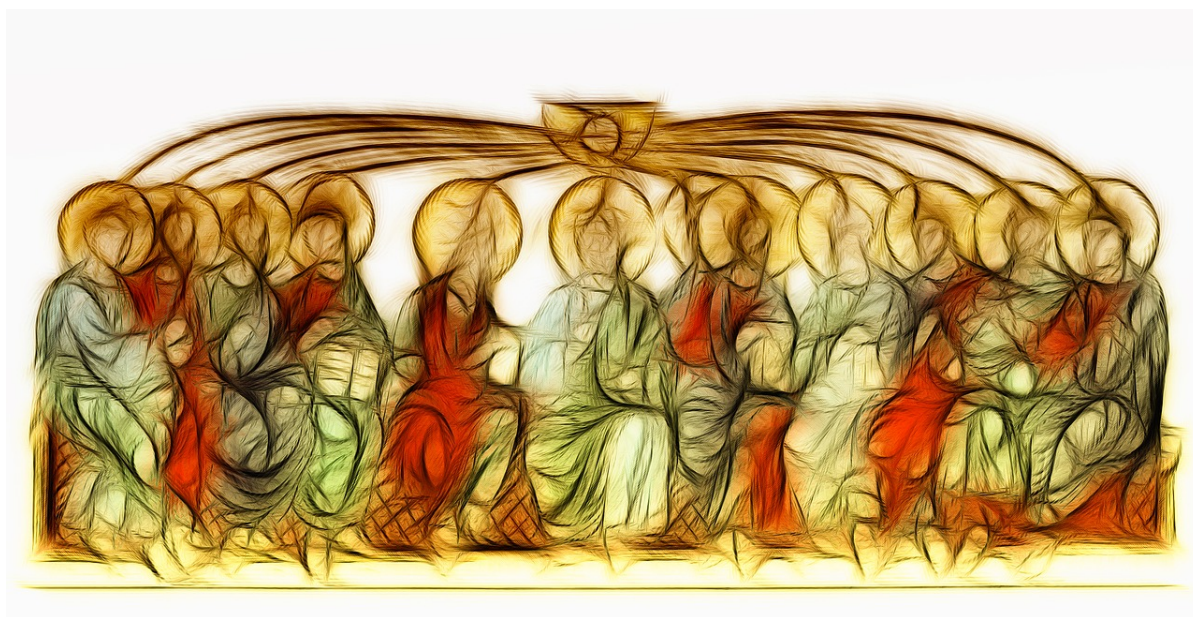


"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf:

[View this email in your browser](#)

Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20



The Advocates

We celebrated Pentecost in June. In Romania, this is actually a pretty big holiday, with most places closing down for a day or two in observance. In the West, Pentecost doesn't seem to be that big of a deal. I know I never thought much about it at all. But if we can place ourselves in the shoes of the first

disciples of Christ, this day was huge. Of course, the resurrection was important, but the demeanor of the church didn't change all that much immediately following Christ's resurrection. Just as Jesus found the disciples huddled up in a house after he first arose, so we find the disciples all gathered together in one room in Acts 2. It isn't until after the Spirit comes that we see an outward movement of the church in the world, with boldness and effectiveness.

One of the titles given to the Spirit is "Advocate" (Jn. 14:26). Jesus also receives the title of Advocate in I John 2:1, and we see his role of advocacy played out fully in the book of Hebrews. While I don't know that God the Father is explicitly called an advocate, we see in many places in the Old Testament where God is called a "father to the fatherless" and where God is an advocate for those who are oppressed: orphans, widows, and foreigners. To be an advocate is integral to who God is, and to have an advocate is to be elevated and receive power. We see this all throughout the weak characters in the Bible whom God empowered through his advocacy, and we see this clearly play out as the disciples of Christ were emboldened on the Day of Pentecost and beyond.

Unsurprisingly, one of the main things God calls his believers to be are advocates. James tells us that true religion comes in being advocates for the oppressed. Micah tells us that two out of three of God's requirements for us are to love justice and mercy. Job, in declaring his guiltlessness before God, primarily points to his advocacy of the downtrodden: the orphan, widow, the dying, the blind, the lame, the needy, victims of the wicked, and the stranger. As people who are called to be a nation of priests, one of our primary roles in this world is to be advocates for others - advocates of the gospel and of justice.

As we figure out how to be advocates here in our Romanian context, we have identified the Roma community as one area in great need of advocacy. While there are many ways in which the Roma are stigmatized and disadvantaged in society, we are currently working with one family who has their own particular disadvantages. We identified that since this family had a difficult time finding work, we could help them in offsetting some of their costs by helping with chicken coops and raised bed gardens. But as we began to work through this process with the family, along with the short term team we had for their experience with chickens and gardens, we discovered yet more injustice and opportunities for advocacy. The chicken coops and gardens were a no-go, as

the landlord would then raise the rent and undo any benefit.

