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A.C.A. is a registered charity both in Romania and the UK.

What use is it, if someone says he has faith but he has not works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food and one of you says to them "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled" and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead.

James 2 v 14-17

Rora House
Halford
Liverton
Newton Abbot
Devon
TQ12 6HZ
Tel: (01626) 821746
Fax: (01626) 821586
Email: roraaca@lineone.net

Casa Aurora
Str Fanionului No 7
Braşov 2200
Romania
Tel: (0040) 268 324 841
Email: acauroraro@yahoo.com

Casa Betania
Str Laterală No 374
Vulcan 2219
Braşov
Romania
Tel: (0040) 268 256 592
Email: betania@aca-vulcan.org

www.rorahouse.org.uk/aca.htm

Aurora Christian Association

History of the Work



... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.
Acts 1 v 8

Registered Charity : 1073190

Our introduction to Romania began when we started travelling to the country in 1983. At that time it was still very much a communist country, and the Iron Curtain was still very much in existence. During the years before December 1989, we travelled regularly up to 3 times a year, with aid of various kinds for the Christians. After the revolution in December 1989, we immediately entered the country, as did many others, with a van load of food, clothes and Bibles. At that time a state of euphoria gripped Romania, as freedom was an unknown thing. Everyone thought that freedom meant that they could do exactly as they liked. Of course, this is not the case as we know. All democratic countries still have to have laws! The overthrow of Ceaucescu did mean the end of a reign of terror, but it did not mean an automatic end to all the problems that 40 years of communism had brought on the people. Romania had a very long way to go before she would enjoy real democracy. After the first and second elections, there was a lot of suspicion as to whether they were really conducted without fraud. Ioan Iliescu, who had originally been a member of Ceaucescu's government before he was 'put out', was elected as president. As time went on, it was obvious that his party was not a truly democratic one, but communism with a different name and face. At the beginning some things did change very rapidly, but it wasn't long before it was plain for those who had eyes to see, that many things remained the same, especially in the infra structure and the mind set of the people. In November 1996 there was a change of government, and Emil Constantinescu became the president. He was a real democrat, but only succeeded in having a majority against Iliescu by forming a government of an amalgamation of all the other parties. This in the end proved a disaster as there was never enough agreement to begin real reforms. He pledged to deal with the enormous problem of corruption at every level, and succeeded somewhat, but could not hold power for long. He had too much against him.



PRAYER POINTS and ONGOING PLANS

1. That Casa Aurora will become self financing
2. Continued financial support to send aid to Romania
3. More regular sponsors for the canteen and the workers
4. Buying another property for the kindergarten to be in accord with EU regulations.
5. The legalities of authority for the canteen
6. Development of the campsite, and its effective use
7. Proper use of the agricultural land ACA, to aid in food production for the canteen.

A.C.A. is an independent, non profit making, Christian Association. It is affiliated to the Rora Christian Fellowship Trust in Devon, England.

FINANCE

Aurora Christian Association [UK] / Asociatia Crestina Aurora [ROM] is financed solely through gifts given specifically for the work in Romania.

Very little is used for administration costs, both in the UK and in Romania, as all staff are voluntary, and live either by nominated sponsorships, or personal gifts.

OPERATION re - AID

We aim to send 50 cubic metres of aid every 6 weeks, finances dependant. All aid is packed carefully and given on a one to one basis, either to individuals, or to churches, social services, orphanages, hospitals, doctors and dentists surgeries, schools, police, council offices, just to name a few. In fact, wherever there is a genuine need, and a trustworthy contact. Everything, according to Romanian law, is signed for, and listed, both on entering the country and as it is given away. The biggest problem, and greatest cost is transport to Romania.

In August 2005, Rora Christian Fellowship sent Bill & Sue Owens and their two youngest children, Matt & Jo, to Vulcan. They bought a house in the same street as Casa Betania, on the opposite side of the road. They work mainly with the gypsies and with both the Baptist churches in the village. Apart from the constant daily requests for help and support, they are very busy. Bill is involved in building gypsy homes and trying to renovate their own house and Sue helps the ladies in the canteen, plus numerous other daily interruptions. They are learning the Romanian language.



There are now six members of 'the team' in Vulcan, and a further twelve Romanian workers. All are committed Christians, and all feel called to this work. They all work for the Lord without salaries, but we help them by finding sponsors from the West who can commit themselves to a regular gifts. This enables us to give them sufficient money each month to put bread in their mouths and feed their children. We have cooks, helpers in the canteen, cleaners, workers in the kindergarten, helpers for the aid and sisters who finds out needs and visit the elderly in the village. There is a tremendous sense of unity, and everything is based on the word of God and prayer. We always begin the day with prayer with all the workers. We also have a dedicated team of voluntary helpers at Rora in the UK.

