

Areopagus

*Centre for Christian Studies
and Contemporary Culture*

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JOY IN SUFFERING...

One of Areopagus' main areas of interest and activity are people with HIV/AIDS. Every week we visit them in hospital and at home, trying to meet their emotional and material needs.

Let me introduce to you one of our patients, Florin Brancu, a young man infected with the HIV virus, who is confined to a wheelchair. But that's not all. Florin is also a mental patient. He cannot take care of himself and he needs continual assistance. His sister, who is also in poor health, looks after him while their mother works in the fields for a meagre daily wage. In addition, Florin's father is an alcoholic who does not take any responsibility for the household.

The living conditions are precarious; the four members of the family live in a single room. The so called "kitchen" is poorly equipped and there is no running water in the house. It is hard to believe that in the 21st century there are people that cannot take a shower properly because there is no bathroom in the house.

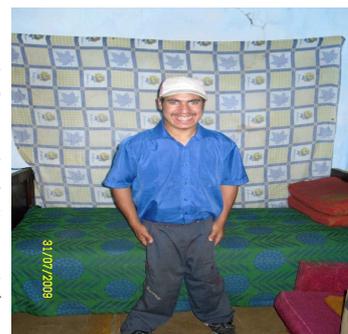
Anyone with HIV must have a well-balanced diet that will increase their chances of a longer life, but how can you do that when four people live on 150 pounds a month? Take a minute and imagine their

faces when they see the bags packed with food that will last for a week or so. Every time we visit Florin, and others in the same situation, we cannot stop thinking of how much we have and the way we have been blessed, but there is so much poverty and suffering around us. We are called to be Jesus' hands and feet for Florin and for so many others.

In spite of the poverty, Florin spreads joy around him. He does not have friends that he can hang out with; he is all day long in the company of his sister. He enjoys so much our visits and conversations. Although life is so difficult for Florin, he is not discouraged. He loves to sing Christian songs and to praise the Lord, this being one of the few moments of comfort.

Florin is an example of a fighter. He struggles with his illness and his disabilities every day but manages to find joy in the simplest things in life. Florin is not alone in his struggle, for he counts on God and on people that care for him, and this is what gets him through the darkest days.

Alin Pascu, Social Worker



NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR TEAM

Alin Pascu and **Monica Eros** work together in the Social Department of the Areopagus Centre. We would like to give you the chance to get to know them a little bit.

My name is Alin Pascu and I am 23 years old. This year, I married a young lady named Mariana and we are expecting our first baby. This spring I started to work as a social worker for the Areopagus Centre. This job has been an answer to my prayers. I had previously had several jobs that were not connected to social work and I was praying that God would give me the chance to work with people, to help and comfort those in need and suffering. So, I decided to resign my job and to look for something in the social field. It was not easy because Romania is experiencing an economic crisis, but I knew God is in

control and that He would provide. I started to pray and fast, along with my wife. After we had been praying and fasting for a while, my wife saw in the church's hallway an announcement. The Areopagus Centre was looking for a social worker and a psychologist. I went for an interview and was accepted. I was so grateful for the wonderful way God worked in my life. I want to encourage you to believe and pray because everything is possible for God. I would like to encourage you with Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Be blessed.





Sometimes in life the unexpected happens and the results are so amazing that one can hardly believe it. This is what I have learned in the past seven months since my life changed.

*My name is **Monica Eros** and I am 23 years old. Last year I graduated from the University of Timisoara, specialising in psychology. Whilst in college I worked as a volunteer in a hospice, and I think that this was the experience that turned my life around, for months later the Areopagus Centre was looking for a person to work with HIV/AIDS patients in the hospital. God opened the way and in April 2009 I began working as a psychologist in Areopagus' social department. Here, I found everything I could ever want in a job and more. I found people who were willing to teach me, support me and pray for me; but most of all I found joy in working in what I think is God's will for me at this point in my life. I see daily His extraordinary intervention in ordinary lives through simple gestures and words. This makes all the difference for the people we help: knowing that God is present in their circumstances and that they are not alone.*

Training Church Leaders in Expository Preaching

The Langham Preaching (Romania) is an initiative of a group of national Evangelical leaders in Romania, in close cooperation with the Langham Preaching International, with the aim of promoting biblical, expository preaching, helping preachers to be more accurate in their exegesis and interpretation of the Bible and more accurate in applying its message to their churches.

In September the first national Romanian conference on expository preaching took place. Seminars covering topics like *Preachers' Priorities: Integrity, Study and Perseverance; Making Connections (bridge building in preaching); Expositions on Philippians 1-3* were given by Mark Meynell from the Langham Preaching (UK). We are grateful to Langham Preaching UK who kindly sponsored the event that took place in the beautiful area of Sibiu. Corneliu Constantineanu (Executive Director of Areopagus) and Daniel Oprean (our Director of Educational Programmes) were the main Romanian organisers of the event.

The conference was attended by one hundred key leaders from various evangelical denominations (Baptists, Pentecostals, Brethren, Charismatic,

Independent, and Presbyterians), representing more than fifty churches from various regions of Romania.

The conference was an opportunity for all participants to refresh their principles of ministry generally, and preaching in particular. It was also a great opportunity to meet new people, to establish new relationships, and to create a network of preachers that will be beneficial for inter-church dialogue and collaboration.

Probably one of the best outcomes of the conference was the launch of *local preachers' groups* in several major cities, such as Bucharest, Timisoara, Iasi, and Oradea. These are intended to be regular meetings that will encourage and equip local preachers by offering a context for fellowship, prayer and Bible study that will help them in their sermon preparation. We are encouraged by the positive feedback of the participants, and look forward to the conference of 2010.

Daniel Oprean,

Director of Educational Programmes

NEWS

- Twenty students were admitted to our Masters Programme in *Spiritually Oriented Social Work Practice*, at the West University of Timisoara,.
- Ioana Constantineanu joined the Areopagus team in September, as our part time librarian.
- The Areopagus library has expanded, thanks to some generous donations of books. Right now we have over 35,000 volumes.
- Grace Fellowship Church, in Florence, Kentucky offered four of our staff members (Adelina, Emma, Corneliu and Daniel) the possibility to attend an advance level training in Biblical Counseling.
- Our colleague Florin and his wife Claudia had their first baby, Laura, in September.
- We have started a project for HIV/AIDS homeless people. Our goal is to offer them a secure place to live and to help them develop social skills.
- A new group of young students with hearing and speaking disabilities have started their training in computers at Areopagus.

Please pray for

- Funds for restoring the car park and the court yard at Areopagus. It gets very muddy every time it rains and this makes parking impossible. We are two thousand pounds short of being able to complete this project.
- Our colleagues Alex Neagoe and Daniel Oprean, who will travel to Bulgaria for a conference on family matters, organised by the Dutch Christian Organisation *Kerk in Actie*.
- The 22nd Cultural Awareness Weekend that will take place at the end of November.
- The HIV/AIDS homeless people whom we are trying to help by providing housing and support to reintegrate them in society. Pray that we will be able to help them spiritually as well, so that they can find comfort and peace in God.
- Wisdom and guidance for our staff as we plan our activities for the coming year.

Editing: Emma Goldis and Robin Plant



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.

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