

The Timisoara Times

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A new phase in the Biblical Counselling Ministry of Areopagus

The Areopagus Biblical Counselling training programme (started in 2011) has equipped so far over 100 Christians from Evangelical Churches to counsel within their churches. The programme is very successful, attracting every year Christians from various Romanian cities, as well as from abroad. The need for Christian counselling is increasing, and our programme provides both the theory and the practice that people need in order to offer counselling. Along the years we have encouraged churches to develop counselling ministries; some did, and others are in the process.

Apart from offering this training programme, we are often asked to provide actual services of Christian counselling as well. There are many Christians who cannot find adequate counselling services in their local churches but they are in desperate need of help. There are more and more teenagers from Christian families who struggle with addictions, depression, maladjustment to various stages of life, or their parents' divorce, and couples dealing with infidelity, loss, and the list goes on. The good news is that Areopagus has trained people to offer biblical counselling to other Christians, and it is our desire to develop this side of our ministry. We have done it so far on a very limited basis, but we want to expand this ministry and have one full time counsellor who can meet with individuals and couples/families. Our counselees and trainees see Areopagus as a great resource for training and counselling, a safe place to come and talk about their difficulties.

Therefore, starting this autumn, we want to start offering counselling sessions for those who want to come to Areopagus for help. We will have a counsellor (who is also a social worker) that will be responsible for this programme. We invite you to join us in our efforts of developing this new side of the counselling ministry, by praying for it, and by offering your support. We need help to be able to cover the salary of our counsellor, which is 880 Euro/780 GBP/month (including taxes). If you want to be part of this and help with the support of our counsellor, please [click here](#) or type www.areopagus.ro/en/support and fill in the form. Thank you!

New graduates from the Masters' Programme Values-Focused Social Work Practice

This year Areopagus hosted the graduation of our Masters' Degree students, professionals from all over the country coming from various fields such as social work, theology, arts, etc. As they graduated, another group of 39 students have enrolled in this programme which aims at training professionals to be able to provide social and spiritual care in an integrative way and at developing professional competencies in Theology and Social work.



Graduation at Areopagus

HIV prevention programmes in high schools

We have continued our HIV prevention programme in various high schools from Timisoara. The prevention programme aims at informing youngsters about the transmission of the virus, testing, and about the challenges and stigma that the HIV-positive/AIDS persons must deal with. We try to teach them not to label people who are infected or to have prejudice, but to be empathic and supportive. Also, it is important to teach them to be responsible in their relationships.

This summer we reached two high schools and over 140 teenagers. Most of them had little knowledge about HIV and were not aware of the problems that HIV-positive people encounter. Also, they became more aware of the risks of drug consumption.

Vacation Bible School

For the second year, Areopagus and a team from Faith Fellowship Church from Clarence, NY, organized a VBS for children from 5 to 12 years old. For a week, we had almost 50 children coming to our programme. Some of them participated last year, as well, but for many it was a new experience. Many of them had little knowledge about God and the Bible, and it was a wonderful opportunity to share with them about these truths. This is also one of the projects that makes Areopagus better known in the community, and it gives us the chance to share with people about our work.



In addition to the VBS, we took the American team to visit a few poor families that Areopagus has been taking care of for a few years. We brought them food and toiletries and we talked to them about their situation. Our plan was to help one of the families repaint a couple of rooms of a very poor house, where Lidia and her 7 children live. Lidia was about to deliver her 7th child and was hoping to have the walls freshly painted and the ratholes plugged. We took her by surprise and we got there ready to do the work for them because we knew it was a huge expense for the family to do it. We worked there for 2 days, but we were equally blessed as we helped her family. Lidia was not a Christian when we first met her, but she became one a couple of years ago. Since then, she stopped having abortions and gave birth to 3 children. She has 7 children now, but the oldest is severely disabled (West Syndrome). She takes care of all of them by herself while her husband is at work.



Areopagus Summer School

This year we had the 7th Areopagus Summer School, a well-known project in the community that brings together children who want to spend a few weeks of their summer holiday doing crafts, sports, and learning interesting facts about our world. Each of the 5 weeks covered a different topic, such as arts, sports, careers, and wildlife. The children had the chance to meet with professionals from each of the areas mentioned above and learn about their work. We talked about their future and did role plays to illustrate their choices. Areopagus summer school supports one of our social projects, *Education beyond barriers* for children at risk of dropping out of school.