

# Berean Prison Ministries

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The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Isaiah 61:1

## BEREAN'S ANNUAL BANQUET TO FOCUS ON ROMANIA

God is doing some very exciting things through the prison ministry in Romania. Through an inmate who found Christ in prison, God established a growing church. Also, a number of house churches were planted, ministering to inmates that were released from prison. Each week in the twenty-three prisons where Berean's volunteers serve, inmates are provided the opportunity to hear to about salvation through Jesus Christ. *Please join us on Thursday, September 7th at Five Points Washington to hear in greater detail all that God is accomplishing through Berean.*

Levente Kovendi will be our featured Romanian speaker. Mr. Kovendi is in full-time ministry for Berean working alongside Berean's fifty volunteers. He serves in several prisons and maintains good relationships with National Administration of Penitentiaries officials.

This year we are also excited to have at our banquet, the man in charge of Romania's prison system, General Director Dobrica. As General Director, he is responsible for all 45 prisons in the country and approximately 28,000 inmates. God has truly opened many doors of service in the Romanian prisons for Berean. We are very grateful for the support and encouragement received from the leadership of the Romanian National Administration of Penitentiaries.

We are looking forward to having you as our guest for the evening. *While the dinner and evening are free reservations are required. Please use the attached information card to make your reservation today.*

*Pictured on the left: Levente & Edit Kovendi*



**BEREAN PRISON MINISTRIES BANQUET**  
Five Points | Washington, IL  
September 7, 2017 | 6:30 pm



1

### IN THIS ISSUE:

BEREAN'S ANNUAL BANQUET TO FOCUS ON ROMANIA  
..... PAGE 1

ROMANIA TRIP OBSERVATIONS AND PRAYER REQUESTS  
..... PAGE 2-3

MIGUEL INUGAY AWARDED IDOC VOLUNTEER OF YEAR

MONICA'S JOURNEY OF FAITH

FINANCIAL REQUESTS  
..... PAGE 4



## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Pray that God will open more doors of opportunity to expand His kingdom in Romania and throughout Eastern Europe.
- For volunteers to serve in more prisons and jails in the U.S.
- For additional individuals to grade the Bible study lessons returned by inmates.
- Pray for Levente/Edit and Director Dobrica to travel safely to America and for God's blessing at the Banquet on Sept. 7.

2

WHAT'S THIS PICTURE MEAN?

Come to the Banquet and find out!



# ROMANIAN TRIP OBSERVATIONS

*Berean Staff recently returned from a trip to Romania. Some brief observations from the trip are provided in the article below. Come to the Banquet to hear more on the Prison Ministry, Gypsy Churches and God's work in Romania.*

Whenever I go on a mission trip, or to a gathering of fellow believers, I always walk away with some new 'heroes'. Our trip to Romania for Berean Ministries was certainly no different. We left Romania at the end of our trip inspired and uplifted by how mightily our Lord is working through Berean!

Our Berean partners step out sacrificially to bring the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to those in prison, and to the unchurched. We were with pastor Baboi Marian, at a prison in the town of Poarta Alba. When finished ministering there, he proceeded to hitch-hike 40 kilometers to his next destination. He has very little income, and no car, but has a passion for sharing the gospel and visits up to 5 prisons a week.

Another servant, Pastor Zolt, in the town of Gheorgheni, ministers to a Gypsy church in the area. Part of the

ministry is an afternoon school, giving the Gypsy children the opportunity of a good education. He is also starting a coffeeshop ministry to reach the unchurched in the community. Stepping out in faith, they are trusting the Lord will bless their efforts.

We were so impressed and excited with how Berean has developed a tremendous relationship with the officials of the Romanian prison system. The Romanian government is very proactive towards the social integration of the prisoners, and welcomes Berean with open arms. A director of the prison system told us "*we believe in what you are doing*". The Lord has certainly opened doors for the gospel!

The Berean volunteers in Romania are a resilient, passionate and faithful group, living the gospel to the incarcerated and the unchurched.

*Tim and Linda Martin*

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## PERSPECTIVE OF ROMANIA

The first thing that struck me at the airport in Bucharest was that it was hard to find anyone smiling. It seems as if the many years of communism has taken a large toll on the hearts of the people. If God is removed from a society it does not offer anything to provide hope to the heart.

On Saturday, we met with a large group of volunteers that work in the various prisons. Within each of them, I saw an excitement and a joy of serving the Lord in a place that desperately needs the truth. Our group spent time together praising Jesus,

sharing testimonies of God's work in Romania and enjoying the fellowship with one another. There was even a man there with the Christian Police Association. We all felt blessed to have spent time encouraging fellow believers to continue in the work of Christ in Romania.

