

*Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." - Galatians 4:6*


# ITMI

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## Provide a Loving, Christian Home for Romanian Orphans!



*"Casa Dorca Children's Home stands in stark contrast to these heart-breaking and disturbing testimonies."*

### ROMANIA

"The only happy time we had at the orphanage was when we slept," remembers Visinel Balan, now an adult. Visinel grew up in one of the many state-run orphan institutions during Nicholas Ceausescu's dictatorship in Romania. Considered the most repressive government in the Eastern Bloc at the time, Ceausescu rose to power in 1965 and was overthrown in 1989.

In an interview with France 24, Balan reported being beaten for failure to learn to count or memorize the alphabet. "It was the worst nightmare you could imagine," he said, his taut facial muscles unable to hide the leftover fear and trauma.

Alina, another now-grown orphan interned in a Ceausescu era Romanian institution, remembers, "Sometimes to punish me, they would stop feeding me."

Another orphan put it this way, "Those places were the slaughterhouses of souls."

Alin, now in his 30s, who also grew up in state-run, secular Romanian children's institutions, has been on the street since he was 18. After the orphanage, he wasn't ready for acclimation to the outside world. After life in an orphanage, drug and alcohol addictions are common.

After Ceausescu was overthrown, around 100,000 orphans were discovered "emaciated and living in appalling conditions." Their bones protruding, some without a thread of clothing, covered with sores and moving with almost animal-like movements on the floor. Most of those children had been abandoned by impoverished parents driven to their knees by a vile, unjust and corrupt system. The plight of orphans in Romania didn't improve much in the years between Ceausescu's fall and the turn of the millennium.

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Today, thirty years after the totalitarian reign of terror ended, Romania still has the largest number of abandoned children in Europe. Though it is now rare for orphanages to use rope to tie children up, they have switched to tranquilizing drugs, reports Romanian senator, Vlad Alexandrescu, “it’s more efficient and less visible,” he explains. In 2015, a correspondent from the GlobalPost reported visiting an orphanage in Romania, and wrote that the children “talked about beatings and thefts from their food as routine.” As a result, many are pushing for the closure of institutions, pushing to replace them with foster care and smaller group homes, like ITMI’s **Casa Dorca Children’s Home**. If they are successful, Casa Dorca’s ministry will be more crucial than ever.

Quietly tucked away in a tiny town called Prilipet in impoverished rural Romania, Casa Dorca Children’s Home stands in stark contrast to these heart-breaking and disturbing testimonies. Established in 1926 as the first Baptist Orphanage in Romania, it was confiscated and turned to a bakery by the Communist government sometime after WWII. Through the work of ITMI founder **Bill Bathman**, **Harriet Bathman** and **Dr. Nick Gheorgita**, the father of long-time ITMI partner, **Ema Ban**, ITMI supporters had the opportunity to help reopen the home in 1996, seven years after the fall of Ceausescu. Casa Dorca has been providing a loving, Christian home and family atmosphere for children since then.

Many of the current 18 children at Casa Dorca come from the toughest backgrounds, and have been through things no child should have to experience.

One Casa Dorca alumni observed, “This place feels more like a family than an orphanage.” As a child at Casa Dorca, he was surprised when the older children helped and cared for him. He was accustomed to being bullied by the bigger, stronger children at the previous orphanage.

The children at Casa Dorca are well-clothed in appropriate, seasonal garments. The facility is clean and cared for. They eat vegetables regularly. They attend church and are encouraged to pursue their gifts, such as joining the church orchestra. They attend school and receive help with their homework from older children, helpers or volunteers.

Casa Dorca’s current leadership is highly dedicated. Though they could obtain higher-paying jobs and better lives for their own families, they faithfully serve because they care deeply about the children and love the Lord Jesus. “I came here because the Lord gave me this opportunity to work for Him...it’s a chance for us to show the Lord our gratitude. I would do anything for my kids,” said **Ionel Lovescu**, the Director at Casa Dorca, “Now I can make a difference for these kids here.”

