



# Chapel Project

Taking Aim at the HEART of the Matter

## Evangelism

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20*

W - Win  
I - Instruct  
T - Train  
N - Nurture  
E - Encourage  
S - Sow seeds  
S - Serve

Witnessing is the primary method of evangelism we use. Although many of the aspects of witnessing in Romania and the Dominican Republic are similar as to Americans, the culture is different and volunteers need to be aware of areas they need to make adjustments. This effort is necessary if the volunteer team is going to be successful in witnessing about Jesus.

### A. Witness By Actions

Romanians and Dominicans watch the American volunteers and therefore actions and behavior are very important. In Romania:

1. Men should remove their hats whenever praying or in church.
2. Married women should wear a scarf on their head when in church. This is a sign of submission to their husbands.
3. Romanians always stand when praying and saying grace.
4. Males and female believers do not show very much affection to one another (married or not) in public; however you'll see girls/women holding hands while walking around or a couple of guys with one's arm around another. Men are much more open with affection with men and likewise women with women, but not mixed genders - sends the wrong signal! **Volunteers should refrain from hugging members of the opposite sex (including translators).**
5. **CAUTION:** Young Romanian women perceive attention from a male as serious and leading to marriage. **No matter how innocent the motivation, it hurts our witness and our mission.**
6. Women do not lead devotions if men are present.



7. NO clapping or lifting up of hands in churches - at all - for any reason. Romanians consider this an inappropriate approach to a holy God.
8. **Your in-country expense money includes funds allocated to provide compensation for translators. If you must tip, please do so as a GROUP and distribute EQUALLY among ALL the translators, thus avoiding favoritism.**
9. Romanian believers think that Christians should be separate from the world and will judge your spirituality based upon your appearance. **Therefore, women should NOT wear jewelry, make-up, or nail polish AND should dress modestly.** Jeans and knee length shorts are acceptable at the job site.
10. Romanian worship services **do not** have altar calls as we understand them in the west. This is not wrong - just different than the American way of worship. In Romanian churches, people are encouraged to talk with the Pastor after the service about receiving Jesus Christ. Volunteers who speak in Romanian churches should respect this difference in culture.

## B. Witness by Words



Romanian Orthodoxy teaches the Romanians that they are born with the living water of Orthodoxy in them and they will all say they are “Christians” whether they go to church or now. Orthodoxy is very works oriented. Therefore emphasis must be placed on repentance and Lordship. The people who live under the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church do not have to be convinced of the basic tenets of Christianity. The average person on the street usually knows something about the fact that God created the world, man is sinful, Jesus was born of a virgin and lived a perfect life, died on a cross, and rose again. Unlike most people from the west, he does not have to be convinced he is a sinner and headed to hell.

If traditional western methods fall short, how can we communicate the true gospel to them? What is proper strategy and method of spreading the message of salvation among these people? With this in mind, the following steps are highly recommended:

1. Visitors to this part of the world must come with a servant's attitude. Self-serving agendas and quick fixes are not the answer. You must spend quality time with the people. They are very inquisitive by nature and would like to speak with you at length. Mass evangelistic methods should only be used as a tool to gather interested people into more intimate follow-up discussions. Not only the number of people who indicate decisions for Christ but the quality of the seed planted as well should measure successes.

2. Realize that most of the people you will witness to do not attend any church. They will not be rooted in their faith. With this in mind, the subject of Orthodox beliefs will probably not even surface. Should the subject come up, it is best never to argue. There are only two possible results to arguing. First, you could lose the argument and lose all credibility. Second, even if you win the argument; you destroy their self-esteem. Simply emphasize the positive aspects of the gospel message.

3. Please realize that none of us are experts on the complicated subject of Orthodoxy or Catholicism . This summary is only the tip of the iceberg. The purpose of sharing this is to acquaint you with the worldview and mind-set of our target audience. It is not meant as ammunition for a frontal attack on Orthodoxy.

4. The western method of presenting the gospel must be modified. Spend less time telling the basic tenets of the faith and spend more time encouraging them to have a personal relationship with the Lord. Most western methods emphasize the free gift of salvation and saying a sinner's prayer. Certainly, these issues are genuine, but much more emphasis must be placed on repentance and Lordship. Some suggested passages on the theme of repentance are: Matthew 4:17; Luke 13:3,5; and Acts 17:30. Emphasize the fact that God forgives us completely and places us in a position of acceptance immediately upon our repentance. Emphasize that grace is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8,9) that cannot be earned or deserved. Explain how Christ's sacrifice restores us into an immediate fellowship with God. Explain how grace is immediately received through faith and not by works. (Titus 2:5) Help them understand that the decision of salvation is a life-changing event, not simply a ritual.