On Sunday, we visited a couple of Gypsy Churches and spent time with the pastor and his family. The Gypsies are a nomadic people who have never had a country to call their own. Gypsies are looked down on by others. Many Gypsies cannot read or write,



live in primitive homes and still use horses and wagons as a main source of travel. Yet they are a uniquely beautiful people, especially as they sing and worship together. Pastor Zolt is from Hungary and move to Romania to minister to the Gypsies and others. The Gypsy people are blessed to have Pastor Zolt as their spiritual leader.

The rest of the week we traveled to different prisons. We were able to meet with prison officials and some of inmates at those locations. Berean has 2 faithful Brothers in Christ that oversee and are active in the out-reach to 23 prisons in Romania. The dedication, selflessness, and joy of both brothers was an inspiration to us all. Levente oversees the ministry there and Marian travels 800 kilometers a week to visit 5 prisons and does much of his travel by hitchhiking which is very common in Romania.

On the last day, we met with one of the government officials named Ionoa. She told us that “We believe in what you do” and “*We consider your volunteers equal with us.*” *Iona continued “We desire to help prisoners reform and have a better life. We think it should be normal to help them. We as correctional facilities should welcome outside help.”* The Romanian government is truly trying to reform

those that are incarcerated. It is amazing and very encouraging for the government to view the Gospel as a vital component that truly can transform inmates’ lives. Romania is a depressed nation that is still trying to find its way after decades of communism. We are thankful that they see the gospel as part of the solution and that God has allowed Berean Prison Ministries to be involved in His work in Romania. The US could learn a few things from them.

One of the most significant comments that I heard was from this same government official. She was talking about her visit to the United States. Her comments should be an encouragement to the true Christian Church. She commented that “Chicago, Springfield, and the sites were nice, but the experience in the church was the best part. The lunch and fellowship in the church was wonderful. The love and sharing with others is something we don’t see in the orthodox religion!”

I pray we will all be encouraged to love and share with others, especially with those that find themselves at a crossroad or struggle in life.

*Bill Schick*



GYPSY CHILDREN

3





## FINANCIAL REQUESTS:

- A gift of \$38.22 provides a Bible and the postage costs for an inmate to complete all 150 of our Bible study lessons.
- The \$3,000 per month needed to provide support for our one representative and the transportation expenses for Berean's 50 volunteers in Romania.
- All contributions of any amount to this ministry are gratefully received.

4

## CONTACT US:

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# MIGUEL INUGAY AWARDED IDOC VOLUNTEER OF YEAR

Miguel Inugay, Berean Prison Ministries volunteer, is a valuable asset to the Illinois Department of Corrections in his exemplary role as volunteer. Inugay serves at Western Illinois Correctional Center as a member of Berean Prison Ministry. His steadfast devotion to the ministry and volunteering are most noteworthy as he additionally volunteers at Illinois River and Hill correctional centers. Inugay's volunteer efforts at Western Illinois Correctional Center extend back to 1997 when he started serving there as a volunteer. In 2001, he began making regular weekly visits, driving two hours to the center each Saturday to conduct Bible study for Spanish-speaking offenders. On his way home, he also volunteers at Illinois River Correctional Center to conduct Bible study for its Spanish-speaking offenders. While leading his Bible study, he has the ability to balance his role of teacher and counselor. He is respected and enjoyed by staff and brings stability and hope to offenders. His continued dedication to make the two-hour drive represents commitment, determination and faithfulness in making a positive difference in the lives of others. Inugay also was named Western Illinois Correctional Center Volunteer of the Year in 2004 for his exceptional volunteer leadership. Congratulations to Miguel for his recognition by IDOC.

## MONICA'S JOURNEY OF FAITH

Meet Monica, who was recently released from the Fulton County Jail where she had served several months. Although Monica is 48 years old, she had never been to a church service until she was an inmate at Fulton County Jail. Monica started attending the services faithfully each Sunday that are held in the jail's gym led by Fedi Davidovics and Ken Helmuth. Monica was given a Bible, which she read completely through and part way through a second time. She also signed up for counseling with the Berean volunteers on Tuesdays. Monica had lots of questions about the Bible passages she was reading and hearing in church. However, she felt that she did not understand enough to commit her life to following Christ. Then just two days before she was released, Monica told a Berean volunteer that

she wanted to accept the redemption offered by Jesus Christ and start following him. Since her release, she is attending a church in Peoria where she witnessed a baptism service. She told the Berean volunteer that she had a desire to be baptized also and to publicly state her intent to follow Jesus.



*Monica was baptized on May 6, 2017, by one of the Berean volunteers at her church. We praise God for the new life He has given Monica.*