is for the student to have an encounter with God through His Word. Founded upon the conviction that the Scriptures are the inspired and infallible Word of God, this study has been designed in such a way that it is literally impossible for the student to advance without an open Bible before him or her. This book may be used by an individual, small group, or Sunday school class.

The true Christian cannot bear or even survive a divorce between the emotions and the intellect, or between devotion to God and the doctrine of God. The mind is not the enemy of the heart, and doctrine is not an obstacle to devotion. The Scriptures command us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matthew 22:37), and to worship God in both spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The study of doctrine is a passionate search for God that should always lead the student to greater personal transformation, obedience, and heartfelt worship.

What Others have Said:

Iain Murray writes, “Paul David Washer’s study guide on the doctrine of God, ‘The One True God’, is the best introductory work known to me. It sets out great truths in clear and balanced form. Human authorities are not quoted but it is evident that the author is familiar with the literature of historic Christianity and accordingly he misses the pitfalls into which others might fall. Young Christians could scarcely spend their time better than working carefully through these pages.”

An Excerpt from the One True God

The Meaning of Holy
The word “holy” comes from the Hebrew word qadosh that means, “separated,” “marked off,” “placed apart,” “withdrawn from common use.” ... The distinction between God and the rest of His creation is not merely quantitative (the same, but greater), but qualitative (God is a completely different being). Regardless of their splendor, all other beings on earth and in heaven are mere creatures. God alone is God, separate, transcendent, and unapproachable. The most splendid angel that stands in the presence of God is no more like God than the smallest worm that crawls upon the earth. God is incomparable!

1. In the Scriptures, we find that the holiness of God is both preeminent and transcendent. It is preeminent in that no other divine attribute is so often declared and explained in the Scriptures. It is transcendent in that there is simply no comparison between the holiness of God and that of any other being or thing.

a. God’s Holiness is Preeminent [Latin: prae, before + eminere, to project]. It is impossible to understand the character of God apart from His Holiness. Above all things, God is Holy! How is this truth demonstrated in Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8?

Note: In Hebrew literature, repetition is used to give emphasis to what is being said. That God’s holiness is declared three times [called the trihagion in Greek, tri, thrice + hagios, holy] denotes that God is absolutely and infinitely holy. No other divine attribute is proclaimed with such great emphasis. We never read in the Scriptures that God is “love, love, love,” or “merciful, merciful, merciful,” but we do read that He is “holy, holy, holy.” Holiness is the foundation of all that God is and does. If there is one attribute of God that we simply cannot overemphasize, it is His holiness.

b. God’s Holiness is Transcendent [Latin: trans, across or beyond + scandere, to climb]. God’s holiness infinitely surpasses all others. There is none holy like the Lord! What do the following Scriptures teach us with regard to this truth?

Exodus 15:11
Persecution in Moldova

Igor and Mariana Seremet are HeartCry missionaries to Moldova. In recent months they have experienced persecution from the townspeople that has been incited by the Orthodox priests. In spite of the many threats against them, God has caused them to triumph. The following account is taken from the Seremets’ last report:

In the recent months, the Orthodox priest is very angry at us and stands against all our activities. He speaks very rude about us and our teaching. He proclaims to the people that our Christian confession of faith is untrue. One day, all the townspeople gathered together and shouted at us. They told us that they would come to our meetings with pitchforks! I praise God that the people did come to our meeting, but they did not come with weapons. God changed their hearts and they came with open minds and hearts. May God continue to bless them with a holy wisdom so that they might know the truth about us and our Gospel. We need your prayers and are thankful for this help you give us. Pray for the work and for all our preaching in the cities of Aneni Noi and Speia. Also pray for my family, especially for my wife’s health.

Personal Evangelism in Ghana

The following is a brief testimony from HeartCry missionary Joseph Lamptey. It demonstrates that evangelism is not a program but a lifestyle:

I had the wonderful privilege of sharing the Gospel with a middle-aged auto mechanic who was working on my car. He told me that his parents and brothers were idol worshippers. He also shared that his parents had totally rejected and disowned his younger brother because he had renounced idol worship and become a Christian. This man was afraid that a similar fate might await him if he became a Christian. I shared the Gospel with him (He is called “Ecomog” by his friends), and he professed Christ as his Lord and Savior. Please pray for him that he will not follow his parent’s idols, but make a true stand for Jesus Christ. In the last few weeks, our church has made 120 contacts for Christ and shared the Gospel with 51 people. Please continue to pray with us that our good Lord will help us here in this place.

Giving beyond their Means

Zoran and Liliana Milovanovic are HeartCry missionaries to the country of Serbia. It has been a joy to watch Zoran mature in the Lord and become a useful church planter in a country with so great a need for the Gospel. The following is an excerpt from a recent report. It demonstrates how the financial gifts from believers in the US have motivated the Eastern European Christians to give even beyond their means. Brother Zoran writes:

I visited the Romanian believers in the church in Resita and presented the needs of our church. At the end of the worship service the church took up a collection for us. I was deeply surprised by the attitude of the congregation. We not only received money, but also gold earrings, necklaces, and other types of jewelry. We were very glad to see that the believers in Romania truly shared the burdens of the Serbians. We discovered that they had been challenged financially by the Christians from other countries who had given to help us and other struggling churches like ours. We praise God that once again we had the privilege of seeing the grace of God. We are glad that our faith has been strengthened to believe that all things will be done in God’s timing. Thank you for your spiritual and financial help. May God reward your love for His church in Serbia and may His joy revive into your hearts.

Zoran Milovanovic (on right) and pastor Daniel Barnut of the church in Resita, Romania that gave so generously.
Standing for Christ in Ukraine

In Matthew 10:36, Jesus taught that His followers would even be persecuted by their own family. This is certainly the case for an elderly Ukrainian believer under the ministry of HeartCry missionary Ion Gireada. Brother Gireada writes, “A dear elderly sister in our church is suffering great persecution from her family because she repented of her sins, left the Orthodox church, and was baptized in the Baptist church when she was eighty years old. Her family is angry at her because of her faith in Jesus and biblical convictions. Her family is very nice to us when we visit, but in our absence they treat her with scorn and threats. They are constantly accusing her of bad things and threatening to do bad things to her. She recently told me that she will never leave her faith in Jesus and that no human being could take it from her. She waits day by day to meet her heavenly Father and Jesus in heaven.”

Ion Gireada (right front) praying with fellow believers.

Confusion in Israel

Antony Simon is a missionary in Israel and is sponsored in part by your giving to the HeartCry Missionary Society. The following excerpt is taken from his most recent report:

In this city of Jerusalem where our Lord was crucified, there is much confusion. We see so many people that do not have any discernment. At the moment, it seems like more and more crazy people are arriving every day. Many come with great visions and a “personal word” from God saying that God is using them to bring about the conversion of the entire Jewish people. Many of these self-proclaimed prophets leave behind their spouses and families in order to fulfill their “high calling.”

Recently, I met a woman who was walking up and down the main street in Jerusalem proclaiming that she was the Messiah. Another man who is not Jewish is searching all of Jerusalem to find the grave of his grandmother who he believes is Jewish. He wants to prove that he is a Jew. He reads the Jewish prayer book with his family even though he and they do not understand Hebrew. He believes that Hebrew is a holy language and that the prayer book is holy (although it makes no claims to inspiration). He has also assumed Jewish ritual into his house and insists that it be followed to the letter. All this has caused great conflict in his family. Although he and his wife are professing believers, his infatuation with Judaism has caused the breakdown of their marriage. I told him that if he truly wanted to obey the Lord he should return to the United States and sort out his marriage. So far he has not responded.

Judaism was given by God and is the foundation of the Christian faith, but what Jews believe today is not the Judaism of the Bible. It is a rabbinical Judaism that is as far removed from the Scriptures as English is from French. In Israel today some believers say that they are not Christian, but Messianic. I tell them that the word “Messianic” is nothing more than a synonym for Christian. The Bible tells us that Israel is not the church, but the future of Israel is with the Church made up by the people of God - both Jew and Gentile. We should love the Jewish people and pray that they might turn back to the true and living God, but the center of the believer’s theology and life is the Lord Jesus and not Israel. If Israel is the center, then something is wrong. Believing in Israel cannot save!