5. In a positive way, emphasize that we can know God personally. We have access to Him through the work that Jesus did on the cross and the Holy Spirit's work today. If the issue arises, do not negate their belief in prayers to icons, etc. Simply teach them there is a better way. Explain that we have God's Spirit interceding for us (Romans 8:26). Stress that since we have direct access to God through Christ's work, there is no need to have another intercessor to do the same.

6. Depend on the Holy Spirit for wisdom in each situation

We have found the following gospel presentation to work extremely well, especially at the medical clinic:

### Introduction

- We're here as part of the American team building the church in your village. We came to Romania to show God's love for all of us. The doctor is here for the same reason. In a little while you will see the doctor who will look after your physical needs. While you are waiting I would like to take a few minutes to discuss some spiritual matters.
- May I ask you a question?

### Diagnostic Questions

- Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven? (Or If you died today would you go to heaven?)

- One of the reasons the bible was written was so we would know how we might have eternal life. Scripture tells us “I write these things ..., so that you may know you have eternal life.” (1 John 3:16)
- May I share with you how I came to know for certain that I have eternal life and how you can know it too?
- Before I do, let me ask you a second question.
- Suppose you were to die today and stand before God and He asked you “Why should I let you into my heaven?” what would you say?
- Let me be sure I understand what you would say to God. You would say .... Is that what you would say?
- Transition: When you answered that first question, I thought I had some news for you. But after hearing your answer to the second question, I know that I have the greatest news you have ever heard.

## The Gospel

### A. Grace

1. Heaven is a free gift
  - The bible tells us “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)
2. It is not earned or deserved
  - Scripture says “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Transition: This can be seen more clearly when we understand what the Bible says about man.

### B. Man

1. Man is a sinner
  - The bible tells us “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:26)
2. Can not save himself
  - The bible tells us “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)
  - **Omelet with Bad Egg Illustration:** Suppose I was making an omelet for guests and have four eggs in a bowl. I crack the fifth egg but it is rotten. If I go ahead and mix the rotten egg with the good eggs and cook the omelet, it will not be acceptable to eat.

Even less can we serve up our lives to God, which may have many good works, and yet are filled with deeds and thoughts that are rotten, and expect them to be acceptable to God. A little sin contaminates the whole and makes us unacceptable to God the same way one bad egg ruins the omelet.

If we want to get into heaven by our own works, then all we have to do is to be perfect. God’s standard is complete obedience to Him in all things and at all times. We all fall short of this.

Do you see why it’s impossible for anyone to get into heaven by doing good works?

Transition: This comes into sharper focus when we look at what the Bible says about God.

### C. God

1. God is merciful - therefore he does not want to punish us
  - The bible tells us “God is love” (1 John 4:8b)
2. God is just - therefore he must punish sin
  - Scripture says “Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:7b)

Transition: This creates an apparent problem because God does not want to punish us but must punish sin. God solved this problem in the person of Jesus Christ.

### D. Christ

1. Who he is - the infinite Man/God
  - The bible tells us “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1,14)
2. What he did - He died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins and purchase a place in heaven for us.

**Record Book Illustration:** Let’s imagine that this book in my right hand is a minutely detailed account of my life. Each page details the sin of a particular day - every thing I have done wrong.

Here then is the problem (*hold up book*)- my sin (*place book in palm of left hand*). God loves me (*point to your left hand*) but he hates my sin (*point to book on top of your left hand*) and must punish it. (*bring right hand above left hand*) When God looks down at me he sees my sin.

To solve this problem, He sent Jesus into this world. (*bring right hand down parallel to left hand*) The scripture says “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him (*transfer the book in one distinct motion from your left hand to your right hand*) the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6) All of my sin which God hates has been placed on Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. He was buried in a grave for three days (*put book in your lap*) but he rose from the dead and went to heaven to prepare a place for you and me. (*bring right hand back above left hand*) Now when God look down he no longer sees my sins and (*clasp hands together*) now I can have a personal relationship with him. Jesus offers eternal life to you and me as a gift.

Transition: This gift is received by faith.

