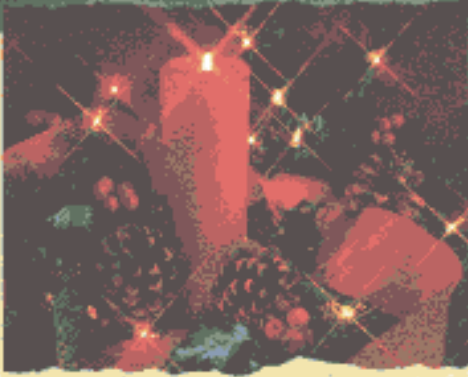


For unto you is born this day...

Saviour.

Luke 2:11



Light is the Word

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas!

As 2003 comes to a close I am reflecting on my three years in Romania and appreciating all God allowed me to experience. There are many people I have come to love and do miss. There are also cultural differences that have surprised me as I look back. Life is different in California from life in Sibiu, not good or bad, just different and sometimes quite entertaining. Each of you had a supporting role in my work in Sibiu and I want to share with you a bit more about some of the youth that are so dear to my heart. I hope that you will join me in praying for these young people as they continue to develop their ministry skills.

Monica participated in three of the youth mission trips and was a co-leader for one of the trips. She demonstrated gifts in leadership and the ability to work with children. For the summer of 2003, Monica joined with another mission team for a longer mission trip to Serbia. While adults in villages were watching the Jesus film, Monica used her training with the wordless book to teach the children. She was also able to train her mission teammates to use the wordless book for witnessing to others. God worked through Monica on that mission trip to share the good news of Christ and lead 50 Serbian children to the Savior.

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."

1 Peter 3:15

Adi was in his last year of schooling when he participated in his first mission trip to Moldova. He completed his schooling and determined that he would serve God as a missionary. He is now beginning his second year of missionary service with Campus Crusade. An interesting point about Adi's work is the way that he is supported. He could have accepted funds from North America for his financial support, but he declined. Instead he trusted that God would provide and bless Romanians if they gave the funds to support him. This thinking was the result of an experience that our team had when we were commissioned by Batania Church to go to Moldova. We were not sure how the mission trip would be financed, but at the commissioning service someone in the congregation suggested that a special offering be taken. Over half of the needed money was collected that night. Before we left for Moldova, God had provided all necessary funds and an extra \$100. The extra money was used to establish a youth mission fund for subsequent trips. The entire church congregation experienced the blessing of participating in missions.

Another blessing is that Monica and Adi have become engaged and will marry in 2004. They plan a life of service together as missionaries in Serbia.

Iriana is another example of a Romanian young person who has been listening to God's call in her life. She is concerned about the high number of abortions performed in Romania. Iriana is working to establish a crisis pregnancy center in Sibiu. Currently Romania has the highest abortion rate in Europe with about 75% of all pregnancies ending in abortion. Few people question the moral or health issues related to this procedure. Iriana was a special encouragement to me because she is a single woman committed to serving God. Culturally, women are given less respect and responsibility in Romania, especially if they are single. Please pray that Iriana will be able to find others who will help her establish a center that will educate and protect women and their unborn children.



GreaterEuropeMission

U.S. OFFICE: 18950 BASE CAMP ROAD MONUMENT, CO 80132 USA ♦ PHONE: 719-488-8008
CANADA OFFICE: 100 ONTARIO STREET OSHAWA, ON L1G 4Z1 CANADA ♦ PHONE: 905-728-8222

Cultural Contrast

Walking: In Sibiu almost everyone walks to work, school, church, stores, etc. It is wise to leave early for any destination because meeting and talking with friends along the way is part of the Sibiu social life. Not many cars are in town and automobile etiquette is not well defined. One day, as I was returning home, I was a bit shocked to see a car approaching me ---driving on the sidewalk! I was not sure what to do. The driver of the car actually honked his horn at me (to move off the sidewalk) so that he could continue. Now that I am back in California I miss the social interaction of pedestrian travel but am more comfortable and confident that cars will be traveling in the streets!

Recycling: Everyone, regardless of economic status is constantly looking for ways to turn someone's trash into something useful. From my apartment window I could look down on trash dumpsters. All day long people would sort through the trash, retrieving broken and battered items. I once neglected to remove the mailing label from a box that I received. A few days later as I was walking down the street, I passed a man carrying the box with my name boldly printed on the side!

Kindergarten Treats: Until recently, Romanians had very limited food choices. In fact, many had never seen a banana before 1990. Now there is more variety available, but few know what or how to eat new foods. In celebration for one of my birthdays, I decided to bring cupcakes to share with the kindergarten class. The Romania tradition is that the one who is having the birthday provides treats for the others. This is true in the workplace, with your neighbors and at school. None of the kindergarteners had seen a cupcake and Romanians do not have muffins either. I was not surprised that I would need to demonstrate to the children how to remove the paper cup to eat a cupcake. What did surprise me was that the cupcakes were a mystery to the Romanian adults as well. It was great fun to explain and watch everyone enjoy this new food.

There were many moments that surprised me during my time in Romania and I am thankful for them all! I look forward to connecting with you in person and having time to share more. As I prepare for my new assignment in Italy I will send out information. You can also visit my website: www.amywilliams.homestead.com

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:14

Have a blessed Christmas season and a wonderful New Year!

Amy Williams

560 Londerry Lane
Anaheim, CA 92807
AWilliams@GEMission.com



Youth and I travel by horse-drawn wagon to a village



Kindergarten Christmas Pageant 2002



Decorating Christmas cookies with youth