While we're still in the process of helping this family navigate their circumstances, we've seen that our unsuccessful attempts at advocacy have been meaningful to this Roma family. A few days after we tried the chicken coop idea, I received a text from the family asking if they could have their son baptized. They wanted to move to a different location where they had more family and more opportunity to follow up on the chickens and gardens, but in their culture, you gain the sins of the previous owners of a house when you move in. While we didn't baptize the child, it gave our pastor and another leader in the church the opportunity to discuss what baptism means as well as the importance of being part of a local church. It also gave us an opportunity to be further advocates as we have offered to cut moving expenses by providing transport for their move. A few days after that conversation, the family asked if they could come to church. Unfortunately, the husband's work has prevented them from coming thus far, but we're praying that they will at least be able to make some community events or Sunday evening prayer and get plugged in with our community.

Beyond our ability to advocate for others, we were also able to learn a little more about the importance of others advocating for us. We had our first short-term trip come out - some close family friends from our home church. We were encouraged in so many ways. When we had originally planned the trip, part of the purpose was for Elin to be encouraged by the visit of her friends. Elin was very encouraged that her friends would make the journey to visit her. We were also encouraged by the short-term trip because we received support to move out in ways we haven't been able to before. Being able to make inroads in the Roma community through offering alternative helps, or by making inroads with the women in the community through an art event at the church - we were very encouraged to have our friends come and help us. Even more than this, as representatives of our sending church, our friends brought over resources to help the Roma, letters of encouragement, gifts, and all sorts of other things sent from our church as encouragement to us. They were a tangible reminder of all the ways our supporters are advocates for us from abroad, through prayer, gifts, and word of encouragement. And now they are able to go back to the States and be even better advocates for us, as they have gained a better understanding of our life and ministry here in Romania.

And certainly, we are surrounded by a vast group of advocates, as so many of you pray for us often! We are grateful for the ways that we see others advocating for us, and the way that the Lord has been gracious to use us as advocates for others.

PLEASE PRAY...

- for several children's camps that Derek is participating in during July, and for Catalina as she solo-parents while he's gone
- for a Roma family who has expressed interest in coming to church
- for Atticus's continual battle with asthma, allergies, and ear infections
- for the Roma whom God continues to bring into our lives and we build relationships, especially my acquaintance Nina (pseudonym), who is 15 and due to have her first baby by the end of the month..
- PRAISE for a recent good report, and continued prayer for a healthy pregnancy for Catalina and Baby Girl, Jemma





Top Left: The Walsmans got here safely, with only two bags stuck in Paris. But even that was the Lord's provision because we realized once they got there that we couldn't fit all their luggage in our car anyway, so it was nice that the airlines delivered their luggage to our door the next day. God always provides!

Top Right: Unfortunately a major stomach bug swept through our families, and we got it really badly all at the same time. We had to cancel several of our scheduled ministry activities and stay quarantined for a bit. #reallife

Middle Left: All of our kiddos together - from age 16 down to 1. It was a full house for two weeks for sure!!

Middle Right: The whole group at dinner. Abby jokingly said that the real ministry was cooking for 12 people in our tiny European kitchen! Somehow the parents ended up at the kids' table for this meal! :-)

Bottom Left: Many people from our home church sent donations for us to put together bags to hand out to the Roma beggars, who are usually children. Soaps, shampoos, coloring pages, small toys, socks, etc. And we'll supplement by adding some snacks. We keep a few in our car at a time to give out as needed. Thank you so much to everyone who donated!

Bottom Right: Abby used her love for art to lead three workshops; the one pictured above at a Hungarian Reformed Church in a nearby town, one for the Kids Club at our church, and one for the ladies at our church as an outreach event. We had such fantastic feedback from all three events, and we are

grateful to her for sharing her talents with us to help bring people in our community together.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

6/20/19- [The Dictatorial God](#) by Derek

6/6/19 - [Thanklessness and the Problem of Evil](#) by Derek

Check us out on Facebook! We post on Catalina's ["From Dacula to Transylvania"](#) album so that you can stay up to date with us. You can also follow [our photos on instagram](#) or check out our [video archive](#). But best, of all, you should let us know if you want to join our secret Facebook Group to get more updates!

Support Account Reminders:

- Our teammates, Derek and Shannon Ebbers, have been faithful missionaries to Romania for 11 years now and are seriously the best team leaders God could have possibly provided for us! As is normal for all long-term missionaries, they have recently lost some financial supporters and are looking to make up the loss in their monthly account. Supporting our teammates is a direct way you can be in support of us; if they have to go back to the States for support-raising, that affects the team dynamic and ministry. We would love for you to consider joining our support team by literally supporting our whole team! If you would be interested in reaching out to them, supporting them, or passing their names along to individuals and churches who may have interest in what we're doing in Romania, we would greatly appreciate this. You can [find them here](#).
- If you're interested in one-time giving and would rather support projects, we have a project account for the Romanian church which goes towards things like the youth program, elder trainings, etc. The account is **#94978** for the Romania church plant.



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To make a donation (Account #14088 for Derek and Catalina), (Account #12140 for the Ebbers), or
(Account #94978 Romania church plant for church projects):

<https://www.mtw.org/missionaries/details/derek-and-catalina-kreider>

or

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