

The Timisoara Times

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EDITORIAL

Proclaiming and embodying Christ's death and resurrection

As we are putting together this issue of *The Timisoara Times*, Romanians, following the Orthodox calendar, are getting ready to celebrate Easter (on May 1 – five weeks after yours!). It is an excellent opportunity for us at the Areopagus Centre to reflect on the significance of Christ's death and resurrection for our ministry. We are reminded once again how much of our life (and of the Areopagus ministry) are centered on these key events of Jesus' story. When we consider our *educational* programs, we recall the story of Paul's visit to the Areopagus in Athens, where he boldly proclaimed "Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18-19). Whether we teach students in the West University of Timisoara, or equip professionals through the "Faith and Profession", forums, therapy training, or train biblical counsellors for service in local churches, we are committed to reminding people that our only real basis for hope and change is the fact that Christ has come to share in our sufferings and struggles, in order to bring us to victory, together with Him. This message is even more poignant as we seek to *embody Christ's suffering and resurrection through our social programs*. Both the HIV-positive people and the families in severe poverty we work with are experiencing pain and struggles on a daily basis. It is our desire and prayer that through our ministry they are able to see the Lord of the universe who has come to share in their suffering, and also that because of Christ's resurrection the reality of suffering and death need not have the final word in history – of course if our "history" is part of "His-story"!

Alex Neagoe, PhD,
President of the Areopagus Centre



Areopagus in Partnership with the Local Administration

One of our main social projects, the HIV program, started in 2003. Since then we have assisted HIV-positive patients in hospitals, at home, or at our quarters. Some of these patients were children when we first met them, now, they are adults with their own families. For most of them Areopagus is a second home. Here they are accepted and appreciated for who they are and not stigmatized because of their condition. In all these years of working with HIV-positive patients, we have enjoyed a good reputation among doctors and the medical staff that treated them, and we worked together as a team for the benefit of our patients.

Last year, Areopagus became one of the nine social services accredited and supported by the Mayor's office. We were honored by this public recognition of our services for HIV/AIDS people. As a result of this partnership with the local administration, they support part of the salaries for our social worker and our psychologist, and provide monthly food and sanitary products for twenty HIV families from Timisoara.

Our HIV program does not operate only in Timisoara, but in a couple of other locations that are further away from Timisoara. However, the sponsorship from the local administration applies only for those that live in Timisoara. In this context, we have to raise support to keep visiting and helping HIV people in villages where no one wants to go, because the conditions are hard and there is a lot of poverty. They need food and clothing, counselling and medical care. They deserve the chance to a decent life and together we have the means to make this possible. Learn more about us from our website, pray for us, support us financially, write to us and visit us. Here is a possible first step (see the form on the next page)

Name:

Address:

Email address:

I commit to support a HIV-family: \$50/month

I commit _____ per month to support Areopagus' ministry

I will provide a special gift of _____ to your support.

You can send this form and your contribution to our tax deductible representative in USA or you can contact us directly at office@areopagus.ro



Areopagus Romania Foundation (www.arfus.org)

Attn: John Livingston

11949 Arbor Run Drive, Walton, KY 41094-9562, jlivingston@arfus.org

When faith makes a difference...

At the beginning of the 1990's, just as the communist regime was coming to an end, another crisis swept our nation. In just four years (1988-1992), 13,000 children were infected with the HIV virus in the hospitals of Romania, and half of them died. The other half exceeded all expectations and survived. They are now in their late twenties and they must take medication on a daily basis for the rest of their lives. They still struggle with stigma, fear, and lack of education in the community and they have less opportunities in life than a person that is not infected. Despite all this, our beneficiaries deserve to be called survivors. They teach us valuable lessons of how to enjoy life and live it with dignity and hope. One of these people is Maria. She is 27 years old and comes from a large Christian family. She has twelve brothers and sisters. Maria was infected with HIV back in 1989 through an infected needle. She suffers from loss of hearing in her left ear due to complications associated with HIV, has had meningitis and gets the flu very often, but she is the most positive person you can meet. She comes to our meetings from two villages away on her roller-skates or bike; she plays soccer, plays the guitar and has a beautiful voice. She works almost daily in housekeeping, plays with her nieces and nephews, helps her mother around the house and likes to sew. As we are writing this, she is in our sewing room, making beautiful things for our Easter sale.

Even if most HIV people keep this aspect of their lives hidden, the Christian community to which Maria belongs, know her diagnosis, and has been very supportive. She remembers being in the hospital, needing blood transfusions, and the doctors being amazed by the large number of people that came to donate blood for her. She is very open, honest and an amazing Christian young lady. She trusts and loves God with all her heart and tells everybody what He has done in her life. We are happy to have known her since she was a teenager and feel blessed to know that we contributed to the person that she has become.

Pray for us:

- ◆ To continue having an impact in the lives of the HIV families we work with, as well as in the lives of the 20 children we serve who have a high risk of dropping out from school that Areopagus is helping.
- ◆ For a new group of professionals that will meet at Areopagus as part of the Faith and Profession Project, to discuss ways in which they live their faith and Christian values at their work place and how it influences their performance.
- ◆ For wisdom and guidance in all our decisions and projects, as well as for our staff.

Please direct any support for the Areopagus Center to:

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