

Walking in the Way of Faith

Traian Chilau

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Preface

This booklet originated in the home of Brother Horen Brasov as I was visiting the United States to attend the annual Thanksgiving conference held by the Romanian Brethren in California.

One day while visiting with this wonderful family – which always has an open door for any brother in the Lord Jesus, and whose home is almost always filled with guests – we got the idea of writing down the experiences we've had with the Lord.

I remember that the following people were present that day: Brother Horen and Sister Virginia, Grandpa and Grandma Albeanu, Sister Lenuta Munteanu, who was taking care of Grandma Albeanu, and two of the Albeanus' daughters who were visiting their parents – Rodica Tudor and Ligia Cheron.

Sister Lenuta, along with Grandpa Albeanu and his daughter Virginia, asked me to share how I received the Lord Jesus in my heart as Lord and Savior. As we were eating – I don't know if anyone has ever entered this home and not been invited to eat – I shared with them how I came to know the Lord Jesus as well as a few of the experiences that I have had on my journey of faith.

As they were all listening to my testimony and stories of experiences with Him on the road of faith, Rodica Tudor, brother Albeanu's daughter, suggested that I write down these experiences on paper and promised that she would cover the cost of publication.

Having received this encouragement, I prayed and sought confirmation that this was the Lord's will, so that only in this way He might allow this book to take shape. I also prayed fervently that all who read this book might be encouraged to live a life of faith filled with practical experiences and have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, because He is for us the most important Person in the entire universe.

I began writing, but in the meantime, sister Rodica became ill and went home to be with the Lord. Along with her, my hope of getting this book published died as well. More than a year after I had stopped working on it, through a divine appointment, Rodica's brother, David Albeanu, asked me

about the book. I told him I had stopped writing and the reason why I had stopped, and he encouraged me to finish writing it. The Lord spoke to me then: *this Christian sister may have died, but not God*. So I resumed writing, ashamed that my faith had been so small.

I

“God has chosen the weak things” (1 Corinthians 1:27)

After I received the Lord Jesus as my Lord and Savior at 26 years of age, I was able to look back on my life and understand things that I had previously considered enigmas. I realized that God is watching over us from the moment we are born.

I did not receive an exceptional education and was not a stellar student in school. On the contrary, I knew what it was to go without from the age of five, when my father was imprisoned for seventeen and a half years. He had been working in the army, and, during an audit, a shortage of 150,000 *lei* was discovered. It was 1954, and this was a very large sum of money back then. Our family received a tremendous blow, essentially splitting into several fragments: Father was in prison, three sisters were sent to an orphanage, an older brother who was 11 was sent to live with an uncle as a servant – because he ran away from home rather than go to the orphanage. I stayed with my grandparents, to be somewhat of a comfort to them in their old age. (They wept daily.) Mother was a nurse and worked at the hospital in the city of *Curtea de Argeș*.

When I share with my children now how I had to work for my food from the the time I was 6 years old, working for other people in the village, they are incredulous. It’s hard for them to believe that I had to tend the neighbors’ geese in the wooded areas down by the creek or gather plums off the ground and many other things.

When I was about 7 or 8 years old, I had an experience which I could not explain until after I received the Lord Jesus. I remember that I was in the town center, in the shopping district, where many people would gather on Sundays. There was a popular expression at the time, “I’m going down the valley”, meaning to the only grocery store in town. Sometimes a lady selling ice cream would come, and I would watch as the majority of children and adults ate ice cream.

I would have liked to eat some too, but where could I get 50 *bani* (half a *leu*)? With this money we could buy a liter of kerosene for our lamp at home and light up the house. I knew that Grandma didn’t have any money

to give me... Suddenly, a thought popped into my mind that I should lift up some pieces of cardboard that were lying in the middle of the street. When I lifted the first one, I found 1 *leu*, and I bought two ice cream cones. At the time I didn't know who to thank, but now I know that God's loving hand was with me. The thought came from Him, because He understood my desire as a poor and needy child – He knows us even from before the foundation of the world.

I grew older. Mother sent me to school, and life followed its normal course. I finished school and got a job. Now that I had money, I began to sink into the mire of this world. All I knew was night clubs and bars; I had formed unhealthy friendships that were leading me into a completely new world which appeared ever more attractive.

After seventeen years, Father was released from prison, but it was kind of late for us. He had left when we needed him most (when we ranged from one- through ten-years-old), and by the time he returned we were all working and some of us were already married.

I want to mention something very important at this point. While Father was in prison, he met Pastor Richard Wurmbrand and heard the Gospel through him for the first time. However, he did not repent during those years, but only after I had received the Lord Jesus. Christian literature was very hard to come by then, and since I was working, I would pay him to copy sermons by hand. In this way, God worked in his heart.

I got married at the age of 23, and one year later our first child was born. Due to a worldly lifestyle, however, our home life became a living nightmare. I would come home drunk and beat my wife for no particular reason; we were on the brink of separation.

II

In the fall of 1975 something happened. Because I had worked in the medical field during my army days and had learned – among many other things – to administer vaccines, I was asked by some neighbors (and long-time acquaintances) in our apartment building to give some shots to their child who was ill. As they were preparing to pay me, I noticed a book on the table – the Orthodox Bible – and, in lieu of payment, I asked to borrow it for a few months.

I started to read the Bible, but I didn't understand very much. Especially when I read that one person lived to be 800, another lived 900 years. I couldn't understand what kind of a book this was! Some time later, a man by the name of Bebe Mihaila showed up at my work. He worked in a different section of the factory, had recently received the Lord Jesus in his heart, and was sharing with his co-workers from the Bible. I told him that I read the Bible too, and he said that if I wanted to understand it, I needed to go to church where the *pocăiți* (evangelical believers) met, because the Bible is interpreted there.¹ This thought gave me no peace, so I decided to go there together with my wife.

On January 7, 1976, I went to a gathering of believers in the village of Oesti, more from curiosity (to see how the Bible is interpreted), thinking *they can't be smarter than me*. We went there because, under the Communist regime, there was no meeting place in the city, and in general, the gatherings of *pocăiți* were pretty rare. Later I learned that they were part of a group of evangelical Christians known as Plymouth Brethren. The brethren seated us in the front row, and two brothers had come there from the nearby city of Pitesti to preach: Ghita Rotbasan and Nastasioiu Ionel.

Brother Ghita read from Ephesians chapter 2. The text begins with these words: "*You were dead...*" and as he was reading further along, I was thinking to myself, *I am so curious to know how this man will interpret this passage from the Bible; how can he say that I am dead when I am alive?*

After reading the chapter, Br.Ghita began his message with these words: "Perhaps someone here today is saying in his heart, *How can I be dead when I am alive?*" In that moment I felt something like an electric current go through me – because he told me what I had been thinking – and I thought to myself, *God is here!*

The brother then went on to describe the sinful state of man apart from God, but he did it in such a manner that he practically described my life as if someone had given him detailed information – and I was wondering who could have told him, yet at the same time answering my own question: *I haven't told anyone this; only I know about it.*

As I saw myself lost – because he showed also the sinner's place, far from the face of God – he finished off with the hope of salvation through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, and I learned how I can receive Him, too.

¹ Translator's note: "*pocăiți*" literally means "repentant ones" and is often used as a derogatory term for non-Orthodox Christians in Romania.

My wife told me later that she concentrated so hard during the message that her neck grew stiff from the tension. On January 7, 1976, both my wife and I received the Lord Jesus into our hearts as Lord and Savior. I remember that I prayed that day that, if it was so, *Lord, You make me to not swear anymore, to not smoke anymore, to not drink anymore, to not beat my wife anymore – because I cannot quit doing these things on my own..*

The brothers taught me to do three things: 1) to read the Bible daily, specifically the New Testament, 2) to pray individually and with my wife daily, and 3) to never miss church, not even once. In less than a month, I received victory over all of my former vices. I was no longer able to swear or beat my wife, I no longer found any pleasure in drinking, and I was delivered from the vice of smoking – which I had previously tried many times to quit on my own, but without success.

I began to witness to my co-workers that I had been saved. At that point the persecution and trials began. I will share a few which contributed to my spiritual growth and strengthening.

I received the Lord Jesus into my heart on a Sunday. The following day, when I went to work, I told all of my co-workers that I had repented. Of course, they thought it was a joke and, because they knew what I had been like, one of them said, “Any miracle lasts three days!” They figured after three days I would be the same again because I was the one who usually instigated and proposed going to the bar directly across the street from the factory after work. Often I would stumble home afterwards, sometimes falling, and frequently falling asleep in the ditches I fell into. But most of the time I managed to make it home, and usually succeeded (within five minutes) to strike my wife without having a reason for it; and my mouth would spew many ugly words which I cannot even utter anymore now.

My co-workers knew all this, so I don’t condemn them, because it was hard for them to believe a miracle. But I was sure because of what had transpired inside my heart - the inner joy I now had and could not even explain. All my past experiences, the worldly friendships and the filthy lifestyle in which I had wallowed like a pig in the mud, never brought me any joy. On the contrary, after each experience I had thoughts of suicide, because I could no longer see any purpose to keep on living.

It was at this point in my life that God intervened, and He had a different plan for me. The events that followed unfolded at a baffling speed for me, and I could not understand them at the time.

So, on Sunday, January 7, 1976, I received the Lord Jesus in my heart. The following day, Monday, I told my co-workers that I had repented and been saved. On Tuesday I was called before the secret police. When I arrived at work that day, my supervisor told me, "Traian, don't put your work clothes on because you need to go see the secret police this morning." When I asked, "Why?" he told me that he didn't know the reason.

