

Partnering Christians in Witness and Action

Autumn 2010



Dear Friends,

Greetings to you in the wonderful name of Jesus our Lord! I thank God for each one of you, for your friendship, partnership and generosity! I thank God for His grace and patience with us; He truly blessed us again this year more than we thought and for sure more than we deserved. I can say with all my heart: "God is so good; He is so good to me!"

During these challenging times for everyone, God helped us to continue all of MLI's projects and ministries. We were not in the situation of closing or ending any of the ministries. Once again we saw His provision and faithfulness at work and I was reminded of the words of the Psalmist: "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." (Psalm 127)

God is sovereign, and He is the one who makes things happen, not us. Yes we do have to work hard, and be diligent but we always should be aware that it is Him who gives, and blesses the work of our hands. Without Him we can do nothing. We are doing His work and we are in His hands, called to be faithful in the work He gave us to do.

On September 24 the MLI board met in Timisoara for evaluation, planning and prayer. I am thankful to those who are part of the board and continue to invest time and energy in achieving our goals.

You all are in our prayers; we do appreciate you and love you in the Lord. Thank you for your continued support, for your prayers and generosity! May the Lord continue to bless each one of you.

Yours in Him, Eugen Groza - president

CHILDREN AT RISK

CHILDREN AT RISK MINISTRIES

The lack of a coherent economical and social political system over the twenty years since the Revolution has left Romania extremely vulnerable in face of the economical crisis of the last two years. This year Romania reached the point of not being able to cover the pensions, welfare and the salaries of the government employees or to sustain the health, education and social systems in the country. As the economy is weak, the government introduced heavy measures: VAT was increased from 19% to 24%, while all government employees (health, education, etc.) had their income reduced by 25%. Village schools have been shut down forcing some children to go to school as far as 25Km (15mi) away without the infrastructure to support this. The lower income of foster families has lead at best to giving up the 'foster parent' status and most frequently to more situations of abuse and child abandonment. The foster system implemented in 2004 became therefore inefficient only six years later in 2010. In the spring some of the emergency transit centers for children were shut down for financial reasons. A home with thirty children was shut down in Timisoara. In those circumstances the Child Protection Department and the County Education Department are demanding more help from MLI-CAR (Children At Risk).

Deborah House (DHC) has been appointed the only centre for girls at risk in Timisoara. Ten new girls, ages 10 to 16, came to DHC this year. Five of the girls came directly to DHC without going through a transit center any more. The 33 girls whom MLI legally provides for are all in school. Six of the girls have moved into apartments making room for younger girls to find healing and care at DHC, they are now part of our 'Aspirations - My Future' program. Three of them are college students, and three have completed vocational training. The smiles, the school results, and also their decisions to follow Christ testify to the love of God and His healing touch in their lives. Three girls have confessed their faith through baptism this year, and four girls have started catechism classes to be baptized. Besides school, daily house activities, helping out in the fruit and vegetables farm, and attending church with the house parents, the girls took part in a basketball camp and went for two weeks of camp at Alpinis. Twelve of the girls went on the Alpinis outdoor backpacking camps. This experience had quite an impact on them as seen in their testimonies.



Making cookies with Deb Normand



Aspirations - my future - in the apartment



with the Christ Church of Oakbrook Basketball team at Deborah 2

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In many villages schools are being shut down and poverty is spreading. The risk that families (especially Roma) will no longer send their children to school is increasing. Given those circumstances, MLI has developed a new program as part of the Aspirations program called "Back to School not Begging on the Streets" (BS/BS). 170 children ages 3 to 16 benefit of this program in four villages around Timisoara, we are helping them to go (back) to school. In order to encourage families to send their children to school, and not use them for labor or begging, MLI provides basic food, personal hygiene toiletries, and occasionally clothing and shoes for children. We ask in return that they will attend school clean and with homework done. Schools provide the children with transportation, books, lunch and study aids.

HARMONY – is an MLI program by which we take the Gospel to children in vulnerable circumstances. Doru and Rodica Racovicean continue to serve in two children homes where although the number of institutionalized children has been reduced, many more children from the wider community are coming to the Bible lessons some if only for the snack they receive. At the Juvenile Prison in Buzias an average of 70 boys are being released or transferred every year, still an average of 60 teenage boys attend the Bible lessons twice a week.

