



Cleaford News



August 2013

Moving on....

We particularly wish to send

- ⇒ New clothes and shoes
- ⇒ Toys, complete puzzles, games
- ⇒ Coloured pencils, felt tips
- ⇒ Paints, brushes and craft materials
- ⇒ Toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap
- ⇒ Medical items—must be at least 6 months within expiry date
- ⇒ Incontinence pads
- ⇒ Secondhand tools—for carpenters and mechanics.

Visit our website at cleafordchristian-trust.org.uk (without the hyphen!) and join the **Cleaford Christian Trust Google Group** for news updates.

We are no longer sending food, knitted blankets, **second-hand clothes**, computers, monitors and printers.

God has led us through a difficult 18 months, and we are now convinced that we are out of the woods, and the ship is back on an even keel. (We always warn British preachers when in Romania to avoid the use of idioms, as they may be difficult to translate, hence we have a lot of spare ones which need to be used somewhere!)

We were pleased to receive confirmation from the Charity Commission recently that we had correctly handled the situation regarding funds sent to Romania. Following a series of meetings here and in Romania we can summarise the whole situation as follows:-

The original investigation carried out by the Hungarian Baptist Church was flawed, and not sufficiently independent.

The concept of 'designated funds' had not been followed correctly.

There had been a lack of oversight from the church headquarters of the actions of individual ministers.

There was no evidence of personal gain from TCCT funds.

There is no possibility of recovery of funds that may not have been used exactly as designated.

We now have a formal Partnership Agreement with the church, which removes the possibility of ministers acting alone without an element of 'cross-checking'. We have no further dealings with the families involved in last year's problems. There is now proper record keeping by our partners in Romania, and these records are regularly inspected.

We are keen to emphasise that this whole matter has involved less than 10% of the funds we have sent to Romania, and even within that 10% we know some good work has been done.

In a curious way we believe that the former communist regime is to blame for much of this. In those days it was not good for churches to maintain records that could be inspected by the authorities, and it was not always helpful for other people in the church to know what gospel work was being done elsewhere. We think that this culture of a lack of openness had persisted in some minds, but it is now clear that these attitudes are being cast off, particularly among the younger leaders. Although it has been a hard time, God has taught us all, and the ministry will be stronger.



Harghita Christian Camp

Impressions from a visit

As long-standing trustees with The Cleaford Christian Trust Roger and Pat Guy keep us informed of news from the Hungarian Baptist Churches in Transylvania. Over the past few years we in Bedworth Baptist Church have enjoyed upbeat reports following ventures to and from the other side of Europe, in faraway Romania.

Over time my intrigue has grown; not least of which was due to my own limited experiences of Romania, 22 years ago. In 1991, whilst stationed on a British Garrison in Germany, our padre organised an aid trip to a similar Baptist community in Brasov. I wondered then if I would one day return.

A chance finally came when Roger asked me to accompany a TCCT team visit as a supporter, over the week of 9-16 March 2013. The highlights of the trip are as follows.

We travelled from Bucharest to Brasov, arriving in Sacele for a meal with Missionary Pastor Otto & Elizabeth Kis; followed by an overnight stay at the FAST base Zuriel (meaning "A new dawn") with Daniel & Ema, and Liz.

On Sunday we attended Purcareni church service in the morning. The afternoon was spent with George & Simone at Zizin Roma community. Finally a service with Otto's Hope Group at Sacele. Otto evidently has a calling to reach the disabled into the church, and through them, many others who are lost, too.

On Monday we visited Brasov Children's Hospital (which TCCT supports) in the morning, meeting the Director, Dr Serban Rogoz and Dana. We had a guided tour of the facilities, including the hospital's Chapel of St. Stellan, which was one of the many things personally instigated by the Director. Afterwards, we moved onto Harghita Christian Camp for an overnight stay, spending time with Zoltan (& Erica) and Andrew Erdo. Gille was to remain at the camp doing a recce for impending Dining Room works in the Autumn.

On Tuesday, at Targu Mures (TM) we stayed at Sandor & Napsugar's church flat. That evening we visited Attila & Adele Toth and attended a memorable evening service Apalina Church with the Roma Gypsies. The place was packed and, after an hour's worship, we were invited to pray with some who had approached Attila specifically for the Lord's help - and some of them not even yet Christians!

Wednesday saw us visiting Gornesti in the morning with Pastor Zoltan & Abigail Dohi. In the afternoon Roger and I explored Targu Mures. Finally we attended an evening service at TM Hungarian Baptist Church. On Thursday we visited George & Emma Doczi (who are supported by TCCT) at Chibed Church, before driving back to Brasov.

My concluding thoughts are, firstly, that Romania is still very much on a journey: a long journey, to stand firmly on her own. She may have been loosed from the cords of communism, but she is still oppressed by poverty, corruption, 'old ways' and lack of vision. In 1991 a real concern was that, with the Wall down, the young people of Romania would leave for a better future abroad. Today, that lifeblood leaching continues and Romania's elite and youth do not (on the whole) see a viable future within their own country.