On my way over, I tried to remember what bad things I had done in the past few days – why I might have been summoned. I thought surely I must have wronged someone, but not once did it cross my mind that the reason was that I had gotten saved.

Finally I reached Room 8, and I was told to wait, but the wait stretched into hours. I was thinking to myself that it's work time anyway, which made me somewhat indifferent to the wait, but during all this time I kept trying to remember who I had fought with, which restaurant may have complained about me, what dishes I had broken, etc. But I could not find a clear answer.

As I was asking myself all sorts of questions, the commanding officer of the secret police – Colonel Negrila – entered the room and began shouting at me: "You miserable wretch! What have you done?!"

With my heart in my throat I awaited the accusations, but he continued to shout and, judging by the way he spoke, I understood that it was something very grave. I asked him what I had done, and after a long time he said, "You repented! Do you know that all miserable wretches repent?"

I was greatly relieved, and I remember telling him: "You are right, sir! For this reason I repented, because I was a miserable wretch. Now I am happy."

But, to my great surprise, he told the lieutenant next to him to go to my house and bring my wife to the police station. I told them that the lieutenant could only go to my house in my presence, because I didn't want him to scare my wife. The lieutenant and I left in a police car, and upon reaching home, I told my wife what was going on. (At the time we had only our first child – a little girl named Mihaela).

We returned to the secret police headquarters and the same officer addressed my wife with these words: "Woman, take care of your husband, because if he has gone crazy he can recover, but if he has repented there is nothing anyone can do for him!" Even now we remember his prophetic

words – because no one was able to do anything to turn me back from the road I had started on.

This was the beginning of a period of trials which followed in my Christian life. A wave of persecution broke from all sides – parents, sisters, in-laws, relatives and neighbors, co-workers, old friends – as if they had all agreed together to persuade me that I been wrong to turn away from our ancestral religion. A terrible battle raged within me.

I have to pause here and relate how God worked with my mother. At the time, she was going to an Orthodox church and was paying money to have different priests pray for me to recover - because I had “lost my mind”. She had a relative who was a priest, and one day she met up with him and told him my story.

To her great surprise, he replied: “Lenuto, I have two more years until I retire, and what your son has done I will do also. This is the Way! Stop giving your money to these thieves and go where your son is going!” Mother was very amazed, and a week later, she came with us to the evangelical church and surrendered her life to God as well.

During this time God had His servants, too, who visited me almost daily and strengthened me from His Word. They were practical evidence of how real God is, and I began to taste the fellowship of God’s Word and prayer.

I remember that, early on, I experienced an instant answer to prayer. I had lost my identification card, which I absolutely needed. I searched for it for days but didn’t find it and was about to go and have a replacement made. Before leaving the house, however, I got down on my knees together with my wife, and we asked God to help us find the ID card. I remember saying in my prayer, “Lord, if it is in the house, please help us find it in the next 15 minutes. If we don’t find it within this timeframe, I will go and have another one made.”

And we began to search for it again, basically in the same places we had previously looked. In less than 15 minutes we found it. I was so overjoyed – like a little child!

The Lord Jesus was teaching me how to have a personal relationship with Himself. Reading in His Word, God would speak to me, and through prayer I would speak to Him. Thus I began a journey of spiritual growth, a path I had not previously traveled. I encountered many unknowns, but didn’t have who to ask at that time because I realized that the brethren I

knew were simple and serious, but had limited knowledge. I couldn't expect too much, but I was thankful that they pointed me in the right direction, and for every question I had, they told me to ask the Lord Jesus. I was encouraged to travel down a road on which I gained experience, and which was like a school for me, like a university in which He taught me that He is present in my life, that He cares about me, and that He has a plan for me.

For example, I don't remember hearing about the principle of tithing in the church we attended. But God taught us to tithe in the following way: We had five young children at the time. Essential groceries were rationed, and we were assigned to a grocery store where every month we would receive our ration. But one day my wife told me, "Traian, we are halfway through the month and have only two kilograms of sugar left."

We began to ask ourselves what the reason might be, and I asked her if she had been giving it out to other people. But she replied, "No, I give everything, but not the sugar, because I don't have enough and it tends to be consumed the most." At that point, we began to think: *If we share everything else and have enough, but we don't share the sugar and don't have enough, maybe that's the reason we don't have enough!*

We determined together to pray and put God to the test. We told God that we wanted to give away half of the two kilograms of sugar we had left, and we asked Him to reveal the person to whom we should give it. To our amazement, the next day a Christian sister who had eleven children knocked on our apartment door and asked if she could borrow one kilogram of sugar.

We rushed to the pantry to bring her the sugar. She, of course, knew nothing of our decision. We gave her the kilogram of sugar in the name of the Lord, and she left – after thanking us and the Lord Jesus. In the subsequent days, the agony began. My wife would announce that, despite all her careful frugality, we had only half a kilogram left, then one cup, then half a cup....

We continued to pray and didn't want to ask anyone else; we wanted a new experience with God, and we wanted to see how God would resolve this. Other thoughts came as well, but we sought to drive them away and to continue believing that we had followed the Holy Spirit's prompting. We could not see any possible resolution; although many human solutions came to mind, we did not want to accept any of them because we wanted to see how God works – to see His ways.

One afternoon, the mailman brought us a notice saying that a package had arrived for us at the post office, and we needed to go pick it up. We were not expecting any package and wondered who might possibly have sent it, because we didn't know anyone who would be sending us something. We went to the post office and picked it up. It was a package of groceries sent from France! Who could have given them our address? We don't know even to this day, but when we opened the package, we cried like little children and thanked the Lord Jesus. Inside, we found – along with many other goods – five kilograms of sugar. And that's how we learned the lesson of giving.

Another lesson I learned was that of feeling ill at ease whenever I sinned in any way. I was working the second shift one afternoon, and there was no supervisor present, but we had to finish whatever work we had been assigned to do. That day, I finished very quickly and said to myself, *Great! I can leave earlier and go visit a Christian brother.* I had many questions from the Bible and I was searching for answers to them.

I got ready to leave, and when I arrived at the gate, the gatekeeper asked me what shift I was from. I thought to myself that if I tell him I work the second shift he won't let me leave, so I told him I was from the first shift. He opened the gate and I left, but as I was walking towards the brother's house, something was happening inside me. I didn't know what – it had never happened to me before. It was like a burden that was producing unrest and turmoil and great sadness within me.

When I arrived at the brother's house, he noticed that I was downcast and asked me what had happened – as with Nehemiah, the cupbearer from Susa: *"This is nothing but sorrow of heart."* (Nehemiah 2:2) I related everything to him in detail. Afterwards, he told me, "Traian, this is what it means to be born again. The Holy Spirit will not give you peace, and from now on you will no longer feel good around sin."

I didn't know these things before then, and I asked him how I can find relief from this burden. He told me that the only solution was to go back, confess to the gatekeeper that I had lied to him, and ask him to let me return to work. After we prayed and I asked God to forgive me, I returned to the factory.

When the gatekeeper saw me, he thought that I had forgotten something. I confessed that I had not told him the truth earlier, and I asked him to let me go back to work because I am a Christian and don't have peace in my heart. He sat down, stunned, and said nothing like this had ever happened before, that someone would confess he had lied to him and

even want to return to work. He tried to dissuade me, but I insisted, so – in the end – he opened the gate. As soon as I stepped through the gate, I felt relief and my peace returned; I was freed from the inner struggle. This was yet another lesson in which the Lord Jesus was teaching me how to turn back from dangerous paths.

Because God was working mightily in my heart, within a short period of time I had been freed from my bondage to drinking, swearing, smoking, fighting and getting into altercations with everyone, from inappropriate entourages, and especially from the hell that I had been creating in my home. In place of these things, God gave me a zeal for witnessing about Him to other people – to tell them what the Lord Jesus had done in my life - especially to everyone I knew, but also to everyone I came into contact with.

Thus it happened that, at the factory where I worked, 17 people got saved in a two-year period. But along with all this, the waves of persecution began crashing in from all sides: work, home, my relatives, parents, sisters.

My wife began to bear more children, and physical sufferings followed. She had toxic pregnancies; with our first child she was hospitalized for seven of the nine months. But even in this area of our lives God worked and showed us His miracles.

I was called to the hospital because of my wife's pregnancies, and the doctors tried to convince us that it made no sense to continue having children because my wife was very ill. The physician posed the following dilemma to me: "Tell me, how should I proceed? If I do the treatment to save the mother, the unborn baby will die; if I try to save the baby, the mother will die!"

I told him, "Doctor, proceed with the treatment to save the mother, and God will take care of the baby!" I signed (a waiver) and left. When the baby was born, all of the doctors from the internal medicine division came by to see what sort of a monster had been born, but when they saw that my wife had given birth to a (healthy) baby boy weighing four kilograms, they all crossed themselves and said that a miracle had taken place.

We named the baby Daniel. But not only his birth was miraculous. When he was 2 years old, in childish innocence he went through my wife's purse one day and found a bottle of codeine – medicine she kept for cough relief. He ate all of the tablets and went into a coma. We rushed him to the hospital, but the doctor told us she couldn't do anything for him because he was too small. She said if he regained consciousness and was able to

urinate, he would be safe. My wife and I prayed for him all that night, and we received him back as one who had been raised from the dead.

