

Romanian Mission Trip Part II Brightside July 2018

By Dr. Derek Conte

Last month I described the Romanian landscape and lifestyle of the Gypsy and Romanian people. For this piece I will present some of how we spent our days in service along with further observations.

You will recall I talked about the massive green Transylvanian foothills upon which large herds of animals grazed. One thing that stood out was how clean the forest floor was everywhere. The reason for this was that most used wood-fired stoves for cooking and heat. It is illegal to cut down a tree for this purpose so all the toppled trees and deadfall on the forest floor was picked clean, as if manicured. Nothing went to waste here. Old roofing tiles and timber were saved and given to others who needed it.

On slander in Romania: If a person spreads nasty rumors about another they are brought to the police to substantiate it and if they cannot, are penalized by receiving a ticket and a fine. Can you imagine how that would go over here in the USA?

Living conditions: While the Romanians seemed to have modest homes, some in need of repair, the Gypsies lived in small houses or closely-packed shacks or even tents. Some had electricity but many used fire and candlelight at night. Running water was hauled from spigots in the central area of the commune to their homes and bathing was done while standing in large buckets or small plastic kiddie pools. Outhouses were the standard for many Gypsies.

The Gypsies had this thing about wind. We were adjusting locals in a small church in the village of Pinticu after a short rain. It was very humid and getting warm and stuffy in the packed church. Dr. Brooks and I opened the large windows and a beautiful fresh breeze moved through the church. Then I was hot again and looked up to find the windows closed. Maybe the wind closed them? I reopened them. Ah, that nice breeze! Then, a minute later I'm hot again and found the windows closed again --- and locked! I asked our interpreter, Adi, what was going on? He said that Gypsies don't

like the wind. Is it a superstitious thing, Adi? Yes, I think it is. Many Gypsies kept small wads of cotton in their ears. I noted the many cases of earaches and vertigo which offered an additional reason for the sensitivity.

Viisoara is a mountain village with a tiny 12'x12' shack of a church up a narrow, ascending dusty path strewn with empty plastic bottles and paper. The kids came first to see who the strangers with the strange tables were and scrambled away like a school of minnows when we reached out to them to be adjusted. But soon we gained their trust and many more came to be adjusted.

On the outskirts of Viilsoara, there was an encampment along a small freely-flowing river bend to which we brought four large garbage bags of used clothing and shoes. It was so remote that the car could only approach to within ¼ mile. As we carried the goods we saw several makeshift tents, several burnt-out fires and a dog chained to a tree. A baby slept in one of the tents attended by its mother who told us the rest of the two dozen who lived there were in town begging or doing odd jobs to scrape by.

One young woman with three small children had a tragic story. She lost her husband to drowning three months ago and recently the plastic roof of her tiny shack burned off while cooking a meal on her wood stove. Its structure could not be saved. She now lives in a small tent with her kids next to the burned shack. A replacement house will cost \$1,200 American dollars. Dr. Brooks and I contributed half that amount to get things rolling.

It is a hard life for the Gypsies yet they seem, for the most part, content and joyful among their kin in their communities despite their privation. If you would like to make a contribution contact: ourlifemission.org and speak with Pastor John Fracker.

Next month, we will close the series by presenting some of the cases we saw and the great utility and effectiveness of chiropractic in the field.

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