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A.C.A. is a registered charity both in Romania and the UK.

**What use is it, if someone says he has faith but he has not works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food and one of you says to them "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled" and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead.
James 2 v 14-17**

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Aurora Christian Association

History of the Work



... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.
Acts 1 v 8

Registered Charity : 1073190

BEFORE & IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Our introduction to Romania began when we started travelling to the country in 1983. At that time it was still a communist country, and the Iron Curtain was still very much in existence. During the years before December 1989, we travelled regularly up to 3 times a year, with aid of various kinds for the Christians. After the revolution in December 1989, we immediately entered the country, as did many others, with a van load of food, clothes and Bibles. At that time a state of euphoria gripped Romania, as freedom was an unknown thing. Everyone thought that freedom meant that they could do exactly as they liked. Of course, this is not the case. All democratic countries still have to have laws! The overthrow of Ceaucescu did mean the end of a reign of terror, but it did not mean an automatic end to all the problems that 40 years of communism had brought on the people. Romania had a very long way to go before she would enjoy real democracy. After the first and second elections, there was a lot of suspicion as to whether they were really conducted without fraud. Ioan Iliescu, who had originally been a member of Ceaucescu's government before he was 'put out', was elected as president. As time went on, it was obvious that his party was not a truly democratic one, but communism with a different name and face. At the beginning some things did change very rapidly, but it wasn't long before it was plain for those who had eyes to see, that many things remained the same, especially in the infra structure and the mind set of the people. In November 1996 there was a change of government, and Emil Constantinescu became the president. He was a real democrat, but only succeeded in having a majority against Iliescu by forming a government of an amalgamation of all the other parties. This in the end proved a disaster as there was never enough agreement to begin real reforms. He pledged to deal with the enormous problem of corruption at every level, and succeeded somewhat, but could not hold power for long. He had too much against him.



PRESENT ON-GOING VISION

1. To provide education and support to enable all children to be schooled (i.e. books, uniforms, necessary materials)
2. To provide adult education and courses as and where possible
3. To help those who cannot read or write and those who are very poor to sort out all their documents, thus enabling them to function legally.
4. To feed the children regularly in the canteen
5. To fill family bags of food for the poorest families, as regularly as finance permits.
6. To support churches where Biblically based truth is being preached, especially new independent churches based on New Testament truth

PRAYER POINTS

1. Continued financial support to send aid to Romania
2. More regular sponsors for the canteen and the workers
3. Purchase of Education Books / Uniforms to encourage children to attend school.

A.C.A. is an independent, non profit making, Christian Association. It is affiliated to the Rora Christian Fellowship Trust in Devon, England.

Our other involvement, and probably the most important, is with the churches in the village. We work with small, Baptist and Pentecostal churches, and we are believing God to move by His Spirit in both these places. There are many souls being added to the Lord, simply through the love shown them in desperate need.

OPERATION re - AID

We aim to send aid regularly, finances dependant. All aid is packed carefully and given on a one to one basis, either to individuals, or to churches, hospitals, doctors and dentists surgeries, schools, police, council offices, just to name a few. In fact, wherever there is a genuine need, and a trustworthy contact. Everything, according to Romanian law, is signed for, and listed, both on entering the country and as it is given away. The biggest problems and greatest costs are (1) transport to Romania and (2) sponsorship for individual workers & families.



FINANCE

Aurora Christian Association [UK] / Asociatia Crestina Aurora [ROM] is financed solely through gifts given specifically for the work in Romania.

Very little is used for administration costs, both in the UK and in Romania, as all staff are voluntary, and live either by nominated sponsorships, or personal gifts. All travel is financed personally.

