

The Timisoara Times



**Areopagus Centre; 104 Calea Martirilor,
300774 Timisoara; Romania
Tel: +40-256-487485**

E-mail: office@areopagus.ro, Internet: www.areopagus.ro

OUR SERVICE FOR THE KING

As we approach the end of 2018, we are encouraged to see once again the many ways in which God has showed His faithfulness to us, as we have tried to play out our roles as instruments for the furtherance of His kingdom in our part of the world. In view of the coming Christmas celebration, we pray that the new-born King (now the glorified Lord) will accept our small acts of service as a token of our heartfelt love for Him.

- ◆ OUR MASTERS' PROGRAM in theology and social work continues to be the strongest and solid Master's program of the Social Work Department of the West University of Timisoara. By God's grace, our 38 current students, together with their professors, are passionately exploring ways in which the Christian faith can make a positive impact in our fallen world.
- ◆ THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS FROM SALLUX (the Netherlands), we continued the Cambridge Papers translation projects and 6 new titles/articles were translated and distributed in Romania and to Romanians living abroad. The resources are available both in a digital and printed format: *Worshipping God with technology* (Denis Alexander), *Finding security in the 'risk society'* (Amy Donovan), *Uniformity or mutuality? The new equality law in Christian perspective* (Julian Rivers), *The Human Identity Crisis: Can we do without the Trinity?* (Michael Ovey), *Mercy not Sacrifice - Mosaic law in Christian social ethics* (Jason Fletcher), *How to create a relational society: Foundations for a new social order* (Michael Schluter).
- ◆ THE AREOPAGUS INSTITUTE of Family Therapy and Systemic Practice offered a series of workshops on parenting at various stages of children's development. The participants' feedback was very positive and encouraged us to continue providing such workshops, in addition to the regular trainings for professionals. There is a great need for training in this area not only for parents, but for school teachers, school counsellors and other people involved in children's education and formation.
- ◆ THE BIBLICAL COUNSELLING programme is training the fourth generation of Christians from churches all over Romania to help individuals, couples and families deal with life's struggles biblically. Over 30 trainees attend our programme and over 100 finished their training and are involved in their local churches.
- ◆ ROMANIA 100 – this year Romania celebrates 100 years since the Great Unification (the union with its historical provinces) in 1918. On this occasion, Areopagus hosted a book launch on two important figures of our history, queen Elisabeth of Romania and queen Marie of Romania. The author made an excellent description of their lives and roles of in the social and political life of Romania. The event gathered over 60 participants and it offered us a great opportunity to pray for our country and for its future.
- ◆ TRAINING YOUNG POLITICIANS is a programme supported by our partners from Sallux, aiming at forming new generations of young politicians. Romania desperately needs new leaders and a return to Christian values. This year was marked by many anti-government protests, violence against protesters, crises of all kinds, and people's frustration with the system which made more and more people leave the country, burdened with the political and economic situation.



THE SHOEBOX DISTRIBUTION campaign has started. So far we have blessed hundreds of children with shoeboxes sent from our partners from Team Hope Ireland. We had distributions in Cara-Severin county in schools, orphanages, homes, and in a hospital. It was such an honour to bring joy and hope to children and families that have so little, families that cannot afford presents for their children and for whom the shoebox was their only Christmas presents! It also gave us the chance to share with them about Jesus, the perfect gift sent from above to bring salvation to mankind!

Here is Diego, a little boy that was abandoned by his mother and raised by his grandmother and his blind grandfather. Diego was so happy with all the toys inside his box. His grandmother had tears in her eyes seeing his joy. We met so many children in the same situation, either raised by grandparents, or by single parents in conditions hard to imagine. Although part of the European Union, Romania has by far the largest poor population in the EU – over a quarter of people live with less than 5 Euros per day.



THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMME for disadvantaged children has continued this year, too. We meet weekly with 20 children from low income families who are at risk of dropping out of school because of their financial situation. Our volunteer teachers help by tutoring them so they can eventually graduate. We believe that education can change their life for the better and it can give them different perspectives in life, better ones than their parents had. Keep praying and supporting this project and think of those who have so much less that education becomes a luxury! Here is a picture of our children at the beginning of the school year when we gave them schoolbags, school supplies and other things that they needed to begin school.



THE HIV/AIDS PROGRAM - Powerful Impact and Current Crisis

The HIV/AIDS project has been the first and the lengthiest of our social care programs, offering over the years counselling and support to hundreds of HIV-positive patients and family members. Currently, we support 20 beneficiaries (as well as and their families) at our premises, at their homes, but also in one of the local hospitals. The program is fully accredited by the government and Areopagus is the only provider of such services in our region. For the last few years, the city authorities have included it among the handful of social projects in Timisoara on their support list. However, due to their financial problems, we have not received this support for the last six months, which has meant an important challenge for us. Unfortunately, the prognosis is not very good. It is likely that they have to stop financing all social programs in the city beginning with next year. We ask you to join us in prayer for a special and urgent intervention from God, so that this important project can continue. Also, if you would like to contribute in any way (or if you know anyone who may be interested) and if you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Here are a few of our beneficiaries' thoughts about Areopagus' service. Reading them has been for us just another confirmation that this program has to continue:

"I do not have a family, but you are my family. Every time I come to Areopagus, I am really happy. Nobody has ever accepted and appreciated me as you do. My world is full of suffering, drugs, alcohol, I was in prison for 20 years and I had a hard time trying to integrate into the society, but God has changed my life, He gave me strength. You will always be my real family!"

"Areopagus is the only place where I feel safe and welcome. I faced difficult times, but you were always there for me, you trusted me and helped me overcome my painful past experiences. I have started to fight again against the disease..."

"... there were times when I had no money for food because I had spent a lot of medication, doctors, check-ups, and the bags with food from Areopagus were like a lifeboat. "

"...Whenever I was not feeling well, I knew you are praying for me... you taught me to have hope..."

"... I was desperate, my son wanted to commit suicide...he could not deal with the disease anymore...but God gave us hope and a ray of light through Areopagus. Words can hardly express how thankful I am...They put the smile back on my son's face!"



Please direct any support for the Areopagus Centre to:
Areopagus Romania Trust

11 The Croft, Pinner, Middx. HA5 5EX

For more information, a gift aid form or a covenant form please write to the same address.