



International Assistance
PROGRAM
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IAP Review

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Go With A Hearing Heart

By Sandi Gress & Ron Phillips



Our children from the Sawla Children's home in their new clothes they received at Christmas.

The recent trip to Ghana, Africa became a day by day encounter of God's miraculous plan. This trip, which Ron & Diane Phillips and Maurice & Sandi Gress make twice a year. They had three additional people with them, Dan Houk, and C.J. & Andrea Pounder. Dan continues to mentor our driver, Moses, in the new taxi and van business. The Pounders have a jewelry business in Spokane and have recently established a non-profit organization for the purpose of supplying African made jewelry to boutique jewelers in the USA. Proceeds will be directed to the support of the Sawla Children's Home in Ghana.

Our trip found all 38 children healthy, happy and progressing well in school. All of the kids are growing, both physically and spiritually. We purchased new mattresses for their beds and brought with us new colorful bed sheets for them. It was amazing how excited and thankful these children were for such a simple thing.

Another major milestone happened when we visited the Sawla Chief. This was the third visit for the group and this was the most rewarding. He sees that IAP has come to help his people with no prejudices in our hearts or ulterior motives in our minds, that the color of our skin does not make a difference. He was very grateful. Ron gave him a children's pamphlet on *How To Be A Christian*, letting the chief know what was being taught to the children. He took it, and said he would read it, and asked to have a Bible... "So I can read it along with my Koran..." God's presence is always with us, and seeds are always planted even in a dry, barren land. The Muslim, Animist chief wants a Bible? We wondered in awe, what next?

Negotiations were made with the landlord for the purchase of the building that houses the existing children's home. Next year will be the renewal or purchase of the children's home site. Please pray that the Lord's direction and hand will guide as negotiations are made. Total costs will be around \$35,000 to purchase this property, if we are given the O.K.

We attended a church service in the small village of Yoliyiri under their newly completed "pavilion". The area is also being used for a primary school where 91 children from 3 villages are starting first grade. We were able to provide them with some benches and school supplies. Another Christian school in Sawla houses 240 children in several old shed type buildings. We are exploring the possibility of assisting them in the purchase and improvement of the property. If you add up the total of our 38 kids, the 91 in Yoliyiri, 10 HIV children under district care that need assistance, and the 240 at the Christian school and then add in Dede a 4 year old that we help a grandmother send to school; you get exactly 380. That's ten times our original commitment. We think maybe God is trying to expand our vision! Please be praying for future decisions concerning these opportunities. It's amazing to watch God in action.

Director's Corner

Just recently while having early morning devotions I found myself struggling to stay awake and focus on a passage I was reading in I Corinthians (now don't be pious, I know there are times when you have the same challenge). However what continued to seemingly disrupt my drowsiness was a verse of scripture. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."

I couldn't remember where the verse was in the Bible or the context in which it was presented. So the search began and the verse was found in the almost hidden book of Zechariah (I say almost hidden because I had to shuffle a few pages before finding the book). Zechariah was a Prophet and encourager. He was prophetic as shared of the Messiah who was to come. But he also encouraged Zeruabbabel, (don't you just love that name?) the Governor of Judah to finish the task of rebuilding the Temple.

So he speaks to Zeruabbabel and reminds him that he need not worry about the few and weak that are about to take on this task, because the "Lord Almighty" is with them. What a good reminder as we step out in obedience,

that we have the "Lord Almighty" helping us finish the task we are called to do.

But the verse that reminded me of IAP was verse 10, "Do not despise this small beginning, for the eyes of the Lord rejoice to see the work begin (TLB)." God is the God of small beginnings. One block started the foundation and building of the Temple, feeding of the 5000 started with 5 loaves and 2 fish, by choosing 12 men Christ changed a world.

In this issue of the IAP Review you will read about the Diaconia clinic in Romania that started with a few people and a small house that now ministers to thousands. You will hear the story of the impact of a "Vision Trip" to Ethiopia taken by Neil Ziegler. Neil is now part of a team that has helped to multiply the micro-loan impact from 30 women to over 700 loan recipients. You will rejoice with CJ and Andrea Pounder as you hear how God is leading them to begin a business that will help care for orphans and impact the Sawla area in Ghana.

When God completes His work He has for us we will follow the example of Zeruabbabel and shout.....

"God Bless It," "God Bless It."