To bring an end to this confusion, we are praying about starting an English speaking service on Sunday evenings. There is a great need for the Bible to be taught verse by verse without emotionalism. Please pray with us that we might have wisdom and guidance in this matter. We are currently looking around for a place to meet. Please pray that a door will be opened for us according to the Lord’s will.

Young Missionary Joins

Leonid Banchik

Leonid Banchik is a missionary in Israel and is sponsored in part by your giving to the HeartCry Missionary Society. The following excerpt is taken from one of his most recent reports:

Shalom from Israel! During the last year we have been praying that the Lord might give me an assistant in the ministry in Tel-Aviv. Recently, God sent us a young man named Denis who left another Messianic congregation because the preaching of the crucified Savior was replaced by the keeping of Jewish laws and ceremonies. The congregation has now turned into a synagogue! Denis came to the right decision to leave it.

Sadly, there are many congregations in Israel that have gone astray. The acceptance of Jewish tradition is becoming more and more fashionable among “Christian” congregations. Many pastors and preachers quote the Talmud more often than they do the Bible. They seem to have forgotten that the Talmud is a book of human wisdom, but it is not the inspired wisdom of God. Exposing the Pharisees, Jesus once declared, “...laying aside the commandments of God, you hold the tradition of men...” (Mark 7:8). The Talmud is a collection of traditions and legends that can be used for the purpose of illustrating spiritual truth, but it must not be taught as though it was the very Word of God!
I read the name “Yeshua” and a LONGING came over me to throw myself in Yeshua’s arms. How I longed to look up and see Him! But then I realized that the Prince of Peace is HERE in the midst of all my turmoil. There is no reason for the Prince of Peace to come to a peaceful place. He comes to the very place where the most turmoil is found! He was with me when people horribly mistreated me and the police said awful things trying to make me feel even worse. He was with me when I could not rest, when I could not buy gifts, and when everything was wrong!

One morning my son Caleb and I went to the market and a couple of people refused to greet me. It made me feel horrible, but Caleb said, “Mommy! You are like Jesus.” I felt like ANYTHING but Christ-like right then, so I asked him what he meant. He said, “People treat you bad even when you did not do anything wrong. That is just like Jesus! You are very special! Now you know what it is like to be like Jesus!” My son’s words were like a slap in the face, but they were true. We all want to be like Jesus, but we are not often very willing to go through anything of what He went through!

The Gamonal Family Pass

Through the Furnace

Joel and Dana Gamonal are missionaries to Peru and are supported in part by your giving to HeartCry. They are living and working in Manchay, a very impoverished area outside of the capital city of Lima. The following is from a recent letter written by Dana:

Right before the Holidays, a young lady ran out in front of me from behind a parked bus. Though I swerved, she still hit the front side of the car. It was the worst experience that I have ever had and the most difficult to overcome. The woman had to undergo one operation and spend four days in the clinic. She was already terribly anemic so we had to find blood donors for her. I thank the Lord that we have car insurance and it is paying for her medical care. The woman is now at home and has a good relationship with me, but her family seems to think that the accident is a golden opportunity to get money from the United States. The police told me that if the woman had been in a car, she would have been totally to blame, but since she was not, I am at fault. Peruvian law says the driver is always responsible. If someone suicidal jumps in front of a moving car with a suicide note in his pocket, the driver is to blame. If the person dies, the driver may go to prison! Such laws make me afraid to drive.

All of this has been a terrible, horrible, nightmarish trial in every sense of the word. I have never been so shaken. Even my spiritual life has been affected. I have NEVER doubted that I was where God wanted me until this happened. I have fought the devil tooth and nail. I know I did nothing wrong, but it is hard for me to see someone hurting so much and know that I did it. My family and I must also face all our neighbors in the community of Manchay. The girl’s family has circulated awful stories about me and my family. It has been so awful that I wanted to run. I have cried until I could not cry anymore.

I am happy to say that I have finally learned what the title “Prince of Peace” means. We have had so many trials lately - one on top of another. For several days after the accident, we were required at great cost to submit the necessary legal paperwork. In the middle of all that, we received my son Aaron’s lab results showing that he had E.coli and his second wave of bronchitis. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies. My other son Caleb was in his last week of exams, and I could not study with him. I have never prayed so much for his studies.

Life was horrible until I realized that there is a Prince of Peace. My eyes fell upon a tract saying something about Yeshua coming to Bethlehem long ago as a babe. I cannot explain it, but when I read the name “Yeshua” a LONGING came over me to throw myself in Yeshua’s arms. How I longed to look up and see Him! But then I realized that the Prince of Peace is HERE in the midst of all my turmoil. There is no reason for the Prince of Peace to come to a peaceful place. He comes to the very place where the most turmoil is found! He was with me when people horribly mistreated me and the police said awful things trying to make me feel even worse. He was with me when I could not rest, when I could not buy gifts, and when everything was wrong!

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A Word To the Young

by Paul David Washer

Over the last few days I have felt compelled to write the following word to the youth who receive this publication. I ask you to prayerfully consider the things you will read. If you find any truth in what is written, then I admonish you to adjust your life accordingly. Do not waste your life!

Remember the Brevity of Life

The first man was created in the image of God. If he had submitted to the will of God, he would have been immortal. He would have passed through the years of his unending existence from strength to strength, without deterioration or decay. The passing of time would have brought him to greater levels of maturity, contentment, and joy. His existence would have abound with purpose and glory.

With the advent of sin, all was lost, and man’s existence became tragically twisted and deformed beyond recognition. Man became a mortal being of brief duration, weariness, and futility. He now lives his life until all vitality is drained away, all purpose is demolished, and the body finally returns to the dust from which it came. It is not without reason that the preacher cries out, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

As a young man or woman, you must constantly fight off the temptation to forget about the brevity of life and the vanity of even the longest life lived apart from God’s will. You must learn from the Scriptures that your life is less than a vapor. You must become convinced of this truth, and then you must set it before you as a constant reminder. You are mortal and your days are numbered!

“As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer” (Psalm 103:15).

“...You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (James 4:14).

You know the Scriptures are true. You know that death is a certainty for you. Every tombstone and eulogy bear witness to the inescapable reality that you are going to die. And yet, how is it that you so quickly forget and give yourself to the passing vanities of this life? It is because you are surrounded by a culture that does everything in its power to avoid any thought of the end of life. It is because the god of this age works with all his cunning to keep you entertained and distracted. It is because, although you have been redeemed, you still dwell in a body of fallen flesh that runs for all that is carnal and temporal. Knowing these things, you would do well to both memorize and often pray the prayer of David in Psalm 39:4:

“LORD, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am.”

Keeping your mortality at the forefront of your thoughts is not for the purpose of being morbid or lamenting as those who have no hope, but to compel you to hope in Christ alone and to give yourself wholeheartedly to His will for your life. Only in Christ is the grave swallowed up in victory and temporal futility replaced by God’s eternal and glorious purpose for you.

Remember your Creator

Knowing something of the brevity of life, “How then shall we live?” The writer of Ecclesiastes answers this question for us in the form of a command:

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth...” (12:1).

The word “remember” comes from the Hebrew word zakar which means to recall or call to mind. This command to remember God refers to more than a casual recollection that there is a God. It means more than simply bowing your head every time you pass by a steeple. It is not fulfilled merely by attending church every time the doors are open. It is a radical and life-changing command to know and understand the God of Scripture, to acknowledge His preeminence in all things, to seek His glory in all things, and to strive to obey Him in all things. The great importance of this command becomes clear when you remember that you are constantly bombarded with temporal distractions designed to make you forget the worth of God and the joys of His will. Unless you purpose in your heart to remember God and use every means at your disposal to remain true to that purpose, you will fall into vanity and your life will be wasted! Consider carefully what I have written. I am not asking you to simply agree with me. I am pleading with you to purpose in your heart to fix your eyes on God as though your life depended upon it (for it does) and to actively, aggressively, even violently (Matthew 11:12) seek out and use every means at your disposal to keep from being distracted and falling into the vanities of this perverse age!