We are grateful and very much appreciate the work of teams and visitors who came to help us this year.

Lorena Rusovan

I am happy I had the opportunity to be a part of the camp on the mountain. I have discovered myself and also the beauty of nature. I also experienced how hard but at the same time how beautiful it is to reach the top of the mountain, and this is a great lesson for life. I will never forget this experience!

Alena Constantinescu



Alpinis outdoor camp - catching our breath



VBS with West Park Baptist, Knoxville, at Stanciova

CHURCH BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The need for developing new Church leaders continues to be a major challenge for us in Romania, especially considering the number of people who are leaving for better work and income abroad in Western Europe. Over the last year we started a few new local training groups (two for men and three for ladies), both in the west and the south of Romania. Approximately 180 people are now part of the leadership development program (130 men and 54 ladies). We assist these groups to meet regularly with local leaders and pastors, and occasionally the groups come together for intensive training.

In May we had the fifth Church Based Leadership Development intensive training session at Alpinis. The theme of the seminar was:

"An Overview of the Book of Acts" with an emphasis on the spreading of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the Earth and looking at Paul's missionary journeys. The first week we had a group from the southeast of Romania (Fetesti, Slobozia, Tandarei and from Timisoara). The second week we had a group from a few mountain towns in Transylvania (Abrud, Campeni, Zlatna, Rosia Montana and Ponorel) and from Carpinis near Timisoara. There were 47 men all together. Pastor Mike Smith with a team from Highlands Community Church, Seattle, WA led the seminars. The group spent two weeks at Alpinis teaching and doing a medical project in mountain villages near Sibiu. I am very thankful to each one of them for their excellent work!

"As the area Pastor and leader I see the very positive impact these studies have on our lives. They help to consolidate and clarify our doctrinal beliefs, to deepen our walk with the Lord and to prepare us for better serving the Lord and others. Our brothers are better equipped, and some who were not involved in the ministry before are now taking part in it. The studies help us in our family life, prayer life and the relationships between us. We very much appreciate this training, and the way brother Eugen serves us and the needs of the church in our area. Thank you!"

Pastor Cigher Sorin, Abrud

For the first time this year in May and again in October we held the leadership training for women at Alpinis. The ladies had a few days of sweet fellowship, teaching from the word of God and encouragement for better service and spiritual growth. The theme of the first seminar was: "Women of the Bible" and it was led by Mrs. Bonnie Kinschner from Ashville, NC. She did an excellent job and we are grateful to her. There were 25 women from the west of Romania, Timisoara and Carpinis, and from the southeast Romania - Fetesti, Slobozia, Tandarei, and Burdujani.

"God is truly wonderful and I praise Him first for these amazing days. I thank Sister Bonnie for her open heart, for everything she taught us by letting herself be used by the Holy Spirit. I read about the women of the Bible many times but I didn't understand their lives so well, and now they have influenced my life in a new way. I also want to sincerely thank all those who have made this conference possible. May God reward each one of you according to His grace! I pray the Lord will bring more times like these in my life."

Maria Preda, Timisoara

"I can see the impact of the training we receive through MLI in the way people relate and understand to serve in the church. We should not let the voice of the world around us direct our lives, but we should learn from the Word of God how to be dedicated Christian women, wives, mothers and servants of the Lord. Through this training you help us towards this end. Thank you so much!"

Elida Pop, Fetesti

Thank you so much for your prayers and generosity in supporting this important ministry. Your involvement is an encouragement and a great blessing for so many.

Your brother in Christ, **Eugen Groza**



Leadership Development group at Alpinis



Ladies seminar at Alpinis with Mrs. Kinschner

CHURCH BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



ALPINIS UPDATE

Twelve of us were on the trail, approximately 150 meters from the peak when one of the girls dropped her backpack and exhausted she said with tears: „This is it! I am not taking one more step! I am done!“ It was difficult. Claudia was out of her comfort zone, she has never been on a wilderness experience in the mountains. We stopped and I encouraged her to look back and realize how much she climbed and how close she is to the top. Stop, rest, take a deep breath, a sip of water and a candy and move on refreshed! There are so many life lessons to learn on the trail! As we talked about it at the end of the experience, Claudia said she feels stronger and more confident. She has learned more about trusting God and continuing with perseverance on the journey.