Our other involvement, and probably the most important, is with the churches in the village. We work with small, Baptist and Pentecostal churches, and we are believing God to move by His Spirit in all these places.

Since 1989, the few rich have got richer and the rest, including the so called middle classes have become increasingly poorer. Before the revolution there was literally nothing to buy in the shops as everything was exported to pay off the national debt, but the people then had jobs, and money in their pockets. Now there is plenty in the shops, but very few can buy as they have no money. There are far fewer jobs due to modernisation, and salaries grow very slowly. Extreme poverty exists everywhere, and there is constant inflation. Even the basics such as bread, potatoes and some meat cannot be afforded by many. Many families live on the family allowance which is £5.00 per child per month, and old people on a pension of between £5.00 and £10.00 a month. Prices are almost at western levels for most food and commodities.

Many who live in rented apartments are losing their homes because they cannot pay the utilities, and this in turn creates more serious problems for the authorities. Whole families live in one or two rooms, and their daily food is soup and bread. One family recently visited was found to be boiling grass for soup. Added to all this there is a serious social problem with the gypsy population. Romania has more gypsies than any other European country, and they are totally despised by their Romanian neighbours and not without reason, as they steal, cheat, lie and drink to excess. Many gypsy women and children suffer great hardship as a result, and live in extreme poverty and squalor. Often, children do not go to school because they don't have shoes or clothes, books or pens, and the other children say they smell because they do not have soap to wash with.

Since the revolution, the number of street children and beggars has increased rapidly. There is very little state aid, and the system is far from fair, especially where the gypsies are concerned, as many cannot read or write and therefore have no rights. Along side all this, is the fact that corruption is still a major problem which pervades the whole of Romanian society, and bureaucracy makes even the smallest official task very difficult. Many western groups have now stopped taking in aid as there are so many difficulties attached to it, with the laws changing monthly and stealing and jealousy the norm.

Even though there are now more computers and a degree of 'modernization', obtaining official documents is still very difficult, and often take months, even years. Most things are still done in a very basic manner with numerous papers, official stamps, and officials opening and closing offices when they feel like it!! Wheels grind very slowly and there is still the attitude of shrugged shoulders and the word 'what can I do?' and a shutter closed in your face!

Hospital treatment is still very difficult, and always entails 'gifts' for every service, even bed making! There is supposed to be free health treatment but in reality it is non-existent. The main reason is that the doctors and nurses earn so little that they try to supplement their income in this way, thus 'milking' the people. Many never go to the doctor, dentist, or the hospital until it is too late, and consequently there are many premature deaths. There is still a big shortage of equipment, medicines and cleaning materials, making a stay in hospital a risky business.

Horrendous accidents are still very common, both in the homes, the workplace, and on the roads. Most Romanians would consider safety laws unnecessary additions to life! They take enormous risks, and often there is no resulting consequence! Maybe we are too safety conscious!

Our work in Romania has grown tremendously from those early beginnings. In December 1990 the Lord clearly showed us that we were to buy a property as a base for His work in Romania. He clearly showed us a town house in great need of renovation, not the kind of place we would have considered naturally, but we were convinced that God was leading us, and our experience at Rora told us that that was enough. It was incredibly cheap by western standards, as prices in Romania had not started to rise at that time. We gave our word that we would purchase, even though at that time we did not have any money at all. We promised to bring back the money [in cash] when we returned in February 1991. On our return to UK in December 1990, we received two separate cheques in the post, specifically for the work in Romania, which covered the purchase price. It was indeed a miracle, as not a word had been said about the intended purchase, but the Lord knew, and supplied through His people.

In 1999, we again moved out in faith and bought yet another house in the village. This is now called **Casa Shalom**. In the autumn of 1999 we began the Kindergarten there with just twelve children. This has now increased to twenty children, all coming from homes where they would never have the chance to receive that kind of education. The children learn as they do in UK at a playgroup, plus a little English. We take them from three years old until they are six, then they go to the state kindergarten for a year. Romanian children don't start school until they are seven years old! We hope in the future to be able to purpose build or buy another property more suitable for the kindergarten according to EU regulations. We are looking to the Lord for His will, in this matter.



The latest acquisition, in June 2001, is land for a **campsite**. This is in a beautiful location at the foot of the mountains and near the forest. We have called this place

Canaan! We offer it to poor churches who cannot afford to take their children to camp. We hope to develop it somewhat, in a simple way, and already we have tents, cooking equipment, sleeping bags etc, which can be used by each group as they need them, for a small fee.