A second trial relates also to our son Daniel. We live on the 4th floor of an apartment building. One day, with the bedroom window open, he climbed up on a chair to look out at the kids playing below. My wife, who was in the kitchen, suddenly felt a strong urge to go to the bedroom. She opened the bedroom door just in time to see our son leaning over and just beginning to slip out of the window. She raced to the window and caught him by his foot at the last fraction of a second.

All of these things I didn't understand at the time. I didn't know that God had a plan with me, that through all of these things He was speaking to me.

III

At work I began to face persecution. The first thing I noticed was that those who had gotten saved were moved to other sections.

During the 1980s I had other experiences as well. There were many discussions about me at the Communist Party meetings. They considered me their enemy not because I had repented, but because they said, "*He is converting others, too.*" One of my co-workers actually was given the task of shadowing me and convincing me that it was a great mistake to repent. He sought to use scientific arguments to convince me, even citing the theory of evolution. Each time, I would read to him from the Word of God and show him God's truth. In the end, he went to his boss and asked him to leave me alone because "*this guy's faith has gotten into his blood*". He told him that they should not send anyone any more to try to convince me because I had such persuasive powers I had almost persuaded him to believe.

One day I was summoned to the Party room along with the foreman, my boss. I didn't know why they had called me, but I suspected it was because of my faith. The recent trials were causing me to pray constantly, and I would ask the Lord Jesus to be with me and to help me answer with the words which He would put in my mouth.

When we arrived, I was amazed at the sight before me. There was a long table in the room, and gathered all around it was the entire management of the factory, the department heads, the Party secretary, the mayor of the city, and many others whom I had not seen before. It appears

that they were all gathered there because of me, but I couldn't understand what I was doing among them.

I had come directly from my workstation; I was still wearing my work clothes and my hands were dirty from the lathe. The director rose to his feet and began to speak – as though I was being offered a great favor – attempting to flatter me: “We have here a young man who is very ambitious, serious, and very hard-working; he's never late for work, shows initiative, and is very intelligent. Therefore, we have decided to recommend him for the foreman's school, which takes two years. He can work during the day and attend classes in the afternoons. We will assign him a section of the factory to oversee and he can also supervise the young engineers who are completing their probationary period in the factory. What do you say, are we in agreement?”

The Communist Party secretary of the factory also stood up, came towards me, and asked: “What do you say to this proposal?” I answered that it is very good and I am in favor of it.

“But we have a small problem,” he continued. “Since we want to promote you, and you will receive a higher salary and a higher position in society, we recommend that you join the Communist Party, because we need people like you who can be an example. However, we want you to renounce your status as a *pocãit* which doesn't do you any honor, nor us. You have a week to think about it. Think it over, consult with your wife, and then give us an answer so we know what to do.”

As I was about to exit the room, I thought to myself that I can give them an answer right now and I don't need any time to think it over. I told them as much – that I don't need more time, and I know what my wife thinks, too, as far as our faith in God is concerned. I told them that I accept their proposal, but I can never renounce the Lord Jesus.

At that point, they resorted to threats. They began to tell me that they could not tolerate in their midst someone who adheres to religious cults, and since I have rejected their generous offer, they have decided to take away my job, my four-room apartment, as well as the propane tank from our kitchen stove, and I can go to my „*pocãit*” and let them take care of me.

In moments like this I would pray and ask the Lord Jesus to help me and be with me – and many times I was amazed at the words that would come out of my mouth, because immediately it occurred to me what I should say to them. I found myself approaching their table and lifting up both

hands. I showed them that they were dirty from the lathe, and I said: “God gave me these two hands so that I can work and raise my five children. If you take away my right to work, I will not steal; but just as you know to do evil, so you also should know how to do good.”

“What do you mean?” one of them asked me. I continued: “I know where each one of you lives. Every morning I will go to the director’s house and he can feed my children (not my wife and myself). At noon I will go to Mr. Barbu’s (the Party Secretary’s) house, so he can feed my children (not my wife and myself). In the evenings I will go to Mr. Mayor’s house so he can feed my children, and – since he has a larger house – he can also provide them with a place to sleep. My wife and I will go and sleep in the train station.”

After I said all these things, I left the room and prayed continually. I didn’t know what decision they would reach concerning me. The foreman (my boss) told me later that, after I left the room, they looked at one another, not knowing what measures to take – how they could convince me to renounce my faith.

I saw how the good hand of the Lord Jesus was upon me, and that He had not forsaken me. They did not kick me out of my workplace, nor did they take away my apartment nor my propane tank. I continued working and witnessing about the Lord Jesus and what He had done in my life.

There were other work-related experiences, too, which I cannot forget, because they left an impact on my life as well as other people’s. For example, due to the fact that there was a single political party in the country at that time (the Romanian Communist Party) and there weren’t too many topics to discuss at their meetings, they came up with topics such as “Disproving Mysticism”.

One day all of us Christians were invited to gather in the conference room, along with many clerks, engineers, foremen, and all of the supervisors. The factory management hoped, through this campaign aimed at disproving faith in God, to put an end to the conversions. This was a (Communist) Party undertaking, so people with positions of distinction in society were invited – big names in the world of science, with lofty titles.

For an hour and a half, they strove to dispute the logic of faith in God. Among other things, they attempted to demonstrate that, from the earliest times, people – seeing that cows only produce other cows and all things follow their natural course – applied the same logic for mankind, going back in history to the first man, and it was very simple for them to

believe in the existence of a Supreme Being named God or Creator, who created everything. This was valid for primitive people, but now things had changed because the advances of science clarified many things, including evolution and (the theory) that the universe came into existence following an explosion named “The Big Bang”. So everything exists by chance.

At the end he asked if anyone in the crowd had a question. I found myself jumping to my feet and asking the guest speaker the following two questions:

1) How is it that a sizable number of scientists were true believers in God? And I named some examples: Johannes Kepler, reknown astronomer, who stated, „When I study in God’s laboratory, I’m amazed by His greatness!” Immanuel Kant: ”The universe amazes me, and I can’t even conceive that this timepiece could possibly exist without a Watchmaker.” And many others.

2) How can he explain the following incredible relationship between science and faith (and the entire audience had to listen). I should mention that there was a magazine at that time – during the ‘80s – called “Science and Technology”, considered one of the best magazines to appear in our country during the Communist era. God brought to mind an article in this magazine which I had read just several days prior to this meeting. It stated that one of the greatest physicists in the world at that time had discovered that the foundation of our universe’s existence was related to the number 137.

How did he arrive at this number? He thought to himself, *One number is the plane constant, another the electrostatic charge of an electron, and the third is the speed of light.* The product of the first two numbers divided by the third number gave him the number 137, and he said that the form of our universe is due to this equation.

What is the relationship between science and faith? In the science of Gametria, both in Hebrew and in Greek, each letter has a numeric value. “JESUS, THE LORD” equals 137.

“The Christian Bible maintains that the Author of the universe is ‘JESUS, THE LORD,’” I continued. “The latest discoveries support this because the Author signed His name in the universe: 137, or ‘JESUS, THE LORD’. How do you explain this awe-inspiring relationship between science and faith?”

I remember that, after I said these things, there was a murmuring throughout the room and a collective, "Wowww!" All the high school teachers looked at the college professor who had been speaking, and he likewise looked at them – as if to say, "Help me out here!" He looked at me – and at the room full of people – and replied that he didn't know he would be asked such a question and was not prepared to answer it, but that it's probably a mere coincidence, like many other things. If I would like to stay behind afterwards he would be quite happy to talk to me individually and persuade me, but I refused.

From that day forward, however, people with high positions in the factory began to seek me out and ask for Christian literature. Of course I gave them the Word of God. I observed then that God gave me favor in their eyes and they seemed to look at me with newfound respect and began to speak in a different manner to me. I began receiving invitations to visit different intellectuals at home, and I was thoroughly delighted to share with them about the Lord Jesus and His work of salvation.

Opportunities opened up which were favorable to the Gospel, and I gave God the glory because, along with the trials, I was being strengthened. God was using them for my good even though I didn't know their purpose at the time; I didn't know why I was encountering so many hardships and so much opposition. When I did bad things and was at odds with the law and with morality, no one opposed me as they did now that the Lord Jesus had helped me to break free from the vise of sin. It seemed like the whole world was against me.

Sadly, at one point even people from church forsook me during a very difficult time of my life. That was probably the most difficult trial in my Christian life; I could see no way out and was convinced that I would end up in prison because of my faith.

What exactly happened? A Christian sister had a daughter who turned twelve years old, and she invited all of the other girls in her class to come over and enjoy some pastries, juice, and sweets in celebration of her birthday. The girl's mother invited me to come and share with the other girls about the Lord Jesus. Since I was working the second shift, I went, taking along my son – who was about 3 years old at the time – as well as some literature. Together we went to this sister's home, which was not too far from ours.

I wasn't sure what to tell these girls, but I felt led to speak to them about the Lord Jesus when He was twelve years old – as they were – and, in the end, they all received the Lord Jesus into their hearts as Lord and

Savior. We were all filled with joy! There were about 14 girls present, and I taught them the hymn, "O Happy Day". After giving each one of them a Christian magazine, a tract, and a Gospel, we left.

The following day, when I got to work, my boss was just making an announcement in our shop that all of us needed to meet outside on the platform at 2:45 p.m. because management had a very important announcement to make. Since none of us knew what the announcement was about, we began to speculate. Because it was close to the end of the year, I thought that they might announce a year-end bonus called the 13th salary. It was customary for us to receive an additional salary as a holiday gift because the factory was doing well and had great benefits.