### E. Faith

1. What it is not
  - Head knowledge - believing Jesus lived 2000 years ago the same way we believe King Carol lived 100 years ago. We may believe Jesus was a real person in history but do not trust him to do anything for us now. The bible tells us “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shutter.” (James 2:19)
  - Temporal faith - trusting God for temporary things like recovering from an illness.
  - While these types of faith are not wrong, they will not give us eternal life.
2. What it is - Trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life



## Commitment

- Transition - Does this make sense to you?
- Commitment - Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life?
- Clarification - let me clarify what this involves:
  1. Transfer trust from yourself and good works to what Jesus has done
  2. Receive the resurrected and living Christ as Savior
  3. Receive Christ as Lord
  4. Repent
- Prayer
 

If that's what you really want, I can lead us in a prayer and we can tell God what you just told me.

  1. Pray for him to understand, repent, and believe.
  2. Pray with him (short phases of the gospel personalized)
  3. Pray for him for assurance
- Assurance
  1. I would like you to read something Jesus says about what you have just done
  2. John 6:47 (I assure you, anyone who believes in me already has eternal life, *NLB*)

## Five Means of Growing

- Attend church
- Read bible
- Pray
- Fellowship with other Christians
- Tell others about Jesus

## C. Witness by Prayer-Walking

### General Instructions:

Pray for each person you meet. Pray that God would be worshipped in each house or place of business you pass. Choose a few specific houses to pray that a Bible Study will be started there. If you walk by a school: pray for the children and teachers: salvation, discipleship, positive influence on the society. If you walk by a government building: pray for the government leaders to have wisdom, to be godly, to administer justice, and to be saved. Pray for temptation to be curtailed. Pray for God's deliverance from the evil one. Pray each day for your team.

### Saturday

*O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. (Psalm 8:1)*

- Praise God for His majesty and the display of His glory.
- Thank the Lord for letting you be a part of His purpose .
- Pray that God would give you a glimpse of what He is doing in the area your team is working in.
- Pray for a city-wide welcome.
- Pray that He would open the eyes of the people to the gospel, and that the blessing of the Gospel would ripple throughout the entire community.
- Ask God to break your heart for the wounded, wasted lives apart from Him.

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. For kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2:1-4)*

## Monday

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory. (Is. 6:3b)*

- Praise the Lord for His holiness.
- Repent of any known sin and if another person is involved, purpose in your heart to make it right as soon as possible.
- Thank the Lord for what He has done so far.
- Pray that all the team members would exhibit holiness today.
- Pray for God's inheritance in this city.
- Pray for spiritual fruitfulness.

*Here am I, send me. (Is. 6:8b)*

## Tuesday

*For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations. (Ps. 100:5)*

- Praise the Lord for His goodness.
- Repent of any known sin and if another person is involved, purpose in your heart to make it right as soon as possible.
- Thank the Lord for His faithfulness and mercy towards sinners.
- Pray that God would be merciful to unbelievers in this community.
- Pray that God would thrust believers from here into the harvest.

*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." (Luke 10:2)*

## Wednesday

*His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: 'What have You done?' (Dan. 4.34-35)*

- Praise the Lord for His sovereign control over all things.
- Repent of any known sin and if another person is involved, purpose in your heart to make it right as soon as possible.
- Pray that others would see Christ in the team members today.
- Thank the Lord that He is working all things together for good.
- Think of ways to pray for God's continuing work in this community.
- Pray that the rule of God would reign in every heart in this community.

*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Mt. 6:10-KJV)*

## Thursday

*O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise, You perceive my thoughts from afar." (Ps. 139:1-2)*

- Praise the Lord for His all-encompassing knowledge.
- Repent of any known sin and if another person is involved, purpose in your heart to make it right as soon as possible.
- Pray for the team members to receive wisdom and knowledge from God today.
- Thank the Lord that He knows about everything going on in this community.

- Pray that this community would come to know Him.

*Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. (John 17:3)*

### Friday

*Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the sides. (Ps. 36.5)*

- Praise the Lord for His love toward us.
- Repent of any known sin and if another person is involved, purpose in your heart to make it right as soon as possible.
- Pray for the team members to show the love of Christ today.
- Pray that others would see the love that Christians have for each other.
- Thank the Lord for His unfailing love for sinners.

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:38-39)*

### Saturday

*The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief (II Pet. 3:9-10a)*

- Praise the Lord for the promise of His return.
- Repent of any known sin and if another person is involved, purpose in your heart to make it right as soon as possible.
- Thank the Lord for His patiently waiting for sinners to come to repentance.
- Pray for our team members to have a sense of urgency in sharing the Gospel.
- Pray for the church body here to be faithful witnesses for Christ until He comes.
- Pray that this city will be ready for the second coming.

