

Clipă de Lumină

SHARON BEMIS—ROMANIA PROGRAM HOPE! INTERN—CRWRC

Running the good race

Races never stop at the starting line. Neither does following Christ.

BucurestiFest, a huge evangelical festival on May 31-June 1, was amazing. I had the opportunity to be very involved in the coordination of the festival. I can't explain the joy of the days during the festival.

But now, seemingly in no time at all, it's over. The grass in the park is smashed. Zillions of empty water bottles (an environmental nightmare) have been picked up. The crowd is gone. The stage is torn down. The ambulance and security are no longer waiting in the wings. The singers and skaters are back home. I'm slightly bored.

But the work is just beginning. The festival is gone, but for Bucharest churches, the

work has just started. Over 1,500 people indicated making first time decisions to follow Christ. A festival comes and goes, but if this is the only step these 1,500 people make, we're in sad shape. Now comes the time to leave the starting line. What use is the festival, if the next day is just the same? If people still won't enter a church? If their lives aren't completely new? If they don't change? One prayer one day might mean a lot once. But what does it mean if it's the only prayer for the rest of a life?

I'm not of the opinion that following Christ means to pray a prayer at a festival or camp or revival meeting and you're good to go. I'm not saying that this is a bad start. But I believe Christ has something much greater in

mind for each of his followers. I believe in a much bigger, more powerful thing. When lives are so radically changed there can't be any other explanation than God—this is what I believe God's will is. Granted, some people have much less exciting stories to start with, but everyone who is truly following Christ has got to be able to say, "Look what God has done in my life!"

The festival isn't what it means to follow Christ; it's the start of many people's race. We've just left the starting line. This isn't a race against each other; it's one where the winners are completely focused on the finish WHILE in unity and joy and purpose and humility with those around them. This is what it means to run the race.



Prayer Requests

- THANKS AND PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE WHO MADE DECISIONS AT BUCURESTIFEST TO FOLLOW CHRIST!
- FOR CHURCHES IN ROMANIA AND STARTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE.
- FOR FUNDATIA NEEMIA AND THE FUTURE OF OUR WORK —THAT WE WILL KNOW GOD'S WILL.
- MY WORK WITH CLINICA PRO VITA
- WISDOM IN SPEAKING AND WRITING—THAT I WILL GLORIFY GOD
- FOR A SAFE VISIT HOME AT THE END OF JUNE!

The Anti-drug Program

I wasn't sure what to expect for the anti-drug program and BucurestiFest. I mentioned being involved in these in my last newsletter.

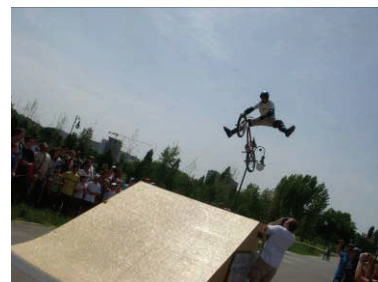
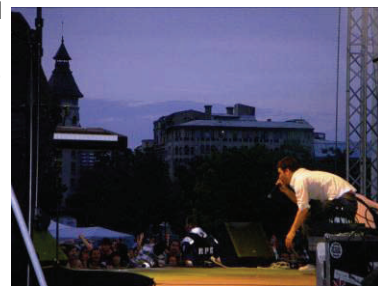
In February, a friend asked me to coordinate an anti-drug program that would go into 40-50 high schools during the last week of May in connection with BucurestiFest, an evangelical festival organized by many churches and organizations here. The approval we needed from the school inspector general for the antidrug program was finally refused in April. While

this severely limited the program, it didn't stop us, and we offered two of the groups—thebandwithnoname from the UK and Livin'it (professional skaters and BMX bikers) from the US—to visit schools and speak to the students in English about peer pressure and drugs. By this route we were welcomed into nine schools and didn't need the inspector's approval.

The program went very well, all things considered! In many ways, I wish we had a chance to do this program again. Now I have relationships with

several schools, we've earned respect and credibility, and I know much more how to coordinate this type of program (not to mention all the Romanian and cultural do and don'ts).