After all of us had gathered outside – both the first and second shifts, several thousand workers – we were all waiting to hear what they would tell us. When I heard the announcement, I thought I didn't understand right and, for a few seconds, I froze. I heard my name announced very loudly, "Traian Chilau, come up to the front!"

I didn't know what new scheme had been cooked up, what latest tool the devil had up his sleeve. I remember praying briefly, *Lord Jesus, don't forsake me! Help me!*

The director of the factory began with these words: "Comrades, we have in our midst a colleague who should not be among us and who belongs to a cult that is forbidden by our nation's laws. Look what he has done: yesterday he converted a class of girls to this cult, making them kneel, wear a black scarf on their heads, and swear to believe in his faith. For this reason we have gathered all of you here, to ask for your vote to hand him over to the justice department so that he can be condemned for his actions, which are extremely grave. Look, the parent of one of these children is here and can confirm everything."

It was true that one of the parents was there, but he was an informer for the secret police, and was brought there by the factory's secret police agent, a lieutenant by the name of Gamalie. After I was accused on all sides, I was given permission to defend myself.

Even now, after all these years, I cannot explain where I got the strength and where the words came from that came out of my mouth. I know I told them that it was all a pack of lies and the accusations were unfounded. I asked, "Where are the parents of the other children? Where are the children to whom you are referring?"

And then I told them about my miserable life before meeting the Son of God, who is my Lord and Savior. I shared – in the hearing of over 3,000 people – how I came to know the Lord. When they called for a vote, one of my co-workers (whom I considered to be enslaved by alcohol) spoke the following words: “Comrades, we don’t know Traian the way that this man – who was brought here by someone else to do him harm – describes him. But, as for this man who accuses him, I don’t have room in the bars because of him.”

After asking me a few questions – including who is “my leader” at church (to which I answered that my leader is the Lord Jesus) – the director dismissed the assembly without giving any indication of what would follow.

Being in the second shift, my shift supervisor (a foreman with heart), told me, “Traian, I’m giving you time off to go home. Go wherever, to whomever you think can help you, because I’ve heard that they intend to create a police report and send you to prison, and I know that it’s not just.”

So, instead of beginning work, I went home. I told my wife what had happened and we prayed. We didn’t know what to do, which way to turn. My heart was deeply grieved, and I prayed constantly. I remember asking the Lord, through tears, to show me what I should do. I asked Him if it was His will that I go to prison. I had five small children, and my wife stayed home with them, as she had work enough looking after them. Worry came crashing in on us!

Suddenly, a light began to dawn, and I got the idea to go to the homes of the other children, together with the daughter of the Christian sister, to talk to the other parents and ask them to give me something in writing stating what I had done to their children. I was so amazed to see how the Lord Jesus works!

We went to each home – with the exception of the girl whose parent was an informer – and when I arrived at their homes (along with the birthday girl who knew where each one lived) I observed that the parents liked what their children had told them had happened at the birthday celebration. I had the opportunity to share about the Lord Jesus, and, one by one, each one of the parents gave their lives to Christ, just as their daughters had done.

I began to understand why the Lord had allowed this trial for me, His child. At the end, I asked each one of them to prepare a written statement of what had happened, so that I could counter a lie with the truth. Each of them ended their statement with the phrase, “and I don’t consider that this was a corruption of my child.”

The interesting thing was that I had the opportunity to witness to the parents about faith in the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus, and they were able to receive Him into their hearts. Many asked me for a Bible. I didn't have enough Bibles with me at the time, but they invited me to come back and visit with them.

The following day, I found out that two hours after my visits, the parents were visited by the secret police agent of the factory where I worked, along with the director of the school the children attended. They threatened to give the children poor marks in behavior if the parents did not give written declarations as they instructed them to, but each of the parents replied that they had already given written statements to someone named Traian and they could not give two conflicting statements. Furious, the two men replied, "Why did you give him written statements? He is not an agent of the secret police!" I didn't know that through those written statements God was in control and one step ahead of the enemy.

That night I didn't sleep, but continually prayed to the Lord, and He answered me from the prophet Isaiah 41:10, "*Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*" After that, I relaxed, and a peace came over me which I could not explain.

But, as if the trial I was going through was not enough, I received another blow – much more painful – from my brothers at church. They decided not to visit me any more, to break off all ties with me because my residence was now being watched, and they were afraid that they might suffer some persecution. And, because that was still not enough, when I went to church that Sunday, I received yet another blow. One of the church elders told me to pipe down. "What, do you want your family to become our burden?" I told him that my family would not become a burden to the church, because I know that the Lord Jesus would bear the burden Himself.

Not long after this, I heard that the informer who had wanted to have me sent to prison was sent to prison himself. He was arrested three months later when the head engineer at a poultry farm caught him with a trunk full of (stolen) chickens. What they did with me they did also with him. They gathered everyone at the factory where he worked to tell them that they were revoking his Communist Party membership – and why. Not even the secret police was able to save him. That's how it is when the Lord takes vengeance for you!

Also related to the factory where I worked as a machinist, I would like to share a couple more stories. One relates to (President) Ceausescu's visit to our factory.

In those days I was continually knocking on doors at various government agencies, seeking to obtain authorization to meet as a church in town. (As I mentioned previously, we were meeting out in the village of Oesti because we lacked the piece of paper granting us permission to meet in Curtea de Arges). By now I was known as one who causes problems for the authorities, so one day before Ceausescu's visit I was summoned to the conference room. (I was beginning to grow accustomed to being summoned!)

That day, when I entered the room, an elegant, well-dressed gentleman stood up from the table and introduced himself as "Colonel (So-and-So)". He told me that he had come from Bucharest especially for me, because he had heard that I had a letter for the head of state. He suggested that I give it to him so as to not disturb the festive atmosphere the following day. He guaranteed me that Ceausescu would receive it. He also told me that he had been informed of my request in which I was soliciting something on behalf of the evangelicals in the city.

I remember very well what my reply to him was. I told him that it was true I had a request, but at that point it was not with Ceausescu but somewhere higher up. The people sitting around the table looked at one another and then asked me, "Where, higher up? At the United Nations?"

"No", I answered, "With God. I will no longer go to men, because they won't grant me justice. But at the Throne of Grace I find mercy." They smiled, and let me leave.

The next day, everyone in the factory was gathered outside along either side of the walkway, to clap their hands and applaud the head of state. I worked alone at the lathe, guarded by three secret policemen who were there to make sure that I don't try to run out in front of the chief of state and give him a letter. The following day my co-workers joked that "yesterday two men were well-guarded: Ceausescu and Traian."

Another occurrence relates to the death of a co-worker, a young man. He had completed the foreman's school and died a sudden death – from either a stroke or a heart attack – and the entire factory was shaken up by this tragedy. Approximately half of the workers in our factory went to his funeral. I went, too, not only because he had been my co-worker, but also because we'd had long discussions from the Bible.

Because I saw that he was interested, I had given him a New Testament. He generally arrived at the factory at 6:00 AM, an hour earlier than he began work, and whenever I worked third shift, he would come and tell me what he had read and what he understood, or he would ask me questions. One of the questions he asked me was how to receive the Lord Jesus in his heart. I told him how I received the Lord and I am pretty certain that he also took this step, mainly because of his walk, even though – because of his position – he didn't witness openly. I also know that he would defend me before other co-workers and would tell them that what Traian did we all should do.

But he died very suddenly, without having been ill of a known illness. Because he lived in a village very close to the city, many factory workers came out; because his family wanted five Orthodox priests to conduct his funeral, the entire village also attended his funeral. I had never seen such a large gathering of people before! Between co-workers from the factory and people from the village, there were approximately 4,000 people there.

At the cemetery one of his co-workers needed to say a few words on behalf of the rest of us. Our department lead – a very intelligent engineer – approached me to ask if I wanted to do the honors, saying that, when he saw that huge crowd of people, he felt his jaw clam up and he didn't think he could speak at all.

I prayed briefly, picked up a flower that was lying on the dead man's body, climbed onto the cement covering of a nearby grave, and after a few introductory words related to his work in the factory (I said some nice things because he was a great guy), I held up the flower and said:

"Perhaps you are asking yourselves, Why did a young man of 38 years have to die? Why didn't an older man die? Why did such a young oak tree have to be cut down? I know that this question is on everyone's lips, and I would like to answer it through an illustration.

"A king had a beautiful and rare flower, and he hired a gardener to take care of it. The first thing the gardener did every morning was check on this flower. One morning he saw that the flower had been cut off, and he began to weep. But someone came and told him, 'Don't weep, because the king himself took the flower.'"

"Gigel was our co-worker, our friend, our boss, our neighbor, his parents' son, his wife's husband. But first and foremost, he belongs to God. Only God has a right to our life and He can cut us off whenever He wishes.

He is Sovereign; therefore it is wise for us to ask ourselves now this question, *Where will we spend eternity?* We need to receive forgiveness for our sins and eternal life through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus' sacrifice."

I know that five Orthodox priests were lined up behind me and they were not happy that I was saying these things. I spoke very loudly in order to be heard, and I saw interest on people's faces. God spoke to me, too, after that about how much people need the Lord! How much darkness there is in the world, and how great is our need for light! I prayed that all who were present would find salvation for their souls.

This ends the chapter of events related to the factory, though I have very many memories of events which impacted my Christian walk daily. I know that I would pray for each of my co-workers who worked with various machines and tools, that I had gained the respect and sympathy of many people in the factory, was appreciated for the work I did, and received grace and health to be able to work and earn a living to raise my five children.