SINCE 1989, the few rich have got richer and the rest, including the so called middle classes have become increasingly poorer. Before the revolution there was literally nothing to buy in the shops as everything was exported to pay off the national debt, but the people then had jobs, and money in their pockets. Now there is plenty in the shops, but very few can buy as they have no money. There are far fewer jobs due to modernisation, and salaries grow very slowly. Extreme poverty exists everywhere, and there is constant inflation. Even the basics such as bread, potatoes and some meat cannot be afforded by many. Many families live on the family allowance which is £10.00 per child per month, and many old people on a pension of between £30.00 - £80.00 a month. Prices are at western levels for most food and commodities.

Many who live in rented apartments are losing their homes because they cannot pay the utilities, and this in turn creates more serious problems for the authorities. Whole families live in one or two rooms, and their daily food is soup and bread. Added to all this there is a serious social problem with the gypsy population. Romania has more gypsies than any other European country, and they are totally despised by their Romanian neighbours and not without reason, as many of them steal, cheat, lie and drink to excess. Many gypsy women and children suffer great hardship as a result, and live in extreme poverty and squalor. Often, children do not go to school because they don't have shoes or clothes, books or pens, and the other children mock them because they are gypsies.

There is very little state aid, and the system is far from fair, especially where the gypsies are concerned, as many cannot read or write and do not have any documents and therefore have no rights. Along side all this, is the fact that corruption is still a major problem which pervades the whole of Romanian society, and bureaucracy makes even the smallest official task very difficult. Many western groups have now stopped taking in aid as there are so many difficulties attached to it, with the laws changing constantly and stealing and jealousy the norm.

At the time of updating this leaflet (Mar 2013), obtaining official documents is still very difficult, and often take months. Most things are still done in a very basic manner with numerous papers, official stamps, and unhelpful officials. Wheels grind very slowly and there is still the attitude of shrugged shoulders and the word 'what can I do?' or 'I am embarrassed/ashamed (to lose face)' which covers up so many things.

Hospital treatment is still very difficult, and always entails 'gifts' for every service, even bed making! There is supposed to be free health treatment but in reality it is often non-existent. The main reason is that the doctors and nurses earn so little that they try to supplement their income in this way, thus 'milking' the people. Many never go to the doctor, dentist, or the hospital until it is too late, and consequently there are many premature deaths. There is constant fear of illness amongst the people, but at the same time, a constant running to the hospital for the most minor things.

OUR WORK in Romania has grown tremendously from those early beginnings. In December 1990 the Lord clearly showed us that we were to buy a property as a base for His work in Romania. First of all He showed us a town house in great need of renovation, not the kind of place we would have considered naturally, but we were convinced that God was leading us, and our experience at Rora told us that that was enough. It was incredibly cheap by western standards, as prices in Romania had not started to rise at that time. We gave our word that we would purchase, even though at that time we did not have any money at all. We promised to bring back the money [in cash] when we returned in February 1991. On our return to UK in December 1990, we received two separate cheques in the post, specifically for the work in Romania, which covered the purchase price. It was indeed a miracle, as not a word had been said about the intended purchase, but the Lord knew, and supplied through His people.

We returned to Romania in the February, handed over the money for the house. We wrote out our own contracts by hand, signed them with the vendor and a witness present, and took them to the council offices for the official and inevitable stamp. So the work at **Casa Aurora** began.



A family we help in a neighbouring village to Vulcan.

Apart from those of us involved in the work from the west, there is a team of 13 Romanian workers. All are committed Christians, and all feel called to this work. They work for the Lord without salaries, but we help them as we can by finding sponsors from the West who can commit themselves to a regular gift. This enables us to give them a little money each month to help put bread in their mouths and feed their children. We have cooks in the canteen, cleaners, workers in the kindergarten & gypsy school, helpers for the aid, workers in the garden, a maintenance man and an administrator. We always begin each day with prayer with the workers. We also have a dedicated team of voluntary helpers at Rora in the UK, without whom the work would not function so well.



ACA Workers in Romania, pictured with Malcolm & Christine

Many activities take place here, including a Holiday Club in the summer of 2012 (another one is planned for summer 2013) and the 'housing' of groups who work with us in Vulcan.



