

News from Tavi

and the Romanian New Hope Team

February 2010



Dear Friends,

I am only 20. Sure I am! I consider myself very young and I plan to stay that way. I have only 20 years with New Hope – 20 Januaries ago I started to communicate with Hank (the old fashioned letters sent by mail — the good old times way). Then, in a few months, New Hope Romania was born.

It is time to ask myself what I have done all these years. A good memory would come in handy, but unfortunately, I do not have one. I am amazed at all that was possible throughout the years. I remember we knew nothing about “Christian full-time ministry,” since there were no ministries in Romania during Communism. We had to start everything from scratch. All the organizational and administrative aspects were new and we had to figure them out. But it all turned out for the best.

As you know, we had several areas of ministry. The major one was books. We have published about 60 titles and 200,000 copies in all. We have learned a lot doing publishing and we have earned our position in the Christian book market. But we have to continue to learn and this time of economic slowdown stretches our imagination, excellence and skills. Who said a crisis is a bad thing? It presents opportunities as well.

Probably the best lesson we have learned is the importance of excellence in publishing. We have strived to get out to our readers only the best books and in the best conditions possible. We have reaped the results. Of all our books, only three were slow to sell, but it was because they had narrower audience (a book for preventing homosexuality, one for parents of prodigals and one for youth workers). We have been blessed by seeing the books go out of our storehouse (actually it is a room beneath our larger room in the office, which we access through a hole in the floor) and getting them in the hands of thousands of readers.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess all the effects these books had on the readers, but since many of them were for families, children, teens and young people, we are thrilled that God used these books to impact so many people. For the best titles we did reprints (as many as four in some cases). We have a lot to thank God for.

Another challenge that we took upon ourselves about 18 years ago, was to get our audience “hooked” on devotionals. During Communist times there were none in Romania. We had Bibles and some books smuggled into the country, but it was impossible to deliver a devotional on a regular basis. Again, we had to start from nothing. We have now published 100 issues of a devotional for teens (*Campus Journal* was the first title in English) with six issues per year, and we now produce *Our Daily Bread* (for a larger audience) with four issues per year. We believe strongly in the power of daily quiet time with the Lord and we want to continue to provide people with an effective tool to do that.

Tavi Verlan



Your support both in prayer and financially is important.

Your gifts made out to New Hope and designated for Tavi and the Romanian ministry will be forwarded 100%.

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Another “success” was the distribution of the curriculum for Sunday School children, *Footstep of Faith* (a flannel graph set illustrating the whole Bible; all you need for a 6 year program). We were a little skeptical in the beginning (a euphemism for lack of faith, actually), but we have seen God’s hand in this and the results were greater than our wildest dreams: 657 sets distributed, to be used by 2,500 teachers for 46,000 kids. These figures are very big for Romania, with a population of 700,000 Evangelicals. The nicest thing is that even the Catholics and Orthodox are using this material for teaching children (though not many, but still it is nice).

We had a program for leaders that we ran for several years. There were leadership messages by Dr. John Maxwell recorded on tapes. We have stopped this program now, but we made happy (I hope) around 100 Christian leaders in our country. Some of them are still insisting on restarting the ministry.

Camping was also a major area of our ministry and still is. We started back in 1991 and I cannot even start to tell you how rudimentary our gear was as well as our expertise in the field. But we had a great passion, and we have carried on this ministry all these years (except one, in which a storm and flooding took our gear exactly when we were setting up the camp). There have been thousands of people who have attended our camps. The camps still keep the original wild, outdoor, tent, wooden cook stove, river bathroom characteristics. We have gotten a little old, but we are still hanging on.

Our ministry in the church also grew in these 20 years. I become an ordained minister and I did Bible studies, preaching, children and teen ministry. I still continue to do all of that and I am more passionate than ever to see those children and youth develop into full grown Christians, walking the disciple road to heaven.

The family is also well. We thank God for His protection and grace all these years. Even though we had our share of troubles, temptations and trials (as anyone else), we can say that these were blessed years and we have passed through them with a feeling of satisfaction, knowing we are doing God’s work that He foreordained us for. Nothing gives us more of a thrill than this.

Our daughter, Rosana, is becoming a fine doctor. She is passionate about her career and she likes to mix it with ministry too, especially in poor countries. We will see how the Lord will lead her.

I can bore you with more figures and facts, but I think you get the picture. Of course, this ministry would not have been possible without your support and prayers. You share in every accomplishment of this ministry, and we alone assume the fault of failures and mistakes (great opportunities for growth, by the way). We thank you and hope to see you around 20 years from now, still part of our team. I will be 71 then – a good age to start new ministries! But then again, we might share the ministry in heaven, the best alternative!

Tavi and Jeni

New Hope, Romania