In addition to seeing the Gospel in action through the love and care of the believing volunteers and staff, they are presented with the Good News throughout their time at the home.

“We cannot force them to trust in Christ,” writes Ionel, “but everything we do is to plant the seeds of the Gospel and show them the love of God every day. Through your prayers, along with ours, we hope that they will cling to the Gospel in their lives, as many have throughout Casa Dorca’s history.”

(continued on p.4)



# From the Director



## DEAR TEAM: GOD IS USING FOOD TO OPEN PEOPLE'S EYES IN A WORLD THAT DOESN'T KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG

In 2018, Billy Graham's *Decision Magazine* reprinted one of Billy's article titled, "Confusing Evil with Good." He listed the many ways we as humans rationalize, re-classify, allow our consciences to be numbed, and say, "...what is in it for me?" when facing moral decisions. Even though many of us have been locked-down, working from home, quarantined and all around isolated, we still can not miss those who are "confusing evil with good" on the TV, news, the political stage, in movies, even in some churches and our families.

Billy wrote: "Man without God is a contradiction, a paradox, a monstrosity. He sees evil as good and good as evil. That is why some people love evil and hate that which is good—they are still in their sins. For them, life's values are confused. Paul found the cure for his violent, destructive disposition, not at the feet of Gamaliel or in the culture of Greece, but on the road to Damascus when he met Jesus Christ. Later he wrote: 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death' (Romans 8:2). The modern conscience has been twisted and distorted so badly that it is difficult [for many] to tell what is genuine and what is false."

Just this last week, a newly selected politician for one of our country's highest offices, when questioned about her previous lambasting of her new political partner with all sorts of harsh, accusatory and character questioning, justified it by saying, "...oh, that is just politics" as if to say "it is ok to lie or say anything you need to say with in the arena of politics." *Rationalization. Re-classifying. Allowing our conscience to be numbed.*

This spiritual blindness is rampant in other countries as well. This week, **Lazarus Yezinai** told me that South Sudan is in an extremely desperate state. Water and weather have destroyed crops in the north, hordes of starving people are migrating south and camping along a river in the capital city, Juba, all without any real hope of any help. An August story from news outlet, *Aljazeera*, titled, "Running on Empty" quotes Brian Adebaba, the deputy director of policy at the United States-based watchdog, *The Sentry*. Brian reported that, "...officials [are] using the central bank as their personal ATM..." He says this has combined with the previous tribal conflict that "killed an estimated 400,000 people" and has "created Africa's biggest refugee crisis since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda." *Rationalization. Re-classification. Allowing our conscience to be numbed.*

Billy reminds us, "Life's values can be reversed. They can be changed until you call good good and evil evil. And your life can have a new dimension and a new power." This is what Lazarus is doing with our **Project Joseph** feeding program in his decimated country. Lazarus has reported that the "Jerry Can" project we reported on last month has been a great success in sharing God's love and truth to those that deeply appreciate the gift of a plastic 5 gallon water container and a large bar of soap, something so simple to us, yet so valuable to those that have nothing. These same people are responding to Lazarus' message that "God has not forgotten them."

**David and Taru Kumar** have also reported that people have responded to the Project Joseph feeding help that they have extended to many Muslims, Hindus, and other lost people by saying, "...you are the only ones doing this [feeding us]." These hungry and needy people are having their hope renewed, their stomachs filled, and their eyes and ears opened to the real truth and light.

God has given us a never-before-seen opportunity to show the world the difference between good and evil, light and darkness, hope and hopelessness. The Lord God is using food to open the eyes, the ears, and the hearts of those who have known only evil and very little good. Together, we can seize this chance to demonstrate and declare the goodness of God for those that are afraid, hungry and without Christ.

