

Friends of the Gypsy Roma

Romania Spring Missionary Trip 2024

By Dr. Paul Barkey, Chairman



The Team

In April a Mission Team of 10 headed for Western Romania to minister in Gypsy villages. Nine of the Team are from Family Bible Fellowship in Weatherford, TX. The Team included four women. My wife reminded me the women would make for a different trip than all previous ones. The women were naturally and spiritually gifted in teaching children as well as reaching out to those in need. They found it objectionable to share their quarters with mice. The Lord marvelously used the Team to spread the Gospel in Gypsy churches and communities along the Hungarian Frontier.



Mission Office Construction

We have needed a headquarters with storage, office space, meeting space and a place for short term housing of traveling missionaries. Over the last few years we have been renovating an apartment for that purpose. This is the apartment where Titus was raised under Communism. Roof repairs were finished as well as painting the interior, and a number of other smaller projects. We now have space to store the Romanian "Go Make Disciples" soccer balls and other evangelism supplies.



Ministries

Pastors and Churches

The church at Oshan has built a new church building which they were hoping to finish and dedicate while the Team was there. Lord willing, we will send a smaller team of HVAC men to install a heating system this fall so the building will be available year-round. The church held a baptismal service a few weeks after we returned.



The Team was blessed by the hospitality extended to us by pastors and church leaders. One pastor's family dressed the four women on the Team in Gypsy dresses as a cross-cultural experience in what it is like to be a Gypsy bride.

Bible Day Camps

Bible Day Camps were held in ten Gypsy villages. Some of the villages where we have Bible Camps have a Biblically centered church, and some don't - many don't have a church at all. The camps include Bible Lessons, Spiritual Songs, games, an open sandwich, a drink and a treat.



Other Ministries

We were able to get a large amount of craft supplies for the continued labors of the Crafts women at Tileagd, as well as eyeglasses for those struggling with weak vision. The trip was also an opportunity to check in on some of the Roma we are assisting with medical expenses. Titus also seeks to encourage church leaders and would like to get back to the training he provided for church leaders prior to the travel restrictions from Covid.

The twice weekly Gypsy Radio Program on Radio Vocea Evangelie out of Oradea continues to reach into communities without a Christian witness, as well as into prisons and remote locations. The station manager reports it is still their most popular program.

Titus has developed a relationship with a 16-year-old young man, Emanuel, at the Catholic Orphanage on the edge of Salonta. Emanuel has recently turned his life over to Christ, and Titus continues to disciple him. We were all impressed with Emanuel, and he will assist Titus with the summer Bible Day Camps.

The Mission Team visited the orphanage several times to repair equipment and replace a broken basketball rim and backboard. Also, we couldn't resist a few pickup basketball games with the kids.



Here are a few comments from Team members as to the spiritual fruit from the trip.

"The trip for me was all about Jesus. I saw God move every day, and it blessed my heart. Not only was He working in the Gypsy's, but in the mission team as well. The kids in the villages were like sponges, soaking it all in. I saw a true hunger of the Word of God while working with the older ladies in the churches. The children and the ladies just want to be taught." JerriLynn

"These people had every reason in the world to reject us and the message we went there to deliver, but they received it, and we got word back that even now, they're on fire for Jesus." Virginia