It is important to note that the preacher of Ecclesiastes not only commands us to “remember God,” but he tells us the most convenient time to do so - in the days of our youth. It does little good to prepare for a battle at the end of the battle, or to wait until the last lap of the race to tie on your running shoes. Likewise, it is a ridiculous notion (found in the head of many young people) that one should delay living for God until later in life and usually after a great portion of life has been wasted. Do not be like the prodigal who “came to his senses” only after squandering his fortune and the strength of his youth. Come to your senses in the early days of your life. Set your heart to seek God now - to know Him, worship Him, serve Him, and rejoice in His goodness. As one older than you, as an ambassador
for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through me, I beg you on behalf of Christ, do not waste your life.

“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance” (Isaiah 55:2).

Set Your Heart to Follow Him

I am hesitant to use this type of language with you because I am afraid that you will misinterpret. To most Christians, the admonition to “follow after God” conjurers up thoughts of duty, obedience, and ministry, but these things by themselves will only leave you tired, hollow, and bitter. I have been down that road and I will do everything in my power to keep you from it. It leads to a horrid place!

When I speak of following Him, I am primarily referring to fellowship with His person; to acknowledge Him and share with Him every experience; to purpose not to hide from Him or shut Him out of some area of your life; to see everything as sacred and nothing as secular; for Him to have preeminence in every moment of your life, every thought in your head, every word that proceeds from your mouth, and every work that you endeavor to do - walking, talking, eating, drinking, laughing, crying, working, playing - experiencing all of it in Him, through Him, for Him, and most of all WITH Him!

Do you realize that you can do almost anything for all the wrong reasons? You can do ministry for the personal satisfaction or fame it may bring. You can even grow in knowledge and piety for the reputation they may reap for you among other believers. But it is the true and loyal heart that seeks only to be with Him for the sake of being with Him!

You may look upon me as a mature Christian who has learned many things, but I have been so wrong in so many ways, and this has been my greatest error. I have always pressed hard to accomplish something, when I should have pressed hard just to be with Him! Yes, my dear young Christian, you can even waste precious drops of your life in the work of ministry and missions!

Remember this: To confine God to a horrid place!

Pray

I divide my praying into two separate categories: Praying in my walking shoes and praying in my work boots. The first category refers to communion, adoration, and thanksgiving. It is walking with God as an ever-present companion, enjoying His fellowship, and seeking greater and greater manifestations of His presence. This type of praying has one purpose - to know Him and to simply “be” with Him. Apart from this type of praying, all the knowledge in your head will never be anything more than second hand theological jargon. You will spend your entire life speaking correctly about things that have never become realities in your life.

I have heard people say that they do not have a specific time of seeking God in this way, but they commune with God throughout the day as they go through their daily activities. It has been my experience that the ability to “practice the presence of God” throughout the day and in the midst of my activities is only made possible because I have separated myself from my daily activities and sought God in specific times of prayer. This seems to have been the practice of our Lord Jesus Christ during His incarnation:

“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there” (Mark 1:35).

The second category of praying - praying in my work boots -refers to intercessory prayer. Let no one mislead you. This type of praying is hard work! It is not a small thing...
that young Christians need to be with older though periods of supervised fellowship rect contradiction to the Scriptures. Al-
need to be with other young people is a di-
most churches. The idea that young people and has now been thoroughly adopted by
lifesaving truth that is often neglected to-
derivation of the Church; we labor in prayer for every need and for the fulfillment of every promise that God has given. This may very well be the most holy task given to men!

I will leave the subject of prayer behind with a bit of advice that has been very helpful to me. It was given to me by an older preacher, who received it from an even older preacher. It goes something like this:

“Pray until you can pray, and then pray until you have prayed.”

Often when we bow our knees in prayer, we do not sense the liberty or power to pray. It seems as though there is a sky of brass above us. This should not be a cause of discouragement, but it should lead us to wrestle in prayer until we have “broken through” to God. It is then that we should set ourselves to praying until our burdens have lifted and we know that we have prayed.

Seek Out Godly Companions

At the risk of offending you, I must say that if you are young there is probably a great deal of foolishness still bound up in your heart (Proverbs 22:15). If the greatest influences in your life are other young people just like yourself, then you are a companion of fools and walking down a dangerous path. The Scriptures teach a very lifesaving truth that is often neglected today:

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” (Proverbs 13:20)

The idea of a “generation gap” was born out of the godless counterculture of the 60’s and has now been thoroughly adopted by most churches. The idea that young people need to be with other young people is a direct contradiction to the Scriptures. Although periods of supervised fellowship with other youth can be both enjoyable and profitable, the Scriptures everywhere teach that young Christians need to be with older and more mature Christians so that they might learn their ways and avoid the pitfalls of the young and naive.

According to the Scriptures, the greatest influences in your life ought to be your mother and father, provided they are godly and mature Christians. Following them, it is the role of the church elders and the entire adult congregation to model the Christian life before you. In summary, you will do well to surround yourself with men and women whose progress in sanctification and usefulness to God are evident. Get to know not only the godly Christians of our time, but also the saints of yesterday through their writings and the writings of others about them.

Flee Youthful Lusts

In Ephesians 6:10-12, you are commanded to make your stand against the devil. In James 4:7 you are given the promise that if you resist him, he will flee from you. Nevertheless in II Timothy 2:22 you are commanded to “flee youthful lusts.” It is rather amazing that you are commanded to be strong, take your stand, and fight against fallen angels, while at the same time, you are commanded to flee with fear from youthful lusts. This demonstrates that the youthful lusts of your flesh and the unbridled sensuality of your culture is more dangerous than a face to face battle with the devil.

I have known countless Christian youth who demonstrated genuine evidence of conversion, and yet upon entering into a relationship with the opposite sex, they fell into immorality. I have known them to memorize Scripture, pray, and even fast to be pure in their relationship, and yet still they fell. Why? Because they did not understand that all the spiritual disciplines in the Scriptures could not save them from youthful lust. They were trying to wage battle while God commanded them to flee. To summarize: You cannot be alone in a relationship with a person of the opposite sex for any extended period of time without falling. Therefore, you should never be alone together in a house, car, or any other place where lust can be kindled and failure is certain.

Give Yourself to Noble Purposes

I see young Christian men in the university who squander away their time playing video games and frequenting malls and movie houses. They should be giving themselves to more noble purposes! You were not bought by the blood of the Lamb in order to give yourself to such things. You have been adopted into a royal family and royal deeds are expected of you. Shun the mindless entertainment of the age and give yourself to the will of God. The Scriptures declare in II Timothy 2:20-21:

“Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

Do you desire to be a vessel of honor and used for noble purposes? Do you desire to be an instrument in the Master’s hand? Then cleanse yourself of the foolish games of little boys and vain girls, and become the man or woman you were called to be. I believe it was A.W. Tozer who said that on the tombstone of America would be written the words, “They entertained themselves to death.” This is a pathetic epitaph when com-
pared to what was said about King David:

“[He] served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers...”

What legacy will you leave? What will be carved into your stone? Most importantly, what will God declare about your life during the great Day of Judgment that awaits you? May God have mercy on you and grant you grace to far surpass the character and deeds of the one who is writing to you this letter.

Your brother,
Paul David Washer
ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE ENEMY

Co-written by Sorin Prodan and Paul Washer

The world is very different now in Eastern Europe. We have been granted religious freedom and exciting opportunities to advance the Gospel in the very countries that little more than a decade ago were behind the Iron Curtain. It is a glorious time for the Gospel and for those who preach it faithfully. And yet, the enemy does not sleep. Every country in Eastern Europe is striving to join the European Union and the price they are willing to pay is costly. In the name of tolerance, they must open their doors to sexual perversion, abortion, prostitution, and countless other sins.

The media gloats that God is slowly being removed from our post-modern society, but it fails to see that a remnant is being kept by God’s almighty power. The evangelical Christians who survived under Communism will also survive this new onslaught of the enemy. Not only will we “survive”, but we will continue to pray and preach the Gospel. God will vindicate His great Name by proving that He is greater than political regimes, humanistic philosophies, vain constitutions, and apostate religious leaders who claim a form of godliness, but deny its power. Our God is Sovereign over all!

