

The History and Vision of



Pioneering Missions to Romania

“LORD, I will go wherever you want, do whatever you want, and become whatever you want, to bring the gospel to the children of Romania!” - Brad Hayes, Director

These were the words I spoke to the Lord in June, 1996, on the return flight of my first trip to Romania. I was deeply impacted by all I had seen while traveling through parts of that country; especially seeing the homeless street kids, referred to as ***nobody's children***.



The Hayes Family (2015)

I witnessed how these children existed in unthinkable conditions; living in sewers with rats, garbage, and toxic fumes. I was so shaken by what I experienced that I cried uncontrollably for hours on the plane back to the States. I was not only shaken, but also *compelled* to return to Milwaukee and work diligently towards long-term solutions to help the children in Romania.

In 1997, our family, with many people from Wisconsin and Romania, started to build a home for orphan girls in Calarasi, Romania. Three years later we decided to move our family to Romania. In 2001, we sold our home, gave away our possessions, and were sent out as missionaries to Romania.

After our move to Romania the Lord prompted us to step out even further. Our first year in Romania we helped direct the daily activities of the girl's home. But, in the fall of 2002, with the help of close friends from Milwaukee, we formed ***Outstretched Hands of Romania (OH)***. Our vision is to ***“raise an army of children and poor to bring the gospel to the unreached parts of Romania.”*** As part of our plan, we began by working with a few existing local churches around Calarasi to evangelize and establish more churches. But, as of 2018, we have now planted 15 churches (in the last 9 years) and hope to start 3 more churches in 2018.

Equipping, supporting, and mentoring leaders is a vital aspect of OH in fulfilling our vision. The area we minister in has about 0.5% professing believers and there are over 100 villages around Calarasi that have no known evangelical Christian influence. Due to the way we work as a team and conduct our activities, leadership development happens within the framework of our daily lifestyle. We are very thankful that the Lord is raising up people of all ages, from our team and network of churches, into a wide range of ministry activities. One of the main team values we have is to work together towards a culture of love, honor, respect, unity, and encouragement. This kind of ministry culture contributes mightily to team health which is needed to accomplish what the Lord has called our team to do together for Him.

We have seen many things in our years on the mission field, including God's divine provision, miraculous healings, and considerable ministry growth. But the greatest thing was to see the Lord's hand shaping our family into servants. Each member of our family has had an important role in **OH** and has become a missionary in their own right. Being a home-schooling family was an integral part of our ability to remain flexible with the daily demands of a missionary lifestyle and it allowed us, as a family, to remain focused on fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus.

A trademark activity of OH is our Children's Evangelistic Tent events called I.M.P.A.C.T. Impact stands for **I**nvesting **M**orally & **P**ractically in **A**dolescents, **C**hildren, & **T**eenagers. We normally do



8-10 events per year. Our tent is set up in a soccer field or park and we invite all the children in that village or area to attend. These 3-5 day events have between 100-350 children each day. They are normally done with visiting short-term mission teams and include teachings about Jesus, singing, drama, scripture memory, sports, games, crafts, and more. Many of our daily and weekly activities are focused on touching the lives of children by loving, caring, discipling, helping, and bringing them to the knowledge of the salvation Jesus has given to us.

We have been pleased to watch the OH ministry grow in numbers and influence over the years. Now we have about 40 full and part time workers on our team, plus volunteers. We had 300 international visitors in each of the last four years, with an increasing number of summer helpers and Bible School students, who served with us and gained valuable missions experience.

The Outstretched Hands Team works together to evangelize and plant churches, while developing



the infrastructure of spiritual ministry within our network of churches. This infrastructure includes discipleship for men, women and children, family conferences, music & worship schools, and Pro Life Ministry. Weekly outreaches also utilize soccer as a bridge to build

relationships and teach youth about Jesus. Now, we have around 150 boys involved with our seasonal soccer ministry in various locations. **OH** supplies Bibles where needed, and develops and prints different types of Christian literature as well.

Community Centers & Healthcare Outreach. In 2009, we established the Hope Community Center in Caramidari, and a center was also started in Chiselet in 2015. Our goal is to have a center in every ministry location, since they become a main area of activity for each community. Both centers have Bible based programs, where we teach children about the Lord, basic life skills, assist with homework in after school programs, and provide a meal. We have 2 more centers in the making currently. Assisting the needy with medical and humanitarian help has been a priority for us over the years. We launched a series of mobile medical clinics in 2016, giving people better access to good medical care, and helped to open a Medical Clinic in Calarasi in 2017.

Pro Life Ministry in Romania is vital, considering Romania is a world leader in abortion. We have organized numerous Pro Life Conferences, where attendees are inspired and taught to be a voice for the voiceless unborn. Our Pro Life Ministry opens many new doors to build relationships and share God's love with government officials, public institution workers, teachers, doctors, and nurses.

Our Pro Life team has begun to teach in public schools about abstinence, STDs, life at conception, and fetal development. The response from students and faculty has been very positive and this has opened doors to speak in more schools. **OH** is the area organizer for the annual *March For Life*.

We are glad we said YES to the Lord. He helped us overcome our fears and unbelief and move forward into our calling and destiny. We offered the Lord our lives to go wherever, do whatever, and become whatever He wanted. We are very thankful for all He has done in our lives!

I believe that many Christians are fearful to say YES to the Lord and move beyond their normal Christian routines. They are afraid they cannot do much for Him, or give much for Him, and vastly underestimate what He can do through them. Often Christians may say yes, but their actions prove otherwise and they miss God’s best for their lives and the impact they can have in those around them. Instead of being part of God’s solution for the spiritual needs of the world, a Christian’s *inaction* becomes part of the world’s problems. The solution is to say **YES** to the Lord with our words and actions. Often people only think about what they **cannot do** but there are many things they **can** do. When they realize that and take action, the Lord will bless those actions, and use them to glorify Himself.



What can YOU do to help us reach the children of Romania? Our *living by faith* lifestyle on the mission field can create the illusion we have all we need for ministry and do not need more help. **This is not true!** The financial burden on our missions’ endeavor is a monthly challenge to survive and still advance His Kingdom. We are in need of many more monthly supporters who will faithfully help us to meet the growing needs of the ministry in Romania. The Bible says, *“How shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach unless they are sent.”* (Romans 10:14-15) By supporting **OH**, you become a sender and a missionary to Romania through our **pioneering work!**

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