Secondly, despite worldly disappointment and unfulfilled hopes of material things, the church is both present and active. God has - and has always had - a plan for the nation of Romania, and he has not abandoned her. Indeed, we ourselves heard accounts of vibrant churches, the Holy Spirit moving, people responding and the Kingdom of God extending. It was heart-warming to see that God's Chosen have, themselves, individually chosen to stay and rebuild their nation of Romania. And this wholesome vision isn't built on a Western pipe-dream or the promise of European entry, but on a firm faith in God, his Word and his divine will.

Thirdly, it was a privilege to be, even for a moment, part of something truly worthwhile in another land - both in a present and eternal sense. Such Good News may be summarised by the Purcareni Church motto for 2013: *"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (2 Cor 5:18-22.)



Andy Burns

Holiday Bible Club with 328 Roma children at Apalina Roma Church, led by Attila Toth

Widows' fund

During our recent holiday in Romania we were invited to visit two of the widows who receive support from TCCT (£20/month each). We were able to see our new strategies for handling money, which involve the money being counted and signed for by the recipient and two witnesses. We made it clear to the widows that we were just a channel for the money which was being donated by friends in the UK.



Maria Menyhart was sitting reading a daily devotions book by CH Spurgeon when we visited her unannounced! She is a delightful lady who is living in very basic conditions and who is very grateful for the support given to her.

We then visited Magda Gedo who was also very appreciative of the help given to her. It really does make a difference to her also.

Harghita Christian Camp

Andrew Erdo writes, 'This camp served for the past 22 years as a place where thousands of children, young people and adults had the opportunity to hear the Good News of salvation and hundreds of them have taken the decision to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. In parallel with the camp the Barnabas House is functioning as a place where people with special needs can spend time relaxing and enjoying hospitality in a Christian environment.'

"We are so glad we discovered this Camp. It is the best we have ever been to in Romania!", enthused an American team member whom we met recently at the Camp. The Camp Director and Manager, Zoltan and Erika Joo, are working extremely hard to run the Camp efficiently and have created a very welcoming atmosphere. There are bookings throughout the summer months and this includes children, young people, adults and groups with special needs. It has been good to see an able-bodied group encouraging those with special needs, with the guidance of Otto and Elizabeth Kis..

The biggest project at the present time is the demolition and rebuilding of the 22 year old wooden dining room. The health authorities wanted to close the camp two years ago but allowed a period of grace in return for a promise that it would be rebuilt. It is being demolished in September, with the help of a group from the Farnham area, and the first phase of building is to get a roof on before the winter weather arrives. This would allow fitting out to continue during the winter, in order to be ready for reopening in the spring. During our visit we had extensive discussions and we were very impressed with the thought and planning that has gone into the design of the new building.

Because it is such strategic evangelistic work we are keen to support the Camp as far as we can. The immediate need is financial help for the Dining Room project. At the time of writing the phase 1 fund stands at £36,000, against a cost of £70,000.

Andrew Erdo writes, 'So while we praise God for the abundant blessing He has given us so far, we pray that He will make it possible to have this project finished in time. Are you willing to join us in this prayer? And if the Lord will put on your heart to help us financially as well, for sure, you will receive the reward from Him. May God bless you and guide you according to His good will.'



The old, and an artist's impression of the new, dining room. The kitchen and staff quarters building at the far end (which is relatively new) will remain, but with some expansion at the back.





Otto's Hope Conferences at Harghita are a highlight for people who can't get out and meet others in a Christian environment. There are plans to install a ramp for wheelchairs to reach the chapel without needing strong men to carry them up the stairs!

The Cleaford Christian Trust

...caring about Romania...

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Prayer Points

Pray for Zoltan & Erika Joo, and Andrew & Ester Erdo, and Erika's parents as they work at Harghita Christian Camp, so that it can continue to be used by God to bring many more to Christ.

Thank God for the financial and prayer support received by the Trust, and pray for its continuance.

Thank God for guiding us through a difficult period working on the problems stemming from financial irregularities in Romania.

Pray for the leaders and pastors of the Hungarian Baptist Convention in Romania as they seek to restore the good name of the denomination, and bring about healing within the church community.

Pray for the provision of finance for the necessary development work at Harghita Christian Camp.

Pray for the growth of the gospel amongst the various Roma communities where there are now church buildings in which to meet.

Pray for Otto and Elizabeth's ministry to the disabled and those with special needs, thanking God for the work being done to foster integration.

Pray for children and young people returning home from summer camps, that the local churches may be empowered to build on the gospel work done at camp.

We use a **Google Groups** for our Trust circulations. Please go to the Trust website and add yourself to the list if you are not already on. Drop us an email if you can now receive the News (and other occasional items) by email, which saves us printing and postage.