Holiday club - July 2012



Gary & Nico, with Abi, Thomas & Reuben

Gary & Nico have established a new church in Bran (a town about ½hr away), which is registered under the banner of ACA. They have 3 children, Abigail, Thomas & Reuben. The church is growing and is a living testimony to Jesus in a very dark place.

In April we started the uphill struggle of renovation and building. We were about to learn many new lessons in patience and faith, which, looking back, we can see, could only be learnt in this way. The first firm of builders we employed were simply 'cowboys' who thought they could gain from these gullible westerners! They stole an enormous amount of things from us, including a great deal of building material. In desperation, in June 1993, we finally wrote our own termination of contract with them, had it translated [because at that time we could not speak Romanian], and asked them to remove all their tools and materials as soon as possible.

Just after this, a Christian brother offered to help us, without payment. He was willing to trust the Lord! What a joy and relief this was to us, someone in Romania willing to move on the same ground of faith. From this point, he took over, using Christians to do the work, and paying them on a casual basis from money we were able to give him as the Lord supplied. Praise the Lord!! From then on, the building and renovation went on steadily, and the workmanship was vastly improved. The house had four run down, dirty rooms when we bought it, and when finished had eleven nicely decorated rooms, four bathrooms, two kitchens, an office and three storerooms. All the interior construction of the 'upper room', and the bedrooms in the roof space, we did ourselves. Little by little the work was finished. Brothers from England came and helped us, giving of their talents as they were able. The whole place was a testimony to the Lord's amazing faithfulness. Casa Aurora became a base for hospitality for visiting groups and individuals coming to Romania to help in any way they could.



In July 2007, after realising that Casa Aurora no longer fulfilled its function of hospitality for westerners, as so much had changed in Romania since ACA's inception, we put the house on the market. Unfortunately to date, it is not sold, but we continue to trust God for a suitable buyer.

In the spring of 1995, The Lord led us to purchase a village property. This was eventually to become our 'home' in Romania, as we moved there in the autumn of 2000. This house, **Casa Betania**, was an old, but very well built German property, with a courtyard, out buildings, garden, orchard and enormous roof space.



God has also given us another lovely Christian couple to work with there, Nelu and Miki and their three daughters, Gabriela, Cristina and Timeea. They live on one side of the courtyard, and we live in the other. Again the Lord miraculously

provided the money for the purchase at exactly the right time. This house has been enlarged to provide an office, a 2nd bedroom, a garage and food storeroom. In total it now consists of three small rooms, including the office, and two large rooms and the bathroom.

The house next door to Casa Betania was initially bought by another English Christian brother Gary and his Romanian wife Nicoleta. The two front rooms have been given to ACA for a **canteen**.

Casa Betania - Malcolm & Christine's home.

Nelu & Miki's home & carpenters workshop.

Casa Betel where the canteen and the upper room are situated.



The canteen started in October 2001 with twenty eight children, and has grown to feed about 100 children & 20 old people daily. The children come from very poor Romanian and Gypsy homes. They receive one hot meal a day from Monday to Friday, in term time. A lot of time and money has had to be spent in renovating and equipping the canteen with a waiting room in the basement, and a flush toilet, to make the place suitable for the work. It is basic, but usable, and we are so grateful to the Lord for His supply for this necessary ministry. The canteen is sponsored by gifts from the west. £20.00 a month feeds one child. If you are interested in sponsoring a child in the canteen, please ask for more information. An **'upper room'** has also been constructed over the house. Here the 3-4 year old kindergarten group is held in the mornings and the gypsy school in the afternoons. Various courses and group teaching sessions are also held here.

In the summer of 2008, ACA bought Gary & Nico's house when they moved to start a new work in Bran. The house is now called **Casa Betel** and has accommodation for guests, as well as presently being the home of co-workers and regular helpers from the west.