Why Go? By: Neil Ziegler

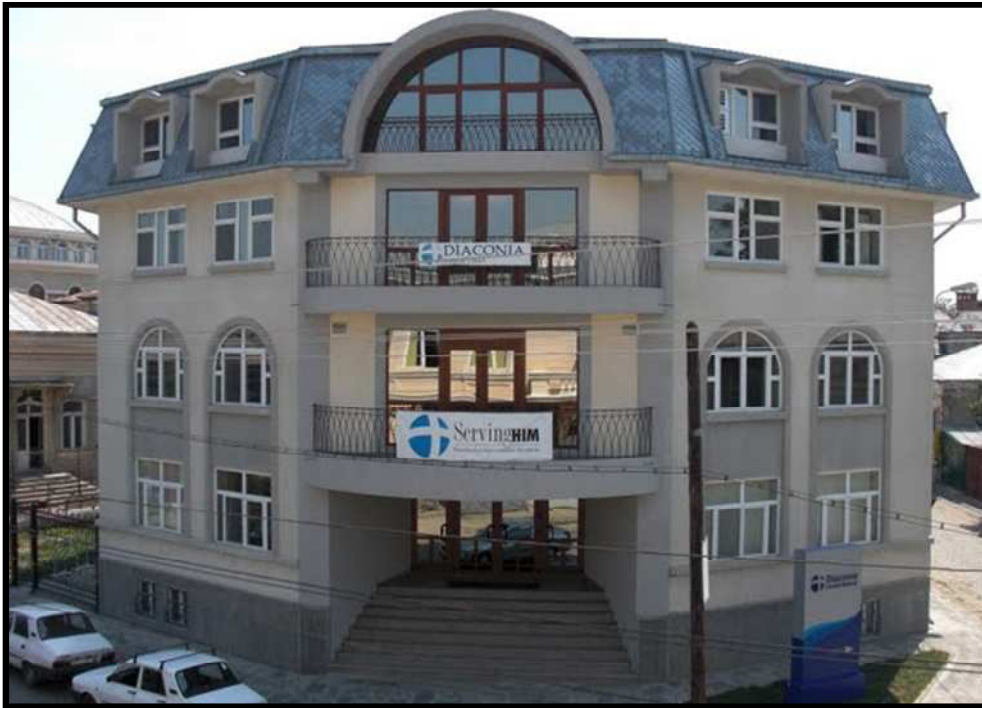
Perhaps it's the tug at your heart when you see news reports of terrible poverty and need. Maybe it comes from hearing an account from a missionary at church. Or it could be the invitation of a friend who has ventured out before you. Regardless of the catalyst, you think you might be hearing the Holy Spirit nudging you to go on a short-term mission trip. You pray and seek counsel – the struggle continues. Why go? Some obvious answers are to show the love of Christ, to serve those less fortunate, to help spread the gospel, or just to be obedient to what you feel God is calling you to. Solid reasons all. But having experienced two trips to Ethiopia with IAP, I can tell you that you will undoubtedly experience much more than you could have imagined. Here are some things you might not think of when making your decision:

- An opportunity to grow closer to God; actually, more like the stripping away of self-erected barriers you have imposed which keep Him away from you. You most likely won't have TV or internet, or even perhaps cell phone coverage. As you allow these distractions to be removed from your day, time is freed up to enter into relationship with Jesus. You will be drawn to the creative Maker as you are amazed at the beauty of the landscape, flora and fauna around you.
- As you remove yourself from the security and comfort of your known life at home, you give God opportunity to reveal His sufficiency for you. For instance, your accommodations may leave you longing for a Motel 6, or you may yearn for a hamburger when faced with unusual foods. The Holy Spirit is there, stretching you, providing what you need. Upon your return home, you will be more likely to recognize and appreciate the abundance God has provided for you. Deeper still, you may look back and realize that the "hardships" were not so severe, and in fact you felt more alive there than ensconced in the comforts of home.
- Meaningful relationships may develop with those you travel with. You will have the opportunity to get to know your co-workers at a deeper heart level, and they will come to know you – if you allow it. You will learn from them through shared daily devotions, working side by side, ministering to each other. You may gain a better understanding of how diverse parts of the body, gifted in different ways, join together to do a work which glorifies our Lord.
- Meaningful relationships may develop with those you go to serve. As you meet, work, pray and worship with Christians in other cultures you may find you will be drawn to establish ongoing relationships, even friendships. You will see a picture of how Jesus intended His body, the church, to function as you become better acquainted with fellow Christ-followers who are so very different, yet serve the same Lord. You will experience rich times of prayer and worship with them.
- The unknown – you won't know in advance how the trip will impact you. You may be surprised at how your experiences and gifts come into play while in the field. You won't know how God will use this experience in your life once you return home. Do you trust the One who created you?