IV

Besides these experiences, there were so many others that I don't know if I can relate them in the order in which they occurred. Some of the memories have faded, while others have remained deeply ingrained in my mind, because they worked in my heart and helped shape my character, showing me how much God loves me and what His plan for me is.

I had great difficulties with the secret police. Probably they wanted to intimidate those with initiative. At that time we didn't have a church in the city and had to travel 17 km (using public transportation) to the village of Oesti to worship. The bus was frequently overcrowded and often the other travelers – who were heading to their homes – would say things like, "We don't have room anymore because of the *pocăit!*", which they punctuated with swear words.

This situation motivated me to go to the authorities and request approval for the authorization to function as a church in the city of Curtea de Arges. I began knocking on the doors of many different institutions, but all of them shut the door in our face – some more tactfully, others quite harshly – citing various reasons.

I think for this reason the secret police was keeping an eye on me, especially when they saw that people were getting saved. They began summoning me more and more frequently, advising me to mind my own business and let others who were older do the footwork.

One day I was asked if I listen to foreign radio programs, and I replied, "Yes, I listen every evening". I was then asked if I listen in a group. I thought for a moment, and replied, "Only in a group."

I can still picture the secret police officer getting up from the table, picking up a sheet of paper and a pen, and starting to praise me, saying that he appreciates that we Christians are honest and don't lie – we tell the truth.

- Now, sit at the table and write down everyone's names.

I began: my name, my wife's name, and those of my five children.

- Who are these?"

- My wife and me, and our five children; every night we listen to sermons from Monte Carlo.

He snatched up the sheet of paper I had begun writing on, crumpled it and threw it into the trash, muttering, "You rascal!"

On a different occasion, we were thrown out of an office when they heard our request. Brother Petre Nitu was with me that time. We went to speak with the vice mayor of the county, and, when our turn came, we began to voice our grievances; namely, that we would like to receive authorization for our group of believers (Plymouth Brethren) to function legally. The vice mayor rose from the table, put his pen down, and replied, "Comrades, we have other concerns. We need to build preschools, daycares, and schools, not Christian churches!" whereupon he opened the door and shoved us out.

Just outside the door another Christian brother (Emanuel Soare) was waiting, and he witnessed the whole scene. He was waiting in line to request permission to emigrate to the United States. When he entered the room, he said, "I also am a Christian and this is why I am leaving this country, because there is no freedom here – the right to freedom of conscience is not respected."

The vice mayor called us back inside, realizing the mistake he had made. He spoke in a different tone, and pretended to listen to us. We tried to tell him that we were not requesting funds for construction, just a simple

piece of paper so we could meet, an authorization so that we would not be fined, because the secret police was constantly watching us. It was the ultimate catch 22: they wouldn't grant us the authorization to meet, and if we met without it, we would be fined.

This caused me to go and request an audience with the chief of the Secret Police for our county to try to reason with him about this "logic": if we meet without authorization, we are fined; if we request authorization, we are denied. "What do you want to do with us?" I asked him, "Because there are roughly one hundred of us riding on the public transportation system, and the overcrowding on buses frequently results in altercations and grumbings from the other passengers.

When we saw that we were knocking on doors that remained closed and were not getting any results, we were compelled to make a decision. A number of believers from our town – together with brothers in leadership positions from Bucharest – decided to begin constructing a house of prayer without government authorization. We planned to build it on May 1st and 2nd, because we were all off on those days and believers from various parts of the country could gather.

We had obtained the blueprints, poured the foundation, gathered all the materials, and were awaiting the big day. We gathered at 4 or 5 in the morning on the outskirts of town where a brother owned property with a small building on it. Some were craftsmen; there were about 150 masons and roughly an equal amount who were unskilled laborers.

We hoped to raise the frame, finish the roof, and plaster it inside and out within those two days, so that we could hold a gospel meeting there the following Sunday. This is what we wanted, but – to our surprise – we were interrupted at around 8:30 AM. By that time, we had already built to about halfway up the windows all around. The building was around 8 meters (26.25 ft) wide by 16 meters (52.5 ft) long. At approximately 8:30 AM, as I mentioned, the police and secret police showed up with several German Shepherds. They had brought along a police wagon, and after a brief discussion, they began loading us up to take us down to the police station.

To my great surprise and sorrow, some of the brothers – probably overcome by a spirit of fear – started to run. I was dumbfounded, because these brothers held positions of authority in our local gathering. I couldn't understand this cowardice; how could they run at the sight of the secret police, leaving behind the brothers who had come from various parts of the country to help us! After hauling many of us down to the police station, the

police fined us about 120,000 lei (the cost of two brand-new cars at that time) and then let us go.

At that point I received the harshest threat yet from the Commander of the Secret Police, who told me that I had become like a thorn in his eyes. He told me that he could send me directly to prison without a trial – he had the power. Yet even he was surprised that believers from six different counties had gathered for the construction. He suggested that I apply to emigrate to America and he guaranteed me that, in maximum three months, I would have all of the necessary approvals to reach America so that he could be rid of me.

I asked the Lord Jesus, however, and did not receive any word from which to understand that this was His will. I don't regret not leaving then, because – by God's grace – I have seen America, but when God wanted it, not when man wanted it.

After this event, the entire city was talking about how the Christians are united among themselves, and if they can finish a house of prayer in two days, they could also build schools and many other things. The testimony of our unity was very great and, for a time, people in our city spoke of little else but of what the Christians were able to accomplish.

Seeing that we were not getting anywhere by “legal” means (I say this in quotes because what they were doing was not lawful), we understood that there was no point in knocking on human doors any further, so we decided to meet as a church in the city. But first we prayed, fasted, and even had the boldness to let the authorities know our intentions beforehand. I don't know what happened, but perhaps they were happy we were no longer pestering them for authorization. The truth is, they pretended to not see us and left us alone for a time. (During that time we met in the house of brother Nelu Sima on 61 Daniel Sterescu Street).

Here we gained new experiences and enjoyed great spiritual blessings; here many souls turned to God, receiving the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We started out just a few families. The others were afraid to come, in case they would be fined, and went back to the old meeting place in the village of Oesti until after the Revolution. In a way, this was from God, because all of the souls that received the Lord Jesus during that time were saved out of the world, and today many of them preach the Gospel in various churches. I know that all of the Christians were watching us, to see what would happen, but the good hand of our God was upon us.

Here I entered a veritable school, a true university, through which the Lord Jesus caused me to grow spiritually. We had many experiences with the Lord Jesus; we learned to live by faith. We had a children's ministry, Bible Study, and also completed various B.E.E.I courses.² We learned many verses by heart, and what we learned we put into practice.

In the Communist days, the majority of Christians were persecuted. I would name the Rosescu family, most of all, the Trufasila family, and brother Nelu Sima (in whose home we met without government authorization; the Secret Police confiscated much Christian literature and Bibles from his home). Many brothers risked their lives to transport these books from place to place, and in our city one such brother was Daniel Onofre.

V

We were still meeting in Nelu Sima's home when the (December 1989) Romanian Revolution occurred. We didn't know what God had in plan for us. At first we saw things in a positive light, thinking that we were at last free of the Communist yoke and of persecution. But we soon saw that we were rid of something and invaded by something else – which we did not know how to deal with: cable TV, pornographic magazines at every turn (a huge snare for young people). In a word, the Western world which had been closed off to us for so many years now inundated us from all sides.

To give an example: I was walking down the street one day, and several young people were distributing some leaflets. I took one, too, and saw that it was an invitation to a series of lectures lasting three consecutive days, to be held in a banquet room at the largest hotel in the city, which had been rented out by a group named "Baha'". I had not heard of this group before and was curious to know their doctrine. I thought they were perhaps a Christian group, and just happened to have this unusual name. At 5:00 PM I went to the gathering along with brother Nelu Sima.

I saw that nothing was said about the Lord Jesus, and the people who had gathered there from our city – even though they were Orthodox by religion – listened attentively about the founder of this religion, an Indian man named Baha'u'llah. When the speaker finished, he asked if anyone in the room had any questions. I stood up – having realized that they were not

² Biblical Education by Extension International

Christians – and asked them to tell me how they had become followers of Baha'i. They looked at each other and one of them replied: "Very simple."

"Go ahead, tell us," I urged.

"I simply said, 'I want to become Baha'i.'"

"That's all?" I asked.

The people in the room were all witnesses. "That's all, and you became Baha'i? Look," I said, "I want to tell you how I became a Christian!"

I told them about my life which was once filled with the filthiness of sin, and how one day I met the Son of God – the Lord Jesus Christ – and received Him into my heart as my Savior and Lord, and now He is my Savior who lives inside me.

I continued: "Why do you call us away from a glorious Savior, who died for our sins but has risen again and is now alive for all eternity, to a man who died and is dead for all eternity? Why don't *you* turn from following a dead man to following a living Savior?"

At that point the people who were present began to say: "That's right, sir! Who are you people, anyway? Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God! Why do you keep talking to us about your cult? Get lost! Quit confusing people with your rubbish!"

Afterwards, one of the organizers addressed me with these words: "See what you've done? If you hadn't stood up and acted like a wise guy, everything would have been okay. Please don't come back here tomorrow night."

"What?!" I said, and told them that this is my city – where I live, where the Lord has placed me – and I am responsible for what happens here. "I did not know who you were initially. Don't tell me what I should do in my own city! Tomorrow I will come with 100 others. I will answer before God for what happens here spiritually."

The following day they pulled up camp and left the city. We thanked the Lord Jesus, who gave us the victory.