In such times, we must remember that the true Christian will always be persecuted, even in times of apparent freedom. The unbelieving world and the unregenerate religious do not want God! Therefore, those of us who believe and preach Christ are a loathsome goad to them. They hate us because our lives and message remind them of the righteousness of God, the sinfulness of their deeds, and the coming judgment. Yes, the true Christian is bound to suffer the onslaught of the enemy. The devil’s methods may change, but his goal is always the same – He seeks to kill us. If He cannot burn us at the stake, He will try to lure us into His filth and make us unfit for the Master’s service. If He is unable to stain our testimony, He will seek to turn us inward and away from our generation. If He cannot contain us, He will try to trick us into relying on “efficient methods of ministry” rather than absolute dependence upon God; giving ourselves to religious activity rather than fervent prayer; trading anointed preaching for harmless sharing.

In the midst of these struggles against the devil and the world, God calls us to preach the Gospel to our Nineveh. He calls us to shake off the spirit of Jonah. He calls us to abandon our beautiful temples, elegant pulpits, and splendid missions conferences filled with like-minded believers. He calls us to enter into the battlefield of the enemy: A very difficult place, a place where Satan is strongest and casualties abound.

It is so easy to invite a lost friend to an evangelistic meeting. The auditorium is filled with only Christians, the music is exceptionally spiritual, and the preacher is biblical. Surrounded by friends, we speak freely about the merits of Christ. We boldly encourage our guest to repent and turn to God. We warn him that today is the day of salvation and exhort him regarding the dangers of rejecting Christ. We are fearless, and yet it is easy to be fearless when we have the home field advantage. But it is an altogether different story when the advantage belongs to the enemy – when we are called to enter into a city or village that is known to be hostile to the Gospel. It takes a different sort of strength to take your stand alone on a street corner or town square and preach the free grace of Jesus Christ when the people would rather have their idols and vain rituals. And yet this is what must be done if the Gospel is to be preached to every man on this globe. The Kingdom of Heaven is built by those who are willing to leave the comforts of the palace and give their lives so that the Lamb might receive the full reward of His sufferings!

Recently, I [Sorin] invited a group of Christian students from the University of Bucharest to accompany me to Ukraine. I warned them that it would not be a vacation, but a long week of very hard work in several villages that are extremely closed to the Gospel. After twelve hours of driving, we arrived in the city of Cernivtsi. There, we divided up into four teams and went to separate villages. My team went to Malinesti. Our goal was to preach the Gospel to the entire village. Our plan was to go door to door and ask permission to share Christ with every individual. I could sense that the students were very afraid. I tried to encourage them by sharing many positive testimonies from my past experiences. I looked calm and experienced on the outside, but inside me there was fear. What was the reason for such fear? Was I ashamed of the Gospel? No! Was I afraid of being rejected, mocked, and mistreated? Maybe, but I have suffered many such things over the years. What was I afraid of? Only this: I was not in my church behind a carefully crafted pulpit. I was not in my home or even in my car. I was standing in the very place where Satan keeps people in spiritual darkness. We had entered behind enemy lines.

The young students were looking to me for leadership. They wanted to follow me. I realized that if I appeared weak, they would be weak. If I told them about my fear, they would lose the necessary courage to witness. I took out my Bible and read to them from I Samuel 14. In this chapter, Saul and his small army were under attack from the Philistines. Through the Lord’s faithfulness and power, they defended their country against an army of “thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance” (I Samuel 13:5). Humanly speaking, the only way to repel such an attack is to have superior weapons, but the Israelites had next to nothing. In I Samuel 13:22, the Scriptures tell us the following:
So it came about on the day of battle that neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and his son Jonathan.

Israel’s army had about as much chance against the Philistines as a primitive tribe would have against the combined forces of NATO. They were a small unarmed band against an army of thirty thousand chariots and six thousand men clothed in armor! The situation seemed hopeless, but God intervened. Jonathan, the king’s son, decided to go over to the Philistines. Without telling his father, he went alone, taking with him only the young man that bore his armour. Except for his confidence in a faithful and omnipotent God, his actions were absurd. The Scriptures tell us in I Samuel 14:6:

“And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, ‘Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.’”

Was Jonathan sure that he would succeed? No! He said, “It may be that the Lord will work for us...” Was he afraid? Probably, but he knew his God! He understood that the largest army in the world was nothing before the Almighty. By faith, he crossed over into the enemy’s camp and God worked a mighty deliverance:

“Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him. That first slaughter which Jonathan made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land. And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling” (I Samuel 14:13).

This account is a wonderful encouragement for God’s missionaries when they go into the enemy’s camp to preach the Gospel. We are just a few! What can we do against this sophisticated world? Satan seems to have far greater weapons: money, power, prestige, media, etc. But we have our God and His Gospel. It is certainly safer to stay at home, attend a church, worship with the chosen, hear sermons, and even preach behind a pulpit in a well-built sanctuary, but it is a far greater challenge to go into the very camp of the enemy and proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to a captive world.

I hope that these words might challenge you to leave home and comforts behind, to take the road to Nineveh, and to cross over to the Philistines on the other side. Also, I pray that you might better understand the spiritual battle that our HeartCry missionaries must face every day for the sake of the Lamb.

False Accusations and Inconveniences

by Sorin Prodan

During the last days of July, we focused our evangelistic efforts on three Romanian cities: Rimnicu Sarat, Pucioasa, and Colibasi. We began in Rimnicu Sarat with street evangelism, handing out Bibles and holding evangelistic meetings in the church. I never realized that there was so much misunderstanding and opposition against the Gospel in the city. The people were even afraid to accept a New Testament from us. We tried to speak to them, but they were far too afraid to listen. As in most other cities in Romania, this fear was sown in their hearts by the Orthodox priests. The fear is compounded by the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ first reached this area with the fall of Communism in 1990. Please pray for this city. HeartCry has two missionary couples that live and minister in this place.

While we were witnessing in Rimnicu Sarat, we visited a Gypsy community of about 3,000 people. About two hundred Gypsies, men, women, and children came out to hear the Gospel. After about thirty minutes, a police car appeared and stopped us from speaking to the people. They demanded that we accompany them to the police station and there they recorded our personal information. Except for the fact that they did not arrest us, they treated us in much the same way that they would have under the Communist regime. We explained to them that our purpose was to distribute Bibles and visit people. We also
explained that it was not our fault that such a large crowd gathered to hear the preaching of the Gospel. The police were unreasonable and accused us of proselytizing. To make matters worse, the officer who brought us in reported false information about us. He declared that we provoked tensions among the people and stirred up dissension. Although the crowd was very calm and orderly, he reported that we were instigating a revolution. Finally, we were able to have an audience with the inspector. He was more flexible and released us with a strong warning.

The next day, God led us to speak with the Chief of Police. He granted us a meeting and we were able to explain to him our message and activity. He was very kind to us and stated that he was positive about our work because he had seen many people changed by faith. He promised his help to us whenever we needed it. We rejoiced to see how God was able to turn persecution into an open door to witness to the Chief of Police.

The last and the most exciting project of the summer took place in Serbia during the month of August. I traveled with a mission team of eight Romanian students and a missionary from Brazil. I was quite apprehensive before we left because I knew how difficult it was in Serbia. I asked my church to pray for us every day of our stay there.

Our first problems appeared at the border. The customs police checked our papers and baggage for more than two hours. They made us unload our entire van and empty out everything we had in our suitcases. In my Bible, they found a leaflet about Islam and the mission in Islamic countries. Since they could not read the Romanian language, they concluded that I had some sort of relationship with a terrorist organization. Finally, someone was found to translate the leaflet and they discovered that it told of the inconsistencies between the love of God and Muslim terrorist groups. Even though they determined that I was not a Muslim terrorist, they still made our entry almost impossible. They made us declare almost everything that we had brought with us.

After crossing over into Serbia, God turned everything into a positive experience. We first went to the city of Kovin in order to visit with Brother Simo Ralevic. It was a special privilege for our team to meet such a man of God. We asked him many questions about his life and experiences with the Lord.

I was very glad to see how the church is growing in the city of Kovin. HeartCry missionary Zoran Milovanovic is working very hard there and the Lord is blessing his efforts. He ministers alone with his family. By God’s grace, the property that we bought is almost paid for, and next week, construction will begin on the auditorium.

