



# Beyond my dreams!

Manda (& Josh) Pidgeon

It doesn't seem to matter how many times I reassure myself, but again and again I confess my doubt of God's provision. And, again and again God rebukes me, humbles me and reminds me just whose hands this world and my life is in. As I read just recently, "If we have focused too narrowly on the dream we thought the Savior would give us, then it is the dream that has become the savior, not Jesus." - M. Craig Barnes

I have been in utter awe over the past two months, watching God work in ways I couldn't have imagined. Our first RWN conference was amazing, and certainly beyond anything I had in mind. My hope was that the Roma workers who came would be blessed and encouraged in their own faith, as well as equipped with more resources and strategies for how they can nurture their ministries when they went home.

I never imagined the feedback I would receive of just how this conference would touch the workers hearts and move them to action. From comments like "I wish we'd had this conference five to ten years ago- If we'd had it then, I would have shaped my ministry differently!" to "I'm glad I was able to come to the conference with my husband. He would have come home and wanted to enact the principles he'd learnt, especially about self care, and I would have told him to 'get back to work.' But, because I've heard this message too, I can help my husband as we grow healthy rhythms into our life, marriage and ministry."

Being the first conference, and receiving the inspiring and constructive feedback from those who came, my mind is already becoming overloaded with ideas for 2018's conference- now I just have to remember to implement those self-care principles for myself and steady the pace. Long-term ministry is indeed a marathon, not a sprint!

So what has the adrenaline rush of the past two months looked like, considering we're already more than a month post-conference.

Before leaving for the conference, there was naturally a mad rush to get everything in place, from people, to printing, and working out what I needed to take from Australia and what I could get once arriving in Râmnicu Vâlcea.

The lead up also included several weddings, including our friends Justin and Cornelia's, the day before we flew out; as well as birthday get-togethers, our local Anzac dawn service, SMBC 100 years service of thanksgiving, and all the last minute dashes to the shops every time I remembered something.

After the long 30 or so hours from Sydney-Doha-Bucharesti-Vâlcea, we had a good 12 hour sleep to swap us over to the right time zone. Though my teammates Mike and Elvira were on Home Assignment in the USA, we enjoyed getting to know Elvira's parents who were looking after their house. It did, however, mean that I was translating between them and Mum right from the beginning, but it was helpful to get my

## Please Pray...

» **Praise** God for every little detail that God brought to fruition for the RWN conference. **Pray** that He will continue to work in the hearts of the workers who came, and especially as they implement what they learnt in their lives and ministries.

» **Pray** for as Josh and I as we negotiate an agreement with our landlord to take on the whole house we are living in, as it is forced by council to become single occupancy.

» **Pray** that the Lord will continue to raise up more financial partners to provide for this ministry, and also for more opportunities to share with churches and individuals about the great things God is doing.



Sharing the love of God in Romania & Australia

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mind into gear for the ensuing three weeks. It also meant I was driving from the day after our arrival- on the 'wrong' side- though thankfully the transition is a lot quicker these days. (It was nice to drive my van again which has been well looked after in my absence, and putting another 2000km on it whilst we were there.)

The rest of the pre-conference week was spent communicating with the speakers and others involved with preparation; and also daily trips to withdraw RWN sponsorship funds, as it couldn't all be withdrawn in one go.

The Sunday before the conference, Mum, Anca (my translator / music coordinator and overall sidekick) drove the 4.5-5 hour trip from Vâlcea to Lacul Surduc. My ITeams Australia colleagues, John and Stephen had arrived not long beforehand from The Netherlands and Spain respectively, and it was great to catch up with them and run through the program as we got ready for everyone to arrive throughout Monday.

With some driving over 520km to get to conference, it meant that people arrived in dribs and drabs. The majority of our 43 attendees had arrived by the time we began our first session at 2pm and I gave a presentation on 'What is Networking and the vision of the RWN?!' as well as playing some get-to-know-you activities. And, after dinner, we had some worship time and a few people shared their testimonies, as well as during other times throughout the week.

Tuesday saw the workshops begin, covering topics throughout the week that related to Roma ministry, beginning with 'Small Business Initiatives'. The other topics were: Preventing Human Trafficking among Roma; Healthy Rhythms for life and Ministry; Effective Strategy and Understanding of the Roma-Way; Roma planting Roma Churches; and, Obstacles in Roma Ministry. I must say, all our speakers did a fabulous job and shared some very helpful things that everyone was able to take away. After the workshop on self-care, one wife came to me and said "my husband will hear this topic, won't he?! He needs to and I don't think I can explain it all." To which I reassured her that everyone will get to hear all the workshops, but just in varying orders depending on which group they were in.

The focus of our devotions each morning was on Isaiah 58, with Stephen leading us through four key areas. It was very encouraging to hear again of God's heart for justice and yet His love for His people and every generation. During the worship time, all the songs except one, were sung in both Romanian and English, and it's been encouraging to hear feedback that 'I believe: The Creed' has now been introduced to one of the Roma churches! It's the little things! However, knowing the Roma passion and ingenuity for music, and now with more connections made, there is certainly room to introduce more Roma music for the next conference. ;)

Throughout the week, each small group prepared a pantomime, skit, poem etc., which was presented at our special dinner on the Thursday night. It was great to watch everyone getting into it and using their creativity as they illustrated what 'Rooted together in Christ' means to them. This was also revealed as people reflected, writing on coloured leaves which together made a tree. As one worker wrote: "Rooted in Christ for me: God is the one who sustains me and bares fruit. Upholds me and is my foundation. Rooted in Christ I gain His family." And, as another wrote: "For me this conference was an extraordinary experience. It was encouraging, challenging, and an impulse to go and fight more for the Kingdom of God. I discovered a new family in Christ. Thank you for this possibility to be part of the family of Christ. Be blessed, with love in Christ."