But even better than another one-week program, we have started a long-term relationship with the high schools, something much better than a simple program! In fact, several of the high schools have specifically asked when we can start planning for next year! This is truly an answer to prayer.





CRWR

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School in Romania

While children in Romania generally start 'kindergarten' from the age of three, they often don't start first grade until the age of seven. The first eight grades are spent at 'general school' and students finish by taking a comprehensive test. Their results on this test determine what type of high school they'll attend, either more academic (and even very specific to focus) or technical. By ninth grade, most youth are supposed to know more or less the type of studies in which they're interested.

In Bucharest, there are more than 120 high schools, many specific to languages, music, sports, computers or a variety of technical skills. Even with this many schools they are very overcrowded. The solution is that there are two shifts of students—morning and afternoon—at almost every school in the city.



http://images.google.ro/images?q=romania+map

A dove by any other name...

Quick question: Are doves and pigeons the same bird? And second, if a dove were called a pigeon, how would you feel about that? Be honest! Where does this come from? Well, in Romanian there is a great language travesty. You see, in Romanian, the same word is used for both doves and pigeons: *porumbel*. Peace pigeon, anyone? How does it change your view of scripture when Noah sends out a pigeon from the ark? Or how about the passage where John the Baptist sees the Spirit of God, in the form of a pi-

geon, come and rest on Jesus? Do you ever think of doves as 'rats with wings'? I thought not. Not that I'm so cruel as to agree with this description of pigeons, but I would NEVER use it on something as peaceful as a dove. Doves prance around gracefully on my balcony railing, cooing all the while. Pigeons cackle as they relieve themselves on me from trees in the park. They are NOT the same!

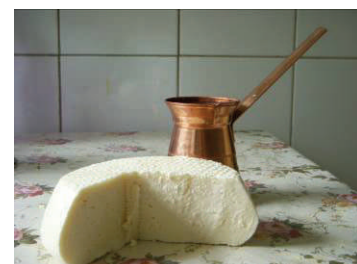
When talking to Romanians about this delicate subject, they've said that doves are white and pigeons are not.

But my retort is: What about the doves that aren't white and still aren't pigeons? Oh, they're pigeons, respond my Romanian friends.

So when we're talking about a bird of peace, we're talking about whiteness? And what about those rats with wings? We once had a white rat; it didn't make it a wingless dove just on account of it being white, I can assure you. I'm not really against pigeons; I've seen many a beautiful flying rat in my day. And a dove by any other name does not smell as sweet.

"IT TAKES TRUE COURAGE TO BE A [PIGEON], BUT NO HONOR ACCRUES TO BEING AN OSTRICH."

~UNKNOWN



Homemade cheese (delicious!) and a Romanian coffee pot!

Drum Bun!

I've done a lot of traveling recently, both figuratively and literally. My parents came in April and we saw a lot. I made it to the mountains again (and am going now too!) and considered again what it means to see God's power and glory. I made a spontaneous day trip with two Americans and led them onto the wrong train on the way back. I made another spontaneous road trip across the country to help pick up things for a church...and stayed with a high school girl who I had never met before but who is now a friend. I'm going to the

States for a visit. [insert shameless plug to read my blog for more stories here]. I've played host to a multitude of people traveling here just to serve. One of them (a professional BMX biker) has written something that I love, "I do all that I do waiting for the day that my Lord says, 'Well done my good and faithful servant.'" Waiting happens a lot in Romania, and there are two ways to do it. One is passive, and the other is not. "I do all that I do waiting..." Isn't this great?! This is what we live for—not passively waiting to die, or

blindly running just to reach the finish line. When we travel somewhere we want to go, we don't say, "I can't wait 'til it's finally over!" We live every moment knowing that when it's over we'll be able to look back at how good it was. But as Christians, we have something even better waiting at the end.

In Romanian, there is a phrase that you say to anyone about to leave on a journey: "Drum Bun!" It's sort of like saying, "Have a good trip!" What it means literally is, "Good Road!" May the road be good to you.



FUNDATIA NEEMIA FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

In addition to prayer, you can also support us financially. Please email and ask about the best way to do this.