On leaving Korvin, we went to the city of Smederevo, where we distributed literature on the streets and evangelized those who spoke English. It was a trial of our courage because we were standing in front of the Orthodox Church and the police station. After Smederevo, we held a two day evangelistic crusade in the village of Deliblato. We went from house to house, offering a New Testament and explaining the message of salvation to the people. By God’s grace we succeeded in reaching out to more than 70 families. Some of them even attended the evangelistic meetings at night.

On Sunday, we traveled to Belgrade and visited a church where just seven elderly believers meet together. We were shocked to hear that there is only one other church of about 100 members in this important capital of Serbia. I invite you to pray with me for Serbia. They need strong and dedicated leaders and young people with a missionary vision. Please pray that God might bring times of repentance and restoration in this dark land. Pray that God might use Romania to play an important role. Pray for HeartCry missionaries Zoran and Lili Milovanovic. Pray that God might raise up a missionary or missionary couple to join them. Pray that they might finish the building and be able to move in soon.

I want to thank you for all your prayers. It means a great deal to me. The battle is hard here, but we are victorious in Christ. We represent a Kingdom that is stronger than all the human authority that seeks to hinder it. We preach a Gospel that is stronger than any message on earth. We serve a God who is over all and in all. I am honored to serve the Lord and am unworthy to be His servant. Thank you for being with us through your prayers and support of the mission that God has called us to accomplish. I pray that He might reward you richly.

With love,
Your Brother in Christ,
Sorin Prodan
Teaching the Word to Hungry Hearts
by Sorin Prodan

It is always difficult to anticipate the success of a conference. It may be organized very well, but void of power in the preaching. If that is the case, it is a waste of time!

The most recent conference held by the HeartCry Missionary Society took place in two locations in Romania: the capital city of Bucharest and the city of Timisoara. There were three pastor/teachers representing HeartCry: Charles Leiter (Kirksville, MO), Scott Lee (St. Louis, MO), and Timothy Conway (San Antonio, Texas).

The first conference was held at the Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Bucharest. It was a wonderful example of God’s grace. I only had a few days after returning from the US to organize the conference, and I tried to do my best to have everything ready before the team arrived. I intended to have a limited number of participants (initially 60 people), but the pastors forgot to announce the conference to their congregations. One day before the conference, I had a list of only 30 students and HeartCry missionaries who would be in attendance. Since the conference was to be held on Monday and Tuesday (work days), I thought that there would be less than 30 people in attendance. By faith, I ordered meals for 60 people!

I was surprised when 60 people arrived before the worship began for the first session. When worship had concluded there were over 90 people in attendance! People took off from work when they heard that a HeartCry conference was being held. I had to order extra portions for lunch. There were more than 40 students, 20 youth, many adults, 20 Gypsy missionaries, and all the HeartCry missionaries from southern and eastern Romania.

The first day, Brother Leiter spoke from Luke 22, Scott Lee taught from Romans 3, and Tim Conway taught on heaven and hell. The day was long and each teacher gave five lectures and participated in a final session of questions and answers. The attendees were so excited about what they were learning that they asked us to continue without breaks.

The second day was another sign of God’s grace. Since the first day was so long and tiring, I expected that some would not return. I was wrong! More people came on the second day than on the first day. I was very glad to see the hunger of the people for the Word of God. The working of God’s Spirit was more than evident! Again, the conference did not end until way into the night because the students were so full of questions. The following are just some of the comments made by the students:

“I only wish that this conference would never end!”

“I thank God for the opportunity to attend this conference. I thank God for all those who were involved in making this conference possible. I leave here with a new desire to know the Lord and live with more passion for Him”.

“I would suggest that everything be recorded on CD’s and that all the material be published”.

“I enjoyed the conference very much. Please bring the same teachers here for another conference! May God bless the entire team and also Brother Paul Washer!”

“Please organize these conferences more frequently. We need to learn from men like these.”

“Please do not limit the attendance. More people should have access to teaching like this. It is a deep and sound teaching that more Christians should hear. The organizing was excellent! Thank you for this conference!”

“I appreciate the effort taken to organize this conference. I am glad that I attended because I discovered a new depth of God’s Word. I learned new things, and new light was shed on many things I had already learned. I felt the touch of the Spirit and I could see God revealing His glory. I have
come to realize that I have neglected some things that are extremely important. I am now challenged to seek out the irresistible and the pure light of God. Thank you very much for this!”

The second conference took place in the city of Timisoara, on a university campus of about 50,000 students. We selected 50 Christian students to attend the conference and it was even better than the first! We did not have a large room and the hall was very crowded, but the grace of God and His presence was very powerful. Brother Charles Leiter taught from Romans 1:16-32, Scott Lee preached on the sinfulness of sin and the holiness of God, and Tim Conway continued to teach on “Heaven and Hell.” I was able to enjoy this conference more because my good friend Ion Tomeci was in charge of organizing everything. I was able to attend each class and take notes.

The students found this conference to be a great challenge to the way they thought about God and the Gospel. They were also challenged to reevaluate the way they do ministry, especially evangelism. Many of the students were from Campus Crusade. The following are just some of the comments made by the students:

“The teaching was very sound and refreshing. The teachers had a profound and passionate way of approaching the Word of God! Please come back!”

“Why do you leave so quickly? When will you come back?”

“The messages were clear, simple, and full of the richness of Scripture. My heart was touched. More people should benefit from this teaching.”

“It was SUUUUUPER! I enjoyed the messages very much!”

“Maybe next year you will find a larger hall to allow more people to attend.”

“I would like to ask you to come more often and stay more time.”

“Excellent! Powerful messages! Very good teachers!”

“The conference deserves an A+. We want more!”

“Please write down these messages and translate them into a book!”

“Let’s organize these kinds of conferences again!”

“Be blessed! God works through you powerfully. He touched my heart. Please, come back!”

“May God bless your sacrifice! I was edified and very challenged through the Word of God. May God keep you in His grace!”

“It was a super conference that offered a sound and deep teaching. I would like to suggest that you organize a conference like this again in Timiosara.”

The reactions from the students, pastors, and missionaries helped me to understand that the goal of the conferences was fulfilled. God’s Name was again magnified by the people who attended the conferences. It seems that God is raising up a new generation that is more and more interested in believing a sound theology and living with a deep passion for God. I am more and more convinced that we need to invest more time in the youth, the university students, and the young ministers! May the Name of God be glorified among the nations!
Light and Salt on Campus

HeartCry has sponsored Ion and Ani Tomeci for many years as missionaries to the universities of Romania. Over the years their lives have been a constant joy and their dedication to evangelism and discipleship has been a constant challenge. In the following pages are several testimonies of how God is working through their lives and ministries.

Ani’s Bank Evangelism

We often hear of door to door evangelism, street evangelism, and even prison evangelism. Ani Tomeci may be the founder of a totally new form of evangelism - bank evangelism. The following testimony is from one of her most recent letters.

I met Gina in a bank. She was nice and always ready to give a helping hand. One day, while I was completing a form she asked me what I did for a living. I told her that although I had graduated from the Veterinary Faculty, I was now working as a missionary with students. Her curiosity and questions opened the door for me to share the Gospel with her and tell her how the love of Jesus Christ changes lives. She asked me if it was true that the “repenters” always helped each other. I told her that it was especially true with regard to watching over one another in spiritual matters. As we spoke, the Lord touched her heart and she asked to go to church with me.

Next day, I visited her again and gave her a New Testament and two other books which she received with joy. She told me that she was not from Timisoara, but when she returned home she would find a church and read the books I gave her.

I praise the Lord because He works through every event and in any heart. May the Lord give us power to share the Gospel in season and out of season!

Crina and Mira

Crina and Mira are two of the many girls that Ani is discipling. She describes them as having a great love for Christ and a great heart for His work. In the following, Ani shares how God is working in their lives:

It is such an encouragement to disciple Crina. She constantly testifies about all the wonderful things that the Lord is teaching her and how much He takes care of her. She is a living testimony to her unbelieving family. She is especially burdened for her two sisters who still have their hearts “bonded to the pleasures of this world.” She prays for her sisters and her parents, and they respect her for her faith. Although unbelievers, her parents encourage her sisters to be like her, to follow the faith that she has, and to attend church with her. They recognize the difference! Please pray that they will one day understand the reason for it!