Another experience happened right after the Revolution when we gained religious freedom and received a great deal of Christian literature – many Gospels, tracts, and New Testaments, as well as a few Bibles. We weren't sure exactly what to do with them all. According to a verse in the

Scriptures, Mark 1:38, we had to go outside our city to the surrounding villages, where the spiritual darkness was very great and there was not even one child of God. We made a diagram of the villages, drawing an imaginary circle with a radius of 20 kilometers around our city, and found 35 villages within that area.

Because we worked during the week, and were free on Saturdays and Sundays for the first time, we decided to begin visiting the villages every Saturday, one at a time, and take them a portion of the Word of God. We began to pray for each village as we prepared to go and take them a portion of God's Word. Each Saturday we would go to one village. We would form two groups and begin conversing with people, after which we would give them a Gospel and a tract from the large bags we carried. Naturally, we had a different experience in every village; each has its own history. I would like to mention just a few which seemed particularly important.

First, though, I should stress that the first place where we met and that functioned as an evangelical church in the city of Curtea de Arges immediately following the Revolution was the one on 61 Daniel Sterescu Street, in the home of brother Nelu Sima. Here we witnessed genuine conversions and saw God's protection; here we studied in God's school and were prepared by Him for a new mission.

It was within this setting that we began the work of reaching the neighboring villages with the Gospel. I'd like to begin with the village of Tutana. Here, four families came to the Lord following the evangelization efforts and they began coming to church every Sunday on Daniel Sterescu Street in Curtea de Arges. Because the public transportation available was very limited, it took pretty substantial efforts on their part for them to come to church in our city.

I would also like to add that, whenever we proposed something (to plant a church, for example), we did not make decisions hastily, but prayed and waited for the Lord to speak to us. Basically, we waited for a word from the Lord which would convince all of us that the proposed thing was according to His will.

When we announced that we'd like to have an evangelical church in the village, one of them – brother Margineanu – told us that, if we wanted, he would give us a room for the Lord. He would remove the bed and wardrobe and all the furniture to make room for us to meet. We said if he did this, we would bring the chairs! So we established a meeting time of 2-4 PM, right between the morning and evening services in the city.

The first Sunday the room was packed, because their neighbors and relatives came for the service too. The second Sunday we couldn't fit inside the house anymore, so we held church outside in the yard. There were people out in the street as well as in the yard, and instead of chairs we sat on logs the brother had split in preparation for winter.

When we saw such an outpouring of God's grace, we said surely the Lord will do a great revival here in this village. We didn't know how to thank God enough because we saw confirmation that His Presence was with us and His grace gave us the necessary strength and zeal to take the Good News to lost souls – because Sundays were exhausting for us. We had to do three services and it was pretty tiring; but the good hand of the Lord was with us, strengthening us.

The third Sunday came and we went to Tutana village in a Trabant.³ Only five of us could fit in it. When we arrived in the village, at a fork in the road the village priest – dressed in his priestly robes – was waiting for us, along with a group of men who smelled like alcohol. When they saw us, we heard someone say, "That's them." To our left, there was a river, and at first they wanted to overturn the car – with us inside – into the river. With great effort, we managed to extract ourselves from the vehicle and tried to engage them in a dialogue, but it was impossible to have a logical and civil conversation. They surrounded us, and Father B. asked me how I wanted him to beat me up: with his fists or with karate – because he had been a boxer in his day, and I needed to choose the method.

I tried to remind him that the Bible doesn't tell us to fight, especially us Christians. If he wanted to hit us, he was free to do so, but our God doesn't teach us to fight. We put our hands behind our backs, to show that we would not defend ourselves. The first to throw a punch was the priest, then the others joined in. Within ten minutes, the entire village crowded into that fork in the road, to watch this spectacle: the village priest beating up on the evangelicals.

As we were down on the ground getting beaten up, we saw that the wife of one of the brothers – a very stocky woman, who had apparently begun to panic, thinking that they would kill us – suddenly lunged towards the priest, picked him up with both of her hands and shoved him up against a fence, saying, "Stay here, Priest. What are you doing? Do you want to kill him?" From where I was on the ground, I had the impression that she hung

³ Translator's note: A small, lightweight automobile made in former East Germany.

him up on the fence. With great difficulty, we worked our way over to the edge of the village.

On the outskirts of the village, in a garden, we prayed and wept and weren't sure what to do. We thought about reporting them to the police, but then said to ourselves that the Lord Jesus never complained about anyone, and we rejoiced that we were counted worthy to be beaten for His name.

When you don't seek revenge yourself but let the Lord Jesus take vengeance for you, He does it in His own way. The police still found out about the incident, even though the chief of police was friends with the priest (and the priest was counting on this friendship). The chief told the priest: "If these people file a complaint, you will serve time in prison because this is criminal."

That same week the bishop also heard about the incident, and the priest was ordered to appear and tell what had happened. He was then invited to another room, where he was shaved bald. Everyone in the village said that their priest got shaved by the "*pocăiți*". (We found out all of these things much later.)

But Sunday was approaching again, and we were somewhat fearful. My wife was afraid for my life and was telling me not to go back there because we had five children.

Again we had to fast and pray, and we received a word from the Lord through Psalm 8:2 – "*Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies.*" From this we understood that the Lord wanted us to take the children as a shield, so we filled a van with our children. We had the kids sing and stopped the van right in front of the priest's house with the windows open and the children singing their hearts out. The priest, meanwhile, was kneeling in his front yard, crossing himself, and cursing us to burn in hell.

This is how a church was planted in this village, and we rejoice because the Christian testimony there remains even to this day, and the believers are blessed with peace and safety. Later, brothers from Bucharest set up a Gospel tent there, too, and there was no more opposition like before. In any case, we saw the good hand of the Lord which was with us.

Another experience took place in the village of Runcu. After we had set off in groups of two, half of us starting at one end of the village and half at the other end, knocking at each gate, and praying silently that people would be open to receiving a portion of God's Word, a brother who was also

passing out tracts (Brother Ionel S.) came up to me and said: “Come over to the church. People are assembled there, and the priest is missing!”

When I got there, I saw that it was the village’s Orthodox church, and, sure enough, people had gathered inside, but the priest was missing. It was a holiday (Saint Mary the Less) and the priest had gone to a monastery. We went inside and began handing out Christian literature, then decided we should preach the Gospel to the people gathered there – and there were quite a few of them.

I shared the Good News of Christ’s sacrifice – and spoke about repentance and faith, and about receiving the Lord Jesus in their hearts. At the end, we knelt down and I asked if they felt the need to surrender to God, if God had opened their hearts to recognize that they are sinners and that the Lord Jesus died for them too, to invite the Lord Jesus into their hearts. It’s true that they repeated a prayer after me, but I advised them to pray at home also, in their prayer closet, to confess their sins before God, and to continue to read from His Word.

I remember that a woman from the area opened up her little kiosk and gave us chocolate. The villagers remarked that they had never heard such things before, and also said, “How happy the priest will be to find out that someone came to fill in for him in his absence!”

Another experience I can’t forget occurred in the commune of Valea Danului. As I was going door-to-door, the owner of one of the houses was just coming out. He looked at me and asked what I was holding. I explained that they are Gospels, they’re free, and we thought it would be good for the people in that commune to have a portion of God’s Word in their homes. He asked me if I have a lot of them and I replied that we had enough for the entire commune. At that point, he proposed that I go along with him to the home of an affluent lady who was giving a “*pomană*” (a free meal served in memory of a deceased loved one) – because half of the commune was assembled there at her house.

I accepted his invitation, and we went together, taking a shortcut through several gardens. When we arrived, I was dumbfounded! Along with the multitude of men, women, and children who had gathered there, the village priest had also come to sanctify a well, and to sanctify the meal so it would be received by the deceased.

If I had known beforehand that the priest was there, I would not have gone. But now it was too late, and I began to pray: *Lord Jesus, You know why I am here; help me, because I don’t know what to do!*

A thought came to me, that the first one I should give a Gospel to is the priest. So I did! I went up to him and gave him a Gospel. The deacon who was nearby, upon seeing this, spoke up, "Sir, give me one, too!" After him, the entire crowd accepted one, since they were free, and since the priest had taken one first, there was no longer a problem for the rest of them.

I was very happy to lighten the load in my bag quite significantly there, and the wealthy lady who was giving the meal insisted that I should sit at the head of the table next to the priest to eat. I kept trying to tell her that I didn't have time to stay.

The priest himself helped me out of this predicament by coming to ask me who had sent me there with these books, and why I had not asked his permission to distribute them to the people, because this was his parish and I should have gotten his permission first. I politely told him that I did not know this, and that, if he was upset, I would not eat at the table with him anymore, so that he would have room at the head of the table.

In another commune, Baiculesti, one day around 3 PM we were exhausted and famished, but still had a little portion of the village left to visit and finish handing out Gospels and tracts before returning home. As we were handing out the tracts, we reached a front yard where there were a number of people standing at the gate discussing various things. After giving them some tracts, we continued on to other houses, when suddenly, we heard them calling after us, asking us to come back.

We didn't know what they wanted, and thought that we probably needed to explain what the tracts were about. We all turned back and were amazed when they invited us to a meal.

They thought we might be hungry and served us some food. I noticed that we were served pork. After we gave thanks, we began to eat something which was a delicacy in the summertime: pork tenderloin prepared with a traditional garlic marinade. Hungry as we were, I couldn't imagine a more appropriate food.