*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (I Cor. 11:26)*

Bible verses are from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

The book *Prayer-Walking: Praying On Site with Insight* by Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick was a helpful resource in preparing this Prayer-Walk guide.

## D. Guide To Romanian Orthodoxy

### Introduction

Literally thousands from the west have had the opportunity to visit Eastern Europe over the past few years. If one were to add up all of those who made a commitment to Christ, according to reported statistics, then it would total over half the population in the former Soviet block countries. Unfortunately, only a very small percentage of these ever attend church. The basis for these conflicting reports cannot simply be blamed on poor follow-up. Ignorance about the spiritual worldview of those living under the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church must also be considered.

Romanian Orthodoxy can be summarized by three 'M's: mysterious, mystical, and magical. The sacraments are referred to as mysteries and much of the popular understanding of a person's relationship



to God through rituals is akin to mysticism and magic. Just as a child might believe his rabbit's foot brings good luck, so is the popular understanding of faith in Orthodoxy.

### Source of Authority

Tradition is seen as the one and only true source of authority. The Bible is held in high regard but only as a product or result of tradition. In fact, the general populace often treats it like an icon.



### Theological Issues

**Fall of Man** - Adam and Eve were not created perfect. They did not fall into grave sin. They simply took a wrong turn that forfeited their ability to reach full fellowship with God.

**Salvation** - Salvation is thought of in terms of theosis or deification (becoming god). The goal is to reclaim the path of theosis forfeited at the fall. Participation in the sacraments, prayer, fasting, and

other works are necessary means for this goal. There is little concern over the broken relationship with God due to sin in our lives.

**Atonement** - Christ's sacrifice and victory over Satan gives man the opportunity to continue on the path of theosis. Payment for man's sin is considered a minor issue.

**Grace** - "Unmerited favor" is not found in the Orthodox concept of grace. Grace is the activities or energies of God, through the Orthodox Church, which lead to deification of believers. A person receives grace by partaking of the sacraments and by human effort. The process begins at one's baptism, is maintained with penance, and achieved temporarily through participation in the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) when the participant literally becomes one with Christ. Interestingly, personal faith is not necessary. Simple (voluntarily or involuntarily) participation in the sacraments gives grace to the individual.

**Church** - The Church is not simply a body of called out believers. It is not simply a building. The Church is literally God Incarnate through the person of the Holy Spirit. It is heaven on earth. Salvation cannot take place outside of the Orthodox Church.

### Saints, Icons, and Relics

Saints are thought of as intercessors and protectors. They are believed to pray for the Orthodox believer just like Protestant believers pray for each other today. Mary is revered above all others because she, as the Mother of God, is the only one who most completely achieved the goal of theosis.

Orthodoxy is a very ritualistic religion filled with sights, smells, and sounds; Icons are thought of as "windows to the divine world" and play a major role in these rituals. They not only represent the person of their image, but also actually are the essence of that person. In other words, when a person lights a candle, kisses, or says a prayer in front of an icon or relic, they are asking the help of that person to solve personal problems and achieve theosis.

### Practical Issues

People living under the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church view Christianity as a set of rituals that must be accomplished in order to mystically and magically receive mysterious grace from God. A personal relationship with God is not considered important or even necessary.

With this in mind, standard western methods of witnessing such as EE, CWT, The Four Spiritual Laws, The Roman Road, etc. all fall short of communicating the true meaning of the gospel. The people hear the words but interpret it through their cultural and religious experiences. They perceive the idea of praying a sinner's prayer as nothing more than a Protestant ritual that might help them. In fact, they will often readily and willingly pray a sinner's prayer even without hearing the gospel message. Certainly, some understand and genuine salvation does take place. In most cases, however, their lives do not change and they do not embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In other words, the only thing that they perceive they are doing is to add what they believe to be a Protestant ritual to their Orthodox ones.

### **Summary**

Romanian Orthodoxy is not Roman Catholicism. It is a very mystical and ritualistic religion. Praying to icons, lighting candles, kissing caskets of dead saints, burning incense, chants, and other rituals are all means to the path of theosis. In addition, there are three major issues that surface that differ from Protestant theology:

1. Man's sinful condition - He only took a wrong turn off the path of deification.
2. Grace - It is simply God's activities and work through the Church's rituals. It is not unmerited favor.
3. Salvation - The goal is to obtain deification without concern for justification.

### **D. Additional Information**

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