

Romania Mission Trip

Memories of Steve Taylor of Mount Gilead Baptist Church

I had the blessing in 2015 of being able to participate in a Goshen mission trip to Romania with a group mostly from Gordonsville Baptist Church. This was my first overseas mission adventure. We went to hold a “sleep away camp” for about 35 middle school aged children from Bucharest who attended the Ruth School. These were mostly Roma (Gypsy) children who were very poor financially (the Roma people are looked down upon in Romania). Most of the kids had never been on a trip outside of Bucharest in a vehicle. As we embarked on our trip in a bus each child was given a plastic bag so I asked why. As it turned out, some of them got motion sickness.

Our first venture was to tour Bran Castle not far from our retreat that was in Transylvania. It is the preserved castle of the real “Count Dracula”. It was massive, beautiful and very impressive. We were all enthralled.

Our project that week was to hold a sort of Vacation Bible School (12 hours a day) with crafts, meals, worship, singing, outdoor games, and campfires. What a joy it was for us to interact with these kids that were expectant, unassuming, appreciative and loving. Language was not a barrier. Each activity had an interpreter that came with us from the Ruth School. We also communicated by pointing, demonstrating, gesturing, etc.

We were prohibited from evangelizing the kids directly. However, we did sing Christian songs, show Christian themed video and show them our love.

The children slept in a dormitory wing of the building where each room had several beds. In the morning we found all the beds in each room pushed together. We were told that being poor, they all had to share beds in their homes and were uncomfortable sleeping apart.

I think the children enjoyed the experience very much (maybe as much as I did). All of us on the team bonded with many of the children who were so loving and fun. I'll never forget the experience.

One morning I got up early and went out for a walk before the kids got up. It was a beautiful setting looking up at the mountains. As I walked back close to the retreat there were three girls smiling and waving at me out of their second-floor bedroom window. I took a picture of them which epitomized the trip for me.