These are just a some of the considerations that come out of my experience with short term mission trips. So if you are contemplating a short-term "Vision Trip" with IAP, by all means pray, ponder and seek counsel to make your decision. Know that if you do go, you will be impacted in ways you could not have foreseen - and you may discover a passion that will change your life.

Diaconia Medical Clinic

By Keith Davis



Pictured above, the beautiful new clinic and at bottom left of the article the old clinic.

I have been reviewing some of the history of the Diaconia Medical Clinic in Braila, Romania. Written in the IAP Review dated August 1997 was this note written by Dora Ciuca, manager of the clinic, *“God continues to move the hands that will make it possible for the clinic to finally get a license. We have just received permission for an Association to be organized. There is still prayer needed before the clinic is licensed to charge a small fee to cover the cost of operation.”*

Since this “small beginning” the clinic has grown from a remodeled house to “the most state of the art medical facility in the region.” This in part is due to a group from Texas, ServingHIM, which has helped initiate the building of a brand new medical and dental clinic.

Let me share with you an excerpt from a recent email sent by Dr. Kevin Seidler, Founder & President of ServingHIM. *“I have had phone conversations with you beginning in 1997 concerning your organization’s work through the Diaconia Medical Clinic in Braila, Romania. I cannot begin to describe the many times we have praised this work throughout these past 13 years. I am pleased to share with you that many have heard the hope and promise of the Gospel shared in the Diaconia Medical facility that you initiated years ago. Because of God’s vision and work through your organization many lives have been changed.”*

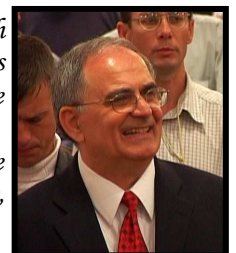
“Your group helped foster our ministry called ServingHIM and although we all serve a common goal to grow the Church and build the Kingdom at times it is important to acknowledge the past and celebrate the steps together. Your group has impacted the world perhaps more than you know.”

As I read this I was reminded by Paul as he writes to the church in Corinth *“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything; but only God who makes things grow.”* May we be faithful to follow His lead as we water and plant, so that He will be honored as He grows His Kingdom!



In Loving Memory of Joseph Stefanuti

On March 22nd we were informed that Pastor Joseph Stefanuti, the man God used to help form IAP, was diagnosed with multiple melanomas in advanced form. He started chemo, but due to complications was put in intensive care. On May 2nd Pastor Joseph went home to be with the Lord. Please pray for his wife Mia, his family, friends and the church as they adjust to their loss.



Meet our New Staff Member

Many of you who have called or been contacted by the IAP office during the past 12 years have spoken with Charleen (Charlee) Brewer. Charlee has faithfully served the Lord through her involvement with IAP. For the



Left to right, Daxton, Dakota, Dayton, Camdyn, Allison & Erik Larson

past few years she has occasionally hinted that she would like to make her life less complicated and enjoy more interaction with the women's Bible studies etc. Well that time has come and Charlee is no longer our Office Manager. We are so grateful for her loyal service.

God has provided a new Office Manager for IAP. We would like to introduce you to Allison Larson. Allison is married to Erik and they have four children, Dakota, Dayton, Camdyn and Daxton. In her last position she worked as the Children's Ministries Director for Turning Point (Open Bible Church) in Spokane. She brings with her glowing recommendations and skills that fit the position and great enthusiasm for the ministry of IAP. We are thankful to God for Allison and are looking forward to what God has as we move together to serve him.

About IAP

The International Assistance Program (IAP) links together Christian business and professional people with projects in "under-resourced" nations. This network uses individuals' business capabilities and professional skills to address economic and humanitarian challenges. These projects will build platforms to share and fund the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

IAP is a tax exempt 501© 3 non-profit corporation. Donations are tax deductible.

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