As we were eating, we heard them whispering among themselves, and in the end finally managed to solve the mystery. Some of them had insisted that we were Seventh Day Adventists, others had disagreed, and, in order to resolve the dispute, they decided to test us by serving us pork. We got a good meal out of it, and once again we gave the glory to God, who orchestrates all things and who takes care of His children.

VI

I would like to say something else which I think is very important. May those who have the patience to read these words be encouraged to live a life of fellowship with the Lord Jesus and of experiences with Him. May this book be a provocation to rise above the cares and the situations of life through which they pass on their journey towards Heaven, where the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare us a place, and from where He has promised to return and take us to be with Him there.

If we have this faith, with certainty we will be neither lazy nor unfruitful. We cannot remain unmoved when we see all around us a world that is perishing. That's why it is so important for each one of God's children to identify his spiritual gift and use it according to the measure of his faith.

As for me, I saw very clearly what God wants from me and in what area He wants to use me. Near the city in which I live there were two large orphanages, which at one time were home to about 1,000 children. They were state-run orphanages. One was for children with disabilities and the other was set up so the children could learn a trade and be integrated into society. The truth is that these children did not know a parent's love, nor did anyone seem to educate them without using corporal punishment. If you tried to reach out and gently stroke them, they drew back, thinking that you wanted to hit them. I felt my heart stirring within me, and a verse from the Bible convinced me: *"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble..."* (James 1:27)

I gathered many drops of joy here from the hearts of hundreds of children. Through the grace of God, we obtained permission to look after these children spiritually, and I purposed to bring these unhappy souls into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus.

We didn't plan on meeting their material needs, but even spiritual needs required some expenditures. The program which was approved by the leadership of the orphanage involved taking the orphans, a group at a time, on an outing or picnic, and during that time, teaching them the Word of God, Christian songs, and especially how to pray. I noticed that we would teach them a song and they would then teach it to others. It was heart-breaking to hear voices coming from all sides when I would arrive at the orphanage, "Take me, too, Mr. Traian!" We couldn't take more than 15 children at one time.

I saw in many of them evidence of a second birth, and I'm sure that I will meet up with many of these children in heaven. They told me about many of their experiences in the orphanage – how they would pray for someone who was ill, kneeling next to her bed, and their zeal in continuing to pray until she would rise from her bed, saying she was no longer ill! Miracles took place with these girls who were so downtrodden and who did not know a mother's love, but who received grace to experience the love of God, their Heavenly Father.

We worked for many years in the orphanage at Suici. Four hundred girls lived there at a time. Every year one hundred left and another one hundred arrived, so there were always new souls that needed to be evangelized.

We began with what we had: we fed them bread with margarine and homemade plum jam. My wife would make large quantities of jam every autumn, and we had enough to last the whole year – a jar per week.

Later the Lord provided for us to also give them salami and cheese in abundance, as well as clothing and sanitary items (soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet paper, and other items). I was profoundly moved when the girls told me they would receive these items twice a year at the orphanage (and they were considered gifts). God provided so that, since then, every group we have taken out of the orphanage by rotation has received these items.

For the financial support necessary to carry out the work with these children, God has provided through the mission organization of Brother Vasile Giulea, which helped me with monthly support towards the cost of the food, sanitary items, and transportation. Later, other believers also helped, and it is very hard for me to list all of them, but the Lord Jesus knows who they are and we have always prayed that He will reward them.

Because the work has expanded so much to include new church plants, preparation of additional laborers to serve, the work with children, help for needy families with many children, purchasing medicine for people who are ill and candy for the children, as well as many other things, the work requires a great deal of monthly support.

Every year, about the month of August, we run out of money. But the beautiful thing is that the Lord Jesus is in control. We pray to God, He puts it on the hearts of His children, and the work continues to go forward.

It's not easy to live by faith, but it is beautiful. One time I was asked what needs I have for the ministry, and I explained how I had always proceeded up to that point, and that I cannot turn back on this principle; namely that, when I have a need in the ministry, I go before the throne of grace, tell God about the need, and God puts it on the heart of one of His children, and I receive what I asked for. So then, if you want to know what I need, ask God, and He will tell you.

Because a number of new churches were planted, some of them in very poor villages, the Lord Jesus put it on my heart to construct an outdoor oven (for baking bread) in the village of Valea Dumiresti. We would bring flour and yeast, while they brought wood. We could fit about 25 loaves of bread inside. We knew that the majority of people were just waiting around for the bread to bake, but in the meantime, we fed them the Bread of God's Word. We experienced some heavenly moments! We didn't have methods learned in a theological manual, but we had the grace to experience the diversity of the Holy Spirit's work.

In this same village, something happened through which I perceived that the Lord wants me to be an instrument in His hand. My wife makes a syrup from the tender shoots of fir trees, and she asked me one year, when it was the right season, to gather a bag full of shoots for her from a nearby forest. I told her that I didn't really have the time to go, but I remembered that in this village (Valea Dumiresti) I had seen a grove of fir trees, and I asked two children to gather some shoots for me in a couple of bags, and I would pay them when I returned the following week.

When I went the following week at our scheduled time, the entire village was waiting for me with bags and sacks of all sizes, filled with fir shoots – which I needed to pay for! I remember that I had to pay quite a bit of money to everyone in the village, but I filled a minivan with the fir shoots. To make the syrup, we used up three sacks of sugar. We made about 200 liters of syrup, which we later drank with the people in this same village. I would bring two liters of syrup, and they would bring two buckets of water, which, together with the freshly-baked bread from the oven, was downright delicious!

I mentioned previously that we didn't learn methods from a theological seminary handbook, but we had faith that the Lord Jesus was leading us and we trusted in His presence each time. We wanted the little ones to learn the Word of God also. For this we came up with some external motivators, such as: whoever learns a verse will receive a candy! Whoever learned two verses received two candies, and so on. One day a little girl

ended up with a whole bag of candy, and I had to increase the portions because we had gotten into the Psalms.

I remember that one day a young man showed up for the church service who was clearly not from that village, judging by the way he was dressed. I started a conversation with him, and he told me that news of what we had been doing in that village, with the children and the adults, promoting Christian ethics and morals, had reached all the way to the local newspaper office where he worked and he had come out to see for himself.

He asked my permission to record everything, because he intended to report on what was being preached in that village. He observed, sang along with me out of my hymnbook, and recorded the entire church service. Afterwards, I was greatly surprised to discover that the newspaper printed my sermon in its entirety, and the entire county had access to it.

Another time, because we didn't have a place to meet, during the summer when school was not in session, we met inside the elementary school, sitting at the students' desks. As we were singing and rejoicing inside the school, we saw a policeman pull up outside on a bicycle. He began to question us, so I invited him to come inside and see for himself what we were teaching the kids.

He was surprised by my invitation, and replied, "We police officers are not allowed to enter inside religious places of worship!" I told him that it was a school, and reminded him – in case he was not aware of it – that the Communists are no longer in power, and – if he had not heard before – now there is liberty, especially religious liberty. Whereupon, embarrassed, he left.

In another village, Valsanesti, out of fifty children living in that village between the ages of three and eighteen years, nearly all of them came to church. One Sunday, I noticed that some children didn't come through the front gate, but the back way through people's gardens, and I asked them why they jump fences. They told me that a schoolteacher lived about 10 meters from the gate of the church, and she would write down the names of all the children who entered through the gate, in order to make their lives miserable at school, and I understood that she utterly forbade them to go to the "*pocăiț*" (evangelicals') church.

I was outraged, and the following day, I stormed into the school office and had a meeting with all of the teachers and the principal. I told them very candidly that, if they wish, I would notify the Inspector of Education from Pitesti (the county seat) and bring him out to the school, to tell him what this teacher is doing, how she threatens the children if they go

to church. "Have you forgotten that Communism has fallen and we are now free? If you are kicked out of the teaching profession, don't blame me."

After I finished my ranting, having poured out all of the pent-up feelings of indignation within me, I saw that the teacher began to tremble and cry, and she promised me, between sobs, that it would never happen again.

It's true that she left the children alone after that, but slowly, slowly, the number of children coming to church began to drop off, and the Lord showed me that I should not have intervened – that was their trial. I remembered how a silkworm after a while forms a cocoon and then emerges from it as a moth. If you try to help the larva inside the cocoon by enlarging the hole it struggles to emerge from as a moth, it will die. I realized that even through our trials, God has a plan.

VII

In the summer of 2003, I received a phone call from brother Vasile Giulea in America, who asked me if I wanted to participate in a conference hosted by the Romanian Brethren there in the U.S. Of course I wanted to, and I remembered how, in the Communist days, the Secret Police had proposed that I emigrate to the United States, and had promised that, within 3 months, I would receive the approval to emigrate. But, at that time, I didn't receive the approval from God, and I thought that this opportunity now was a blessing that came as a reward from the Lord Jesus.

So, in 2003 I visited the U.S. for the first time. As I was waiting in line to receive the visa to go, I became acquainted with a young man in the line who was very happy, and from the way he was acting, I understood that he was very certain he would receive a visa.

I asked him, "What makes you so certain that you will get a visa?" He replied, "Yesterday, at church, two prophets told me I would receive the visa." So then I told him how I had prayed: "Lord Jesus, if You work in such a way that I receive the visa, I thank You! But, I thank You even if I don't receive the visa!" In the end, I was happy, and my younger brother was sad.

Every year I rejoiced to be with the brethren in the States, especially with my Romanian brothers, but also with my American ones. I've been to Romanian Brethren, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches, as well as American churches. I've visited mega-churches; a brother once told me that, if you

want to speak even for 5 minutes in one of these churches, you have to schedule it a year in advance.