In His Service,

*PS. We're beyond grateful for those of you who have already joined God's people around the world and gotten involved with spreading the Gospel through Project Joseph. Your contributions are making a huge difference!*

*"Woe to those who call  
evil good, and good  
evil; who put darkness  
for light, and light for  
darkness; who put  
bitter for sweet, and  
sweet for bitter!"*

*Isaiah 4:20*

(continued from p.2)

Many don't leave as soon as they turn 18. When they do, they are capable of leading normal, productive lives. Some even return to help out!

The smiles emanating from healthy faces say it all. They declare the depth of the impact that can be made in the lives of these young people.

"None of this is possible without people who are willing to be used by God to be sponsors of our work at Casa Dorca," Ionel acknowledges.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Casa Dorca has lost up to \$3500USD a month in regular sponsorship. If the Lord has blessed you with financial stability during this time, we need people like you to get involved with this important work!

Right now, you have the opportunity to stand with Casa Dorca Children's Home to provide a loving, Christian home for Romanian children in need at a crucial time. Imagine the feeling of knowing you responded to the Lord in obedience to care for the orphans and be a faithful witness in Romania. Imagine the joy of knowing a child who otherwise might be neglected and abused is now loved and cared for because of your obedience! That joy will be stored away "where moth and rust do not destroy."

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

The Economist. "Romania's Last Orphanages." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEzTFmiCeks>

Morris, et al. "Romania: 30 Years after Ceausescu, Orphans Remain Traumatized." *France 24*. Focus France 24, 1 June 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20200106-focus-romania->

30-years-after-ceausescu-former-orphans-remain-traumatized-adoption-mass-orphanage-network

Odobes, Vlad. "Half a million kids survived Romania's 'slaughterhouses of souls.' Now they want justice." *The World*, The Global Post, 28 December 2015, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-12-28/half-million-kids-survived-romania-slaughterhouses-souls-now-they-want-justice>

# Project Joseph Update

Because of the overwhelming generosity and compassion of ITMI donors, we are gearing up for another round of provision-enabled Gospel delivery by our partners!

It's not too late to participate in demonstrating and declaring the Gospel to the hurting and in need through the provision of food, kindness and redemptive relationships. Every donation - no matter the amount - goes a long way.

Meanwhile, **Charl van Wyk** and his team are expanding their Project Joseph outreaches to go beyond the necessary and valuable short-term solutions. Zimbabwe and South Africa will not likely see recovery from the economic blows of these extended pandemic-induced lockdowns anytime soon.

Charl's team has begun working toward having two community vegetable gardens, one in

Zimbabwe and one in South Africa, both around 17,000 square feet! The gardens will help Charl and his team reach many with the Gospel through the provision of food.

Neither location has a sustainable water supply needed to grow vegetables on this scale. Drilling a well in each location is a cost-effective way to provide for years of Gospel-centered outreach. According to the estimates provided by local professionals, due to soil conditions and depth, Charl and his team can provide both gardens with a sustainable water source for a total of \$13,500USD. This provides not just one, but two wells, which will enable years of opportunities for faithful, godly believers to reach the hurting with the Good News *while* offering a live illustration of Christ's fulfillment of our deepest needs through the meeting of their physical ones.

## FOR PRAISE

1. India - Kumar - Completion of a community prayer room above their home enhancing opportunities to share Jesus.
2. Poland - Gorski - A generous match toward equipping Polish believers to share the Gospel which was met quickly.
3. South Sudan - Vicky Waraka - Provision of a bed for each of the orphaned girls that live with Vicky.
4. Project Joseph - The lives and families that are being impacted and drawn to Christ.

## FOR PRAYER

1. Romania - Casa Dorca - Provision of sponsorship providing a loving, Christian home for Romanian orphans.
2. Zimbabwe, S.Africa - van Wyk - The flourishing of both gardens, meeting needs and reaching people for Christ.
3. World - God's wisdom and provision as we operate in this unprecedented time.



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A higher purpose.

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