Such moments are the highlight of summer camps. It is what they are about – young people encountering God, friends and nature in a new way while removed from the comfort of the home and the city. We often think God does not intend the wilderness for us, but Jesus himself was led by the Spirit in the wilderness and often he withdrew to such a place for quiet and prayer.

Over the summer we had seven camps at Alpinis. Five of the camps were at the villa with youth groups from Giurgiu, Fetesti, Bucharest and the girls from Deborah House. The teams from Zionsville Presbyterian Church, IN and Christian Life Fellowship, Baton Rouge, LA, have done a great job helping us with camps. Thank you!



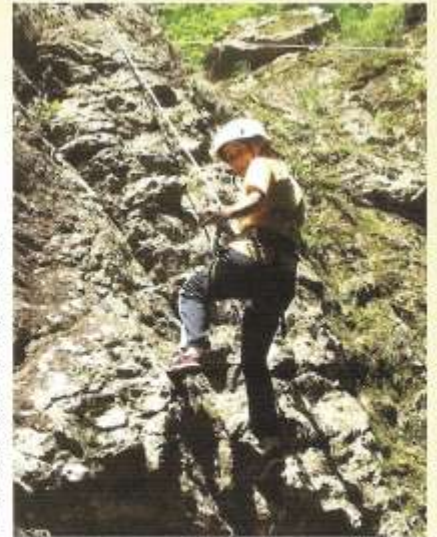
ZPC team and youth from Giurgiu at Alpinis

The other two camps were backpacking trips – out on the mountain without watches, cell phones or mp3 players, sleeping in tents and making a loop starting from Alpinis and returning five days later. We witnessed God’s work of transformation in the lives of both leaders and participants as we hiked, shared a tent, shared meals and life stories, rock climbed and learned from Scripture together. In June, like in the previous two years, we continued the training of leaders with Wilderness Ministry Institute from CO, USA, preparing for the later camps.

Throughout the year we continued to host camps and retreats organized by other groups and churches at Alpinis. Some groups return to Alpinis every year for such events. We hosted two series of three consecutive MLI Church Based Leadership Development seminars in May and later in October.

In September we had a team from Harrisonburg, VA who replaced the stairs between the 2nd and 3rd floors, and did repairs and interior work on the villa. Thank you!

We are grateful for being able to continue the work at Alpinis and thank you for your continued support in prayer and giving. We continue to depend on your participation through teams, support and prayer for building the Kingdom in this way, and please take this as an open invitation to participate in our work by coming, giving and praying.



Outdoor camp - Simona rappelling

„This was a real adventure! Rain, cold, wind, sunshine, friends, bonding and fun. What seemed difficult at the beginning turned into an unforgettable experience. None of us will forget how wet we were and how we dried our boots and clothes. But we will also remember the special moments and the breathtaking view. Climbing up was hard, climbing down even harder. Yet, in all of it I experienced God’s joy and care. (Hedda, Timisoara)

„I returned home spiritually, emotionally and physically stronger. I learned that I can do more than I thought. This camp was an answer to prayer - going through a difficult situation at home - I prayed before the camp that it will be a turning point in my life journey and God answered my prayer – I could see how He is Emmanuel, I saw His Spirit in Creation, His kindness, care, and sovereignty amidst our fears and desire for all to be well. All was new to me, and I am usually resistant to



change. Here are a few words to describe my experience: an investment in the relationship with God and friends, renewed strength, great fun, new passions.” (Cristina, Timisoara)

“The experience I had on the mountain helped me realize that I am stronger than I knew. I overcame my fears, and it was unforgettable.” (Claudia)

Emil Toader



MLI Pastors' Family Retreat,

Our Lord commands us to train and empower God's people to do His work. At the beginning of September (6th-10th), with your generosity we organized the yearly Pastors' Family Retreat. Dr. Steve Wingfield, evangelist and president of Steve Wingfield Ministries, and Mrs. Barbara Bomtrager did an excellent work of leading the conference in Buzias, a spa near Timisoara. Our theme this year was "The Lordship of Jesus Christ", learning about the titles and names given to our Lord using the passage from Isaiah 9:6. This year's retreat was the largest we ever did with approximately 150 participants. Here are some impressions from the retreat:

It has been a long time since my heart was broken as it was after Steve's messages. Personal examples from his life and the use of Scripture gave authority to the teaching we received. We were challenged in our prayer life and in our family life. Beyond words we felt that Steve's heart beats Romanian. **Pastor Marin & Doina Tifrea (Piatra Neamt)**

This retreat provided me with renewed motivation to continue in ministry and serve the Lord who is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. In lives' storms He is the only one who gives peace. I learned to trust Him more and more. **Pastor Daniel Molcut (Ohaba Lunga)**

For me and my wife MLI has a special meaning: God's hand touches us, His hand comforts us, and His hand gives us new strength. We did not expect to have this conference in this year of crisis but I saw once again people who sacrificed themselves to bless us in this way. The messages were full of God's love and we felt refreshed and ready to go back in ministry. Thank you! **Pastor Ivanica Octavian (Alexandria)**

I serve the Lord in a small church in southeast of Romania and I often struggle thinking that what I do doesn't matter much for the Kingdom. At this conference I became aware that the value of a ministry is not measured during the time of our lives, but in God's eternal plan for the Kingdom. **Pastor Iulian Stoian (Tandarei)**

Thank you so much for your continued support for the work of God in Romania, your love and generosity make a difference in the lives of so many servants of God!

Your partner for Christ in Romania, **Pastor Eugen Groza**



Friends who recently visited our ministry in Romania:

- West Park Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN, USA – a team did a Vacation Bible School (VBS) with children who are part of the Aspirations program – Back to School Not Begging on the Streets (BS/BS);
- Washington Avenue Baptist Church, Cookeville, TN – partnering with churches in rural areas;
- Bill and Bonnie Kinschner, Ashville, NC – Bonnie led the women seminar at Alpinis and Mr. Kinschner visited the MLI ministry;
- First Baptist Church, Fountain City, Knoxville, TN – a team with Mrs. Fran Mitchell and Rhonda Ward visited MLI ministry;
- Northern Ireland team – helped with the renovation of the exterior wall at Deborah 1 (D1);
- Task Force Romania, UK – a team worked on the upstairs rooms and the storage house at Deborah 2 (D2);
- Mt. Bethel, UMC, Marietta GA, USA – a team did repair works on the house at D2 and the septic system at D1;
- Christ Church of Oakbrook, Chicago, IL, USA – a team did an evangelistic basketball camp with youth from Timisoara and girls from DHC;
- Debby and Donny Nease, Bethesda UMC, Savannah, GA, USA – visited and worked at DHC;
- Christian Life Fellowship, Baton Rouge, LA, USA – helped with the Alpinis camp for the girls from DHC;
- Steve Wingfield Ministries, VA, USA – a team came with Evangelist Steve Wingfield and worked at DHC and at Alpinis;
- Vessels of Mercy Intl., Richmond, VA – a team did a VBS and painting work at D1;
- Mike and Darlene McKeithen, MI, Marietta GA, USA – Missio International (MI) and MLI board members, visited MLI ministries and took part in the MLI board meeting;
- Jeff and Deb Normand, Grace UMC, Toledo, OH, – long term partners and friends visited MLI ministry;
- Greg and Denise Ward, Memphis, TN, – visited MLI ministry for the first time;
- Kenny Woodhull, Missio International, Knoxville, TN – executive director of MI visited the ministry and took part in the MLI board meeting;
- Zionsville Presbyterian Church, IN – Dave and Joan Gall came with a small group, Dave is part of the MLI board and the group visited the ministry in Timisoara and at Alpinis.

We are glad you came!

Pray with us for:

- People, families, marriages in Romania, who are seriously affected by the economic situation that they will find a real alternative for life in the Gospel and the Church;
- Children MLI ministers to through the Children at Risk program – pray for protection, and for God's provision in their lives and the sustainability of the program;
- Pray for the girls who left DH to start life on their own as part of the Aspirations program;
- Pastors and church leaders who are part of the Leadership Development program – pray for vision, wisdom and God's provision as they minister in their locations;
- Young people who were part of the Alpinis camps, that Jesus will continue to be real and close to them in day to day life, for support and vision for Alpinis so we can continue developing the camp.

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