In a small Romanian church in California, after reading from the Word of God, I looked up to see Victor Ciorbea, former prime minister of Romania, sitting in one of the front rows, and he had to listen to me tell how I came to receive the Lord Jesus. Afterwards, speaking with the pastor, I told him that I had the great honor that day to bring the prime minister of Romania to his feet. But the pastor took me by the shoulders and said, "We are greater than a mere earthly official! We are ambassadors of Heaven, sent, empowered...". (2 Corinthians 5.20)

Another experience, which also happened in America: I was on a domestic flight, and I had requested a window seat as usual so that I could look down and pray for the world God created. A young couple was seated next to me, and they were obviously in a good mood. They ordered bottles of alcoholic beverages, talked among themselves, and listened to music. A couple of times they tried to converse with me, but because I don't know many words in English, I couldn't carry out a very long conversation.

Seeing the book I was reading, the young woman exclaimed, "Oh! Bible!" Whereupon I thought she said the words, "mother" and "father". I realized that their parents were Christians and suddenly got an idea. I asked their permission to pray for them. I closed my eyes and prayed in Romanian. When I finished and opened my eyes again, I saw that they had tears flowing from their eyes. I wondered, *What did they understand?* I don't know, but one thing is certain: the Holy Spirit had access to their hearts, and He spoke to them.

Another experience, also related to the US: I met a brother there named Ionel Vijeila, and when I returned home, I received a phone call from him asking if I could go to a village near Horezului and obtain a copy of his mother's birth certificate.

This happened in the month of February. It was cold and snowy outside. I really didn't feel like going. It was far, the car was not doing so well, and I wasn't such a great driver. In a word, I didn't really want to go. But after the telephone call, I began to pray and ask the Lord if it was His will for me to go.

But how would He speak to me? I picked up His Word, and opened it to where I had last left off reading. And, in Isaiah 30:21, the Word says so clearly, "*This is the way, walk in it...*" (Note: the verb used in the Romanian Bible is "*merge*", which means, "Go".) This verse spoke so clearly to me that

it left no room for doubts, and I was afraid to resist, even if I wasn't really happy about it.

I set off at 4 AM the next morning and arrived in that village at 8 AM. I spoke with the secretary, telling him who I was and where I was from. He told me they cannot release such a document; it can only be obtained through the embassy, and he's sorry, but that's the law. A war was raging inside my head: *Lord, didn't You tell me to make this trip, and look what this man is telling me?!*

But before I left, I asked him to look in the registry and see if her name was there, and also asked if he could give me a few more details. He looked in the registry and told me that the name was not there, because after the Revolution the village was split into two. I asked him where the other village was, and the Lord spoke to me a second time, this time through an unbeliever. He gestured with his hand towards the window and said, "That's the road; go that way." (Translator's Note: The words he used are exactly the same phrase that appears in the Romanian Bible.) I knew that my quest would be successful!

When I got to the city hall in the other village, I felt led to give a Bible to the wife of the secretary, who was filling in for him that day. When she saw the Bible, she was so happy she started kissing it, saying that she had wanted a Bible for a long time. Of course, I began to tell her about the Lord Jesus' sacrifice and how she can receive Him in her heart. After about half an hour, she gave a sudden start and asked me, "Why did you come here? Just to tell me about Jesus?"

"Oh, no, I came for another reason, but I think what we discussed was more important than what I came for," I replied, and explained why I had come. She reached for a drawer, saying, "Sure – it's my pleasure to help you!" She took out the registry and filled out a copy of the birth certificate.

I thanked the Lord for His guidance and for the fact that He was with me, guarded me from accidents, car troubles, tickets, and once again for the fellowship with Him and His presence which fills us with joy.

One time while in the US, I was in the home of a Christian family, Ed and Diana. I shared with them about an experience I had during my first visit to the United States: A brother came to me with a Romanian newspaper, which mentioned that the factory where I worked at the time was practically bankrupt. He suggested that I remain in the States and work a few months, so I could return home with some money. I didn't say anything. I asked

Vasile, and he told me he couldn't tell me anything, I should ask God. I fasted and prayed. In my daily reading, I got to Joshua 1:9, and these words became imprinted in my mind, "...do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Note: In Romanian, the verse reads, "...for the Lord your God is with you *in all that you do...*") I was dismayed to return and be without a job, but when God speaks to you, He fills you with His peace.

I told the brethren that I would return to Romania, and the Lord took care of me. As I was sharing this experience with this wonderful family, I noticed Brother Ed had tears in his eyes. He then told me of a similar experience in his life, when he didn't know what to do in a certain situation, and the Lord Jesus spoke to him through this same verse. It's hard to relate the joy that the Word of God brought at that time, and this verse essentially united us in a friendship that will remain through eternity.

This booklet is drawing to a close, and I have by no means exhausted all the experiences along the journey of faith, but before relating one more which just came to mind, I'd like to exhort the young people who are setting out on the journey of faith to do what Moses did in the wilderness. Namely, to write down their journey from place to place (Numbers 33:2) – not like me at sixty years old – because there comes a time when these experiences are no longer so fresh in one's memory and you don't remember all of them anymore.

If I could share just one more of the things that are very important (among others), it's related to the Word of God and its practical application in our lives. I remember a little incident: Every morning I would wake up at 5:30 AM, and would leave for work at 6:20 AM. I never would leave without a word from the Lord. One morning I read Colossians 2:10, "...*You are complete in Him!*" I knelt down and prayed: *I am not complete in You, as Your Word says. Maybe other Christians are, but I'm not. On the contrary, I see only weaknesses in myself and am almost afraid to say that I'm a Christian. In a word, I don't have this fullness of life which You promised.* And I left for work.

On the way to work, which usually took about half an hour, I was praying, "Lord, give me fullness of life." And nothing was happening. I came home after work, and this verse was not giving me peace. I knelt down again to pray, and told God, *I'm not going to read any further until You give me the fullness of life.* For three days I read only this verse and implored God to give me what is written in it.

This experience is hard to explain – how our good, heavenly Father had mercy on me. I know that, as I was walking to work one morning and it was still dark outside, a light suddenly dawned inside of me and I saw what I had not seen until then: namely, that I was complete in Him, only I didn't believe it. The problem was with me, not with Him. And since then I learned something else: that everything God gives me, He gives me through faith, and especially the things He's promised in relation to the Lord Jesus, in Him the true treasures have been carefully placed by God, our Father. But we have access to them only by faith!

I cannot close without mentioning another one of God's miracles on the mission field. By His grace many doors were opened for the Gospel, and each time we began meeting outdoors in grassy areas or at crossroads, sitting on rocks or on logs normally used to heat homes.

The beautiful thing is that the Lord would surprise us each time with works which I consider miracles, one of them being that He sent to our area a missionary from Korea by the name of Kim Sun Soo. The Lord put on her heart – along with a Presbyterian church from Korea – to build churches in five different locations: Valea-Dumiresti, Oiasca, Rotunda, Tigveni, and Albesti de Arges.

How can you not trust God when you witness such things? For that reason, my advice to all who are called to the mission field is that they go out trusting in His help, because He is *“a very present help in trouble”*. (Psalm 46:1)

Conclusion

I did not set out to write a lengthy book but rather to relate a few experiences which, surely, every child of God has on their own journey of faith toward heaven. My desire is that this booklet would be an encouragement for the many who come, as I did, out of the world, to experience in their own lives the beauty of the Lord Jesus' life. I don't consider myself to be a theologian, nor a scribe like Ezra, but rather an unprofitable servant on whom the Lord Jesus had mercy and looked after in a special way.

Among those who suggested that I write down these experiences on paper, I would mention Brother Vasile Giulea and his wife Dori.

Whenever I stayed with them at their home in California, each time I mentioned something I needed, I would always hear the same word: "Pray!" Every morning at 6 AM, we would walk for thirty minutes, and during that time we prayed. Through this the Lord impressed on my heart the importance of prayer.

I can't forget the Brasov family, either, who through the emails they send almost daily, send nourishment and a balm which have done me much good.

I remember with joy the tiny Romanian Brethren churches in Fullerton, San Bernardino, Sacramento, and Oroville.

Likewise, I need to mention the ministry of the Stef family from Chicago, which has supported me very much in the work I do, as much spiritually as materially: making tremendous sacrifices, going to the mission field, giving Christian concerts, and preaching the Gospel.

I pray that God will reward each one of them, as He knows best of all. I've had things to learn from each of the brothers and sisters I've come into contact with, and I am grateful to God the Father for them.

If I have reached the completion stage of this booklet, it is partly because the Lord used Brother David Albeanu to give me that word of encouragement to continue to write, even if his sister Rodica, who had promised to print it, has gone home to be with the Lord Jesus.

I can not forget Daniela Iorga, who came a number of times to Romania and has a heart for the work here, who typed the manuscript for this booklet, and on whose heart the Lord Jesus put the desire to translate this booklet into English.

Special thanks to Sister Ortansa Stanga, who graciously offered her time to edit and stylize the manuscript in Romanian.

If this booklet causes the reader to have a closer relationship with the Lord Jesus and to experience the richness of a life of faith which has its source in that sweet fellowship with Him, then its purpose has been attained.

No sermon, no teaching, nor anything else can serve as a substitute for the joy which comes from this unique fellowship with the most important Person in the universe, the Lord Jesus.

I'd like to close with Romans 8:38-39: *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Traian Chilau
Missionary – Arges, Romania

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