Mira is a sensitive girl who loves God and His ministry. She is currently working as a rehabilitation psychiatrist for children. In the last few months she has been quite busy with her job and her masters level studies. Recently she told me: “Ani, the fact that I have not shared the Gospel with the other students in the last few months makes me feel so empty inside. I want to do more for our Lord. I know that I have to tell others about the joy that I received from Jesus. I do not want to be selfish and keep this wonderful gift just for me.” At the moment, Mira is in a spiritual battle with her parents. They do love her, but they do not accept her as a Christian. Her father told her: “Mira, from my point of view, anyone who reads the Bible is a low life, a nothing.” His words hurt Mira very much, but she continues to pray for her parents and her sister. In spite of all the conflict, she truly desires to follow the Lord with all her heart and to give Him what she cares about the most: her life.

Ion and Adi

In the following, brother Ion Tomeci shares a wonderful testimony about a young man named Adi. Adi was converted through a series of personal one-on-one Bible studies and the godly testimony of other Christians. The following is an excerpt from one of Ion’s most recent letters:

“Oh, Jesus my Lord, I need You! I am a sinner and I need your forgiveness. Please, come into my heart and lead my life!”

Those were the words of Adi, a second year student of Political Sciences when he cried out to the Lord for salvation. I met Adi during the second semester of last year. I saw him as an intelligent and sincere young man who feared God, but according to the religious traditions he had received and not according to the Bible. At first, he came to our Bible studies because he liked being around us. Then, during a summer evangelistic outreach, God touched his heart and began to change his life. He began to enjoy the things of God and wanted to find out more about faith in God.

Two weeks ago, God enabled me to have my third “one on one” Bible study with Adi. He was not yet converted, but he wanted to study the Bible together. We sat for over an hour on a park bench on the river Bega.
talked with him about his sin and how it was destroying any possibility of a relationship with God. We always prayed at the end of our Bible study and Adi’s prayer was usually short and simple. This time things were different! Adi cried out to God for salvation and asked Jesus to come into his life. After that, he took off an unusual ring that he had always wearing and threw it into the Bega. He said, “I no longer need things such as this!” I could see on his face a joy and a light that he did not have before. He had the attitude of a free man. Praise the Lord because His Gospel has the same power today to save men and release them from the burden of sin!

Further witness of God’s Salvation

The following are several more testimonies from Ion’s and Ani’s ministry to university students in Romania. We hope that they will be as great an encouragement to you as they are to us!

Camelia Botar - Freed from Fear

My name is Camelia Botar and I was born in the small town of Baia de Aries in Alba county. I was raised in the Orthodox tradition. I have an elder sister named Delia with whom I shared my childhood. Growing up, she was my standard - I followed her in whatever she did and liked. We were together all the time and that was all that mattered to me. When I was in the fifth grade my sister went to college and I was left alone. I was always a very shy girl, but after my sister’s departure, I became very withdrawn. I was insecure and very afraid. I was afraid to try anything new, and most of all, I was afraid of failure. I did not trust people and I always believed that their intentions towards me were not good. Above all these things, I felt that no one loved me and that I belonged to no one.

In spite of all these “disorders”, I enjoyed church, especially the songs and the part where the priest read from the Bible. When I was 14 years old, I thought a great deal about becoming a nun. Deep in my heart I was searching for something and I thought that becoming a nun would put an end to my searching. I never fulfilled this desire simply because I was afraid. How I overcame my fears and enrolled in the university at Cluj is still a mystery to me. For some reason, I had a new desire to change my life. I wanted to experience what it was like to live away from my parents. I wanted to take my life in my own hands!

I took the admission exam for the faculty of Biology and was accepted. I received a room in the dorm and my dream had come true - I had a new beginning. I was a student and free to do whatever I desired. However, my dream proved to be different than what I had imagined it to be. I felt lost, small, and insignificant in such a large town. I felt lonely and the fear of the unknown which I had carried all my life became even bigger. I began to think that I had made the biggest mistake of my life!

In the first days of October, I received a Christian magazine from Ion and Ani’s college group along with an invitation to attend their meetings. I read the magazine immediately and learned about the Gospel of Jesus. I even called on God for salvation even though I did not understand exactly what I was doing. A few weeks later, I was invited to a Christian retreat directed by Ion and Ani. One night at the retreat, a girl shared the Gospel with me. She told me about the love of God and how my sin was keeping me separated from having a personal relationship with Him. She told me that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and that His death was the only solution for solving my “sin problem” with God. She told me that I could receive forgiveness from God for my sins through trusting in Jesus Christ and crying out to Him for salvation. When she told me this, I understood the meaning of the prayer I had prayed after receiving the magazine. That night, I prayed with all my heart because I wanted to be sure that God had saved me.

After the retreat, I began to meet with a girl who was discipled by Ani and we started a Bible study. I enjoyed the Bible study very much, but I was still afraid to trust anyone. I was uncertain about the real intentions of the girl who led the study and the intentions of the entire group. As time went on, this fear began to erode and I saw that they truly cared about me and wanted me to know more about God.

As time went by, I also saw some changes in my own heart. At the beginning, I noticed that there was no longer an emptiness in my soul. As time progressed, I began to feel loved, not just by the people around me, but by God Himself. When I read in the Bible or in a Christian book that God loved me, it was not just information or an impersonal fact, but it was something that I felt deep inside my heart. I was happy, really happy.

The changes in me have continued beyond my heart. The relationship with my parents changed for the better. I began to talk with them more than I ever did before. One day, I even found the courage to talk with them about what was happening to me. As I spoke, I felt God’s love filling my heart, and I realized how much I loved my parents, and how much they loved me. Another thing that God changed in me was my fear of doing something that involved risk or the possibility of failure. The
confident that God gave me through His Word and through the people that He put around me made me overcome the fear. Now I do things that I had only dreamed of before. I am no longer afraid of people. I only see their need for God. God’s love has released me from the self-centeredness that controlled me and helps me to pay more attention to the people around me. At this moment, I am still growing in the knowledge of Him and being transformed. I have one great purpose - to be like the One who gave His life for me!

**Dana’s Testimony**

Before coming to Christ, I had a life full of sorrow. While most young people my age were dreaming of nice toys and expensive clothes, all I ever wanted was peace in my family. My father is an alcoholic and he has made our family look like something out of a horror movie. We loved our father but at the same time we were very afraid of him. As a young girl, I began looking for help for my family, but I did not find it anywhere. I went to the Orthodox church because it was our tradition, and sometimes I even read the Bible, but it seemed like a collection of stories that had nothing to do with me personally.

Even at the university, I could not free myself from my fears for my family. Although student life was full of fun, I could not overcome the sorrow I carried inside. I felt inferior to everyone else and carried a great emptiness inside. I thought that God was not interested in my difficulties until one day the door of my dorm was opened and two girls asked if they could share the Gospel with me. I noticed that they were joyful and full of peace.

I will never forget that day in November, a year ago. The two girls that came to tell me about Jesus were from Ani’s discipleship group. They shared the Gospel with me and compelled me to trust Christ. That day, I understood the Gospel and cried out for God to save me. I began to go to the campus Bible study once or twice a week and everything was new.

The Bible and its message became personal to me as though God were speaking directly to me. I remember crying in one of the Bible studies when I caught a glimpse of how great, kind, and loving our God is! I saw that I had been rescued from this world of shadows because of the Holy blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary. Until that time I did not understand the importance of His sacrifice.

I have experienced a transformation in all my being, and now my mind, soul, and heart are directed towards God’s holy will. I have said “NO!” to sorrow and doubt and have given them to Him. I have given Him my burden and accepted His will in all the areas of my life. I fully trust in Him, and pray that my family will be changed through His Grace. I live in Him, and I want to be used by Him to share His love and Good News to others. Please pray that He might give me the strength to confess Him to strangers. I praise Him because He holds me up whenever I am ready to fall, and He listens to me and offers me guidance in every situation. A person who has not been born again cannot even imagine the joy that comes from knowing that one is a child of God, and seeing His hand working in one’s life. Even when I have been defeated, I know that I can come to Him in prayer and speak face to face with Him. I know that He will comfort me and raise me up!

