

News from Tavi

and the Romanian New Hope Team

August 2009

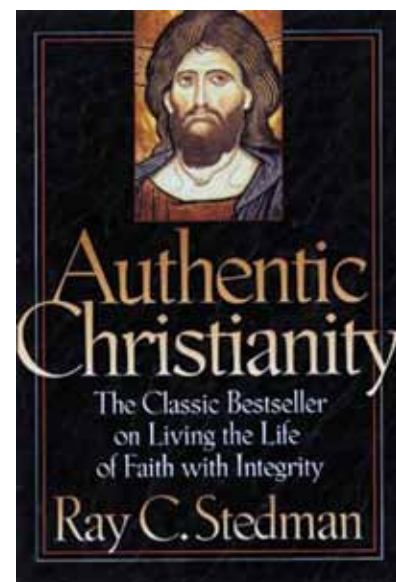


Dear Friends,

Authentic Christianity. Do you find a mistake in this phrase? This is the title of our latest book from Gary Thomas, so who are we to contradict such a good author? But think for awhile. The term Christianity should be self-sufficient. There should be no need to add anything to it. It should describe Christianity as a way of life introduced and modeled by Christ Himself. But what we have done with our version of Christianity requires that we add something to define what the New Testament really teaches us about the Christian life. Gary speaks of some neglected spiritual disciplines, such as the discipline of selflessness, waiting, suffering, persecution, forgiveness, mourning, contentment, and sacrifice.

It is the call of every generation to capture and pass on the essence of authentic Christianity, and we are trying to do just that. In the last four days, we have had three memorial services. Three members of our church have gone home to be with the Lord. I preached at each one, and I could not help but compare their departure with the departure of "The King of Pop." I asked the question of what won in each case: death or life? Then I expressed my own idea about their destinies. The ones we buried I know were authentic Christians. Jenny was in the audience, and she overheard people complaining. They do not like to hear that they can possibly go to hell or that they have to become authentic Christians to go to heaven. Or that maybe Michael has not gone to heaven. They would like to remain nominal Christians. But we have to tell the truth.

This is the environment in which we live and minister and where our young generation lives. We just had a special day with our high school group. It was "graduation" day for those who finished high school. We had lunch together and hung out at the church until the evening program. So, the whole day was spent in the house of God. Nice. Theoretically, they leave Sunday School, even if some have asked permission to stay longer (just like me — just kidding!!). I asked them to tell what the Sunday School has meant for them. Some of them have attended it since they were three or four years old. Two of them said that they learned how to think. We were thrilled. That is what we aim for. We want to make them think for themselves. Just the other day, I was in a store and I saw a young girl wearing a blouse with the words: "Kiss more. Think less." I wonder what her future might be if she decides to do as instructed!



We are praying for finances to publish Authentic Christianity in Romanian.

Tavi Verlan



Your support both in prayer and financially is important.
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That is why we are teaching our youth to study the Bible and think through what they encounter in our culture. There is so much bad influence everywhere. To do that even more, we decided to keep the Sunday School going through the whole summer. So, we will not have the usual break for summer. Even if the group is smaller, we will keep them active and interested in the church. To help them think and structure their thinking, we have asked them to read the New Testament during the summer and, for some who are really into the Word, to read it in one month. So, guess who has to keep up with them. So far, I have seen them responding quite well.

We also do all sorts of other activities with them. We did a two day retreat in the mountains, and we have scheduled to go in an area nearby to spend some Saturdays playing volley and other games. Our ministry with them keeps me quite busy. I was looking for ways to communicate personally with them, on a deeper level than in the class situation. I started to talk with them using instant messenger, and I was amazed at how open some of them are. They initiated some good talks about personal issues, salvation, church problems, and activities. I am glad I am able to help. They have gained trust in me as evidenced by their opening up. I am always praying that the Lord will encourage those who have a real need to open up and talk about their problems, questions, and life. It is a new level of the ministry; this is where real ministry happens.

It is now camp time for New Hope Timisoara. We are getting all the gear together and are leaving for camp. We have seven camps, together with other churches, there will be more than 200 attendants.

Our family is doing well. Rosana has finished exams and has some vacation. We haven't decided yet on what to do this vacation, but we will see. Anyway, it will be somewhere close to home.

We thank you so much for your faithful support all these years. Continue to pray for us and for our ministry. Prayer is not for ministry, prayer is ministry. So, join us in the ministry.

Tavi and Jenny