We have also purchased another piece of land for agricultural purposes, both to supply potatoes for the canteen, and provide work for some of the young people in the churches. We have also been able to buy a tractor, trailer and some implements to make the work easier.

The house next door has been bought by another English Christian brother Gary and his Romanian wife Nicoleta. The two front rooms have been given to ACA for a **canteen**. The canteen started in October 2001 with twenty eight children, and has grown to feed one hundred and eighty five children. The children come from very poor Romanian and Gypsy homes, and some are the children of the workers [who are also very poor by our standards]. They receive one hot meal a day from Monday to Friday. A lot of time and money has had to be spent in renovating and equipping the canteen and building a waiting room and putting in a flush toilet, to make the place suitable for the work. It is basic, but usable, and we are so grateful to the Lord for His supply for this necessary ministry. All the families who receive this help have been personally visited to assess their need, and there are at least a hundred more children who are just as poor, on the waiting list. The canteen is sponsored by gifts from the west. £15.00 a month feeds one child. If you are interested in sponsoring a child in the canteen, please ask us for more information. An **'upper room'** which will seat 80 people has also been constructed over Gary's house. Here regular Bible Studies, youth clubs for Romanians and Gypsies and conference meetings are held.



Children in the canteen.

We returned to Romania in the February, handed over the money for the house. We wrote out our own contracts by hand, signed them with the vendor and a witness present, and took them to the council offices for the official and inevitable stamp. So the work at **Casa Aurora** began.

In April we started the uphill struggle of renovation and building. We were about to learn many new lessons in patience and faith, which, looking back, we can see, could only be learnt in this way. The first firm of builders we employed were simply 'cowboys' who thought they could gain from these gullible westerners! They stole an enormous amount of things from us, including a great deal of building material. In desperation, in June 1993, we finally wrote our own termination of contract with them, had it translated [because at that time we could not speak Romanian], and asked them to remove all their tools and materials as soon as possible.

Just after this, a Christian brother offered to help us, without payment. He was willing to trust the Lord! What a joy and relief this was to us, someone in Romania willing to move on the same ground of faith. From this point, he took over, using Christians to do the work, and paying them on a casual basis from money we were able to give him as the Lord supplied. Praise the Lord!! From then on, the building and renovation went on steadily, and the workmanship was vastly improved. The house had four run down, dirty rooms when we bought it, and now it has eleven nicely decorated rooms, four bathrooms, two kitchens, an office and three storerooms. All the interior construction of the 'upper room', and the bedrooms in the roof space, we did ourselves. Little by little the work was finished. Brothers from England came and helped us, giving of their talents as they were able. The whole place is a testimony to the Lord's amazing faithfulness. The final job was the construction of the garage at the back of the property, which was completed at the end of 1997. The way in which the Lord enabled us to buy materials, or supplied goods, furnishings or money at exactly the right time was nothing short of a miracle every time.

The vision for the house is to provide hospitality for individuals or groups serving the Lord in Romania, both western and national. It has also become an 'oasis' – a place of rest and refreshment, for foreign Christian workers who serve the Lord in Romania, as well as a refuge for Romanian leaders needing some rest and respite. We hold Bible teaching conferences in the upper room whenever possible. There is also a small store for aid, which we distribute on a one to one basis. Casa Aurora also houses the main office for the Aurora Christian Association [ACA].

The Lord is blessing the work, and we are increasingly busy. He has given us a lovely Christian couple, Iosif and Ani, to run the house, and to train up in the work. Ani's mother Zica, comes in daily to help, and the commitment of these three is tremendous, and we praise God for them. Our vision is that the house will eventually become completely self supporting with the gifts given by those who benefit from their stay. The most important criteria is that the work should continue on a spiritual basis, and that all the workers should therefore be committed Christians.



Iosif & Ani Mich, with Ani's mum Zica, who run the hospitality home at Casa Aurora.

In the spring of 1995, The Lord led us to purchase a village property. This was eventually to become our 'home' in Romania, as we moved there in the autumn of 2000. This house, **Casa Betania**, is an old, but very well built German property, with a courtyard, out buildings, garden, orchard and enormous roof space.



God has also given us another lovely Christian couple to work with there, Nelu and Miki and their three little daughters, Gabi, Cristi and Timi. They live on one side of the courtyard, and we live in the other. Again the Lord miraculously provided the

money for the purchase at exactly the right time. This house has been enlarged to provide a new office for the branch of the Association in the village, a 2nd bedroom, a garage and food storeroom, and in total now consists of three small rooms, including the office, and two large rooms and the bathroom. Casa Betania also has a large store for aid.

Malcolm & Christine's home.

Nelu & Miki's home.

Gary & Nico's house where the canteen and the upper room are situated.