Thank you Lord, for bringing me into your family!
Thank you for your mercy!
Thank you for Jesus Christ!

**Recent Baptism**

“You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.”

*II Timothy 2:2*

Recently we held a day of celebration for the entire campus group at Timisoara. In the last two months, God has changed the hearts of many students and brought them into fellowship with the other believers of the Stanca Baptist Church where we serve.

Three of the recent converts - Bogdan, Crina, and Radu - made the decision to be baptized by our pastor as a testimony to their faith in Christ. They were baptized in the morning before a large number of believers and afterwards we celebrated with the other students. It was a wonderful time of fellowship. There is a real sense of the Holy Spirit working among us and many students have taken strong stands for Christ in their lives, among their family members, and on campus. They have given themselves to the will of God. Please pray for the other students from our group that they might mature in their understanding of the great importance of the local church, and that they might make the decision to publicly profess Christ in baptism!

**Seekers**

The following brief testimonies demonstrate how Ion and Ani are constantly reaching out to the lost. Most are converted only after a long-term and costly investment is made in their lives. We praise God that Ion and Ani have been given the grace to count that cost! They are a challenge to the rest of us to reach out to all whom God has placed in our lives.

Claudia is a young student who found our telephone number on the back of one of our magazines. One day she
called me and said that she wanted to participate in our Bible study. She came to our Thursday night meeting and shared that she liked to talk about God and even considered a degree in Orthodox Theology. She thinks that she is a Christian because of her relationship with the Orthodox church and because she knows many verses from the Bible, but she has little genuine knowledge of the forgiveness that comes by faith in Jesus Christ. After our meeting, she said that she was seeing things differently. Please pray for her that she might come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ!

Octav is a very unique young man. He is very academic and inquisitive and has the personality of a leader. He is very disappointed about society and the plight of man, but he comes to our meetings without prejudice against us. At the moment he is not very open to the Gospel, but he likes our morality and wants to be with us. We rejoice that even though he is not yet open to the Gospel, he does recognize a difference between us and the world, and he is being exposed to biblical truth and spiritual things. God has brought us several students who are leaders on campus. If they will truly turn to God, they will have a great impact among the other students.

Adela is a miracle from God. I met her more than a year ago through Adriana, another young girl whom I am discipling. She always came to our meetings and was very open to the Gospel. We made several appointments with her during the last year to share with her the Gospel and she became agitated with us because she thought she was already a Christian. In spite of her false assurance, she was tortured by the thought of life after death and the judgment. Her father had died a few years ago and she did not want to accept that he might be in hell. She believed that forgiveness was gained by good deeds and that her father was a good man. She read the Bible with us, but she could not understand or remember much. She seemed to have no ears to hear and eventually we stopped meeting together.

This spring she came again to our meetings and found out about the upcoming HeartCry Conference. To our surprise she said that she wanted to attend. I must admit that I never considered inviting her, but God spoke to her powerfully in the conference. Afterwards, when I talked to her, she was not sure whether she was going to heaven or hell, but she was inclined to think she was going to hell. In spite of her doubt, she still did not want to surrender to the Lord.

A short time later I met with her again and I talked to her about the certainty of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Her answers were very confusing and uncertain until we read I John 5:11-13 together:

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

I asked her the question, “On a scale from 0 to 10 how sure are you that you are going to Heaven?” She said, “I do not think that I have the Son or that He has ever come to be in my heart.” I asked her, “Do you want Him to save you now and abide with you?” and she answered, “Yes!” At that moment she cried out to God for salvation and asked Jesus to be her Savior. Afterwards, she declared in a loud voice and with tears streaming down her face: “I am 100% sure that God has saved me!” There was so much joy on her face that I was amazed. She thanked me and declared that she wanted to come to our college meetings and to attend church with me.

A few days later, we met again and she said to me, “I have read the Gospel of John until 2 o’clock every night and now I am starting with the Gospel of Mark.” It is such a joy to disciple her. In each meeting, she asks questions that are more and more profound. She comes to all our meetings and has a great desire to grow up spiritually. She is a fourth year student and will soon be returning to her hometown. I do not want to let her go, but she has learned the importance of growing to spiritual maturity and the importance of the local church. I entrust her to God who can do all things! Praise the Lord for giving fruit to our ministry!
Alex and Simona Palade

HeartCry has sponsored Alex and Simona Palade for many years as missionaries to the universities of Romania. Like Ion and Ani, they are very dear to us at HeartCry. Their lives both convict and motivate us to seek harder after the Lord and to serve Him with greater zeal. In the following pages are several testimonies of how God is working through their lives and ministries.

Looking for Zacchaeus

It is a great joy for a worker in God’s vineyard to see people coming to Christ and being baptized. I sense the Lord’s leading to continue a story from the field that I began two years ago. The story is called “Searching for Zacchaeus.” Two years ago, Levi (a fellow missionary) and I were doing evangelism among the university students in Brashov. Day after day, we sought to spread the Gospel, but we saw no results. We experienced only denials, indifferences, prejudices and suspicions from the unbelievers. We were beginning to be discouraged.

One day in front of the dorms, Levi read the story about Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10 and a thought came into my heart, “Let’s go find Zacchaeus.” God used the story of Zacchaeus to show us that in spite of all the indifference among the students, He had prepared the hearts of some to both hear and receive the Gospel. We prayed that the Lord would lead us to Zacchaeus, and we were awakened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit in the next days and weeks. We were guided by the truth that we were looking for Zacchaeus.

After several days, God led us to a young man named Marian from the city of Toplita. In the beginning, he was suspicious of us and so we left him with a Christian book. He read through it during his summer holiday and God began to work in his heart. Before he came back to college for the fall term, Marian repented of his sins and trusted in Christ. He was a man changed by the Holy Spirit. We baptized him along with several other new believers.

Persecution of Young Believers

One of the new converts who was recently baptized is Ionut - a student in Brasov. His father said that he would never enter a “repenter’s” church, but God worked in his heart and he came to his son’s baptism. A young student from Sibiu named Leo was also baptized. When his parents heard that he was baptized, they announced that they would no longer support him in school. His uncle who works in Italy told him that he would no longer give him money to continue his studies. His uncle was so angry that he threw his cell phone into a garbage can so that Leo could no longer call him. The last thing he said to Leo was, “Your God and the repenters can take care of you now. You have disappointed me by repenting. I would have rather seen you become a drunk than a repenter.” Please pray that the Lord will prove that now that he was a university student, he wanted to share the Gospel with others and he asked me to teach him. The next week, I gave Daniel some Christian magazines to give to his colleagues. The magazines included some very good evangelistic articles.

One of his colleagues was so intrigued by the articles that she was caught reading them in class. The professor confiscated the magazine and began to read it. She liked the magazine so much that she offered to give Daniel and the Christians a hall in which to hold meetings.

A few weeks later, I went with Daniel and Bogdan to the share Gospel in the men’s dormitory. We began to knock on doors and talk to people who would talk with us. One young man named Daniel recognized me from when I visited the same room last year and he was open to hear the Gospel again. When I read to him from Hebrews 9:27, he was very amazed and shaken up. He listened to the rest of the Gospel message and declared that he wanted to believe in Jesus and be saved. That day, both Daniel and his roommate Alin made professions of faith in Christ.

As time went on, Daniel continued to meet with us and grow, but Alin became very suspicious of us. He went home and shared with his parents about our message. They are Orthodox and opposed to the Gospel. Therefore they prohibited him from listening to us. He has now abandoned the faith he professed and fulfilled the words of Jesus in Matthew 13:21:

“Yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.”

Multiplying Disciples

In the fall, I began to meet with a young Christian named Alex. He told me that since high school he wanted to share the Gospel with others. He was hindered by his lack of knowledge and his fear of men. He told me
The difference between Daniel and Alin was an example of the lesson I was teaching to the students in Brasov regarding genuine conversion. I am teaching through I John and discussing how a person my truly have a biblical assurance.

May God be glorified for such ministry!

May the Lord reward the prayers you raise before His throne of Grace and grant mercy for the salvation of our students.

Testimonies from Simona

My husband and I traveled to Bacau to meet with the Christians who are studying and serving God on that campus. While I was there, I met with several disciples. Among them were Codrina, Ana, Roxana, and Alexandra. Ana and I went to share the Gospel in the dormitory. We stopped at room 306 where we met Elena, Alina and Monica. Elena is a leader from ASCOR, a student Orthodox movement that is very antagonistic to Evangelicals. Most of them hate us. They tell us that we are wrong and call us a cult. I shared with them my testimony and they asked me what kind of church I attended. When they discovered that I was not Orthodox, they asked me to leave their room. I was very happy that I could tell them about Jesus before they kicked me out.

It is important to understand that the Orthodox Church is very strong in the city of Bacau. The people care little for serving God, but they are obsessed about never changing their religion. In the Orthodox Church it is not a great sin to have an abortion, to live in sexual immorality, to take drugs, or to practice the occult, but it is a great sin to be an Evangelical or “repenter” who renounces such things and follows Christ. The people are deceived by their Orthodox priests. The Evangelical Church is very small in Bacau and the unbelievers have many prejudices against the “repenters.” It is difficult to spread the Gospel in a place like this, but it is not impossible for our God! Praise the Lord!

After being kicked out of one dorm room, I went to another with a young disciple named Roxana. In 312 we met with three girls - two girls named Alina and another named Monica. We shared the Gospel with them and they understood that they were sinners. They were so impressed with the message of the Gospel, that they embraced us at the end. It was a good reminder that not all hearts are closed to the Gospel. Some of them have been opened by God!

I will finish my letter with a testimony about one of our disciples whose name is Ana. She is a student in the College of Journalism. Two years ago she moved from the university in Brasov to the university in Bucharest. In Bucharest, she lived in the dormitory and began to share the Gospel with the others students. When the vice-rector heard about Ana’s evangelism, he called her into his office and demanded that she stop preaching “her religion” to others.

In spite of the vice-rector’s treats, Ana did not stop sharing the Gospel with the other students and God used her in the conversion of a girl named Aura. When the vice-rector heard that Ana had not stopped sharing the Gospel, he called her into his office again. He threatened that he would have her kicked out of the dormitory if she did not stop. Ana returned to her dorm and continued to evangelize. For a third time, the vice-rector reprimanded her and then had her kicked out of her room. He prohibited her from ever entering into the dormitory again. Ana is sad because she cannot visit her colleagues, but is glad that God used her in Aura’s salvation. God has also helped Ana to enroll in another university.
Reformation and Revival

Reform: 1. to make better by removing faults and defects 2. to make better by putting a stop to abuses or malpractices. 3. to correct.

Revive: 1. to come back to life. 2. to come back to consciousness. 3. to come back to health and vigor. 4. to flourish again after a decline. 5. to come back into use or attention. 6. to become valid, effective, or operative again.

This article is born out of our desire to see the reformation and revival of the Church. We do not pretend to offer a ministry that can or will produce such a move of God. Our only claim is that we see the desperate need for such and passionately seek it for the glory of God and the eternal benefit of His people.

Areas of Greatest Need

We believe that there are certain teachings and practices of contemporary Christianity (especially in the West), that have led to its demise. They are the things which stand in greatest need of change:

The Attributes of God: There is a great lack of biblical teaching on the attributes of God. As a result, church members often worship a God they do not know, or worse, one they have created in their own mind and according to their own image or culture. The “god” that is worshiped by many has very little resemblance to the God of Scripture. If the true God were preached in many congregations throughout the land, the response would be, “My God is not like that!” or “I could never love a God like that!” In Psalm 50:21, God declares, “You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes.”

The Gospel: The glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ has been reduced down to nothing more than “four laws” or “five things” God wants man to know. For the Gospel to be properly understood, there are several essentials that must be proclaimed: The attributes of both God and man must be set forth - God is holy and just; man is radically depraved and deserving of all condemnation. The Cross must be explained – Christ bore the sins of His people and was crushed under the full weight of God’s wrath. Through such a death, God’s justice was satisfied that He might be both just and the justification of wicked men. The resurrection must be proclaimed – the resurrection is God’s public vindication of His Son and a public declaration of the justification of His people. There must be a proper call - the Gospel does not call men to simply repeat a “sinner’s prayer,” but to repent of sin and self righteousness, and trust in Christ alone. In modern evangelism, a man is asked whether or not he is a sinner. If he agrees, he is asked if he wants to go to heaven. If he nods his head, he is asked if he wants to repeat a simple prayer. If he does, he is told that he is saved. This is not the Gospel. It matters little if a man admits that he is a sinner. The real question is whether or not God has done a work in his heart so that
he hates the sin he once loved. It matters little that a man wants to go to heaven. The real question is whether or not he desires the God he once hated and esteems as precious the Christ he once ignored. It matters little that a man is willing to repeat a prayer. The real question is whether or not he repents and trusts in Christ!

**Regeneration and True Conversion:** In salvation, men are called upon to make a decision, but salvation is not merely or primarily a human decision. Salvation is the supernatural work of God whereby the very nature of man is changed and he becomes a new creature. The Great Awakenings in Europe and New England occurred at a time when people were admitted to the church simply because they had been baptized as infants and thus the churches were filled with unconverted and carnal members. Against this heresy, George Whitefield, Howell Harris, Daniel Rowlands, John Wesley and others thundered out the message that one must experience the new birth as a supernatural and life-changing work of God. Today, men, women, and children are admitted into the church simply because they repeated a prayer regardless of whether or not there is any evidence of the new birth in their lives. Because of this, our churches are again filled with unconverted and carnal members. Many are deceived into a false assurance by pulpets that either do not understand the doctrine of regeneration or are afraid to preach it. There is once again the need to sound forth the doctrine of the new birth and the nature of true conversion!

**Biblical Separation:** The immoral and materialistic culture of the West will find a safe haven in every congregation where the biblical doctrine of separation is not promoted from the pulpit. The church has been so influenced by Western views of tolerance and political correctness that any teaching on holiness and separation is often regarded as an attack on the Christian’s individual freedom and labeled as fanaticism or legalism. In many congregations today, there is essentially very little difference between those who claim allegiance to Christ and those who deny Him. Most Christian distinctives have been lost or blurred with regard to personal relationships, family, dress, sex, entertainment, financial stewardship, and countless other relevant issues. A failure to address these issues biblically has resulted in the destruction of God’s people and has invalidated our witness among unbelievers. The Church must remember that it is not relevant because it is like the world, but because it is contrary to it.

### The Road to Revival

The best efforts of the godliest men and women cannot produce revival. It would be wrong and dangerous to say that there are certain things we can do to make it happen. We are, however, called to seek the advancement of the Church in all holiness and godliness by walking in obedience to God’s Word and preaching the Scriptures boldly and in love. We also believe that our God is a gracious God who hears the prayers of His people and will not delay in their deliverance. We should always be willing to ask for great things from our God, for we know that He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.
All Christians are concerned about missions and desire to support the missionaries who have given their lives for the sake of the Gospel. However, most Christians never become personally involved in any international mission endeavor. Many are discouraged because the closest they come to the mission field is putting money in an envelope or an offering plate. Most never imagine that they could support a full-time missionary on their own and become personally involved in their ministry.

Through the HeartCry Missionary Society, you can support an indigenous missionary to work full-time in the ministry for as little as $150 a month. You can support a missionary as a family project, involving your children, or you and your friends can support a missionary together to share the blessing and the cost. You can also support a missionary through your church family. Contact us and we can prayerfully work out all the details. We know of countless qualified indigenous missionaries who are worthy of support. God can use you to be a blessing in their lives and to bless you in return. Though you may not be called to go, you can be an instrument of sending a missionary and interceding for them in prayer.

Each individual, group, or church who chooses to sponsor a specific indigenous missionary will receive:

- A photograph of the missionary and his or her family.
- Their personal testimony of conversion and calling.
- Quarterly updates and prayer requests.
- Personal correspondence.
- Depending on the country selected, the supporter may visit the missionary on the field.

We look forward to hearing from you and count it a privilege to help you participate in the greatest of all endeavors - the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the very ends of the earth.