The opportunity to simply attend the conference was a great blessing, especially for those who couldn't attend by their own means. I want to again give my sincere thanks to those who generously gave of what God has given them, to sponsor workers to be blessed. It is truly a picture of the body of Christ empowering one another.

Friday afternoon, after packing up and saying goodbye to everyone, Mum and I drove about 5 hours to Ghindari, where we met an RWN family who were unable to come to conference. This was followed by visits to two other workers/teams in Cluj and Târnăveni, before heading back to Vâlcea. It was really helpful for me to meet with these workers and see some of their ministries, as we discussed their ministries and dreams and how the RWN can empower them. There are certainly many needs among the Roma ministries, such as having materials translated and finding someone who can teach a group how to use all the candle making equipment they've had donated, to enable them to potentially turn it into a small business opportunity. Of course the greatest all round need and request from people is more workers! Do you know anyone with a heart and passion for the marginalised Roma people in Romania?

Thank you for walking with us, and especially for your prayers over the past few months- they were certainly felt!

In His hands, Manda (& Josh) Pidgeon.



Frederiksborg Castle, Denmark- as Mum and I enjoyed a week of rest before flying home



Vivid, Sydney

## Upcoming Events

RIDE for Refugees-  
Sydney- 27th August  
Toowoomba- 3rd September  
Brisbane- 10th September  
To RIDE, Donate, Volunteer-  
go to [rideforrefugees.com.au](http://rideforrefugees.com.au)

24th Sept- 1st Oct-  
Scripture Union- Boys Ag  
Camp, Mundarlo NSW

## Enabling life and ministry to continue...

I give great thanks to God and to all those who have walked with me over the past 9 years that I have served with International Teams. It has been a joy and a privilege to watch God at work as I have served.

God has again and again shown me that, whilst I make guidelines, God continues to bring His plan to fruition, and I need to keep trusting that He knows best. I also need to keep trusting that He will prepare and equip me for each step forward.

Over the past year, Josh and I have been very blessed to have an affordable place to live in Baulkham Hills, which is pretty rare for Sydney. Due to unique circumstances, however, our place is about to change from dual to single-occupancy, naturally resulting in our rent going up to a more median price. With Josh still studying full time until the end of 2017 and working part time, and my budget currently at 44%, we have some challenging and somewhat stressful decisions to make, as I'm sure you can understand.

More than anything, we would appreciate your prayers for wisdom and discernment as we decide what the best way forward is, and that if we are to stay in our current place, that God will raise up more financial partners to cover the extra rent we will need, as well as other regular bills and day-to-day costs.

Please pray about how God might be calling you to partner with us as we continue to step forward in faith and consider where God is leading us, both now here in Sydney, and as we plan further ahead.

Please pray also, as we begin the process of Josh's application to join International Teams, in preparation for heading to Romania together once his studies are complete. It would be great to grow our financial support to a level where we can not only afford to live now to cover both my ITeams roles, but also so we can be ready to fly when the time arrives. Even \$20/month can make a big difference.

As part of International Teams growth and the strengthening of its strategy, this month has seen a new giving page go live, to enable smoother processing of all funds given. In the coming weeks, individual giving pages will also be made available so you can give directly to a worker or a project.

For the moment, however, you can go to [www.iteams.org/give](http://www.iteams.org/give) and select my name under 'Specific Worker'. (or you can select Roma-Workers Network under 'Specific Project' to go towards other RWN mission costs).

Acknowledging our need for a significant increase in financial support, and after discussions with the ITeams leadership, I am planning to allocate some specific time to partnership raising over the coming few months. As such, I'd love to invite myself to come and talk at your church or Bible Study group to share what God is doing, as we continue to watch God work over the next decade. I'd especially love to share about the Roma-Workers Network Conference we just had in May! God's work amongst the Roma is only just beginning! Please let me know if we can come and share with you, or even meet with you one-on-one for coffee or a meal.

Please continue to pray that He will provide for our needs, so that we can continue to serve without all the extra stress, that is unfortunately often weighing heavily on our everyday reality. It is a joy and a privilege to serve. xx

## Impending Practical Needs...

- ① My current laptop is on its' last legs, though I'm extremely grateful that it got through May's RWN conference.

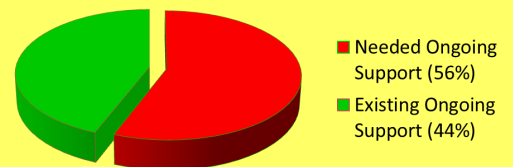
Because both my Member Care Coordinator and Roma-Workers Network roles rely heavily on being able to communicate with workers via email and Skype etc, I will be needing to purchase a new laptop within the next few months.

If you are willing and able to help me purchase a new laptop, please go to: [www.iteams.org/give](http://www.iteams.org/give)

Please select my name to give a one-off donation, and write in the comments that it's toward my new laptop.

- ② I am starting to plan towards creating a website for the Roma-Workers Network. Having now received some feedback from those who came to the RWN conference, I would love to find someone who has more knowledge in this field to brainstorm the possibilities. If you or someone you know would be able to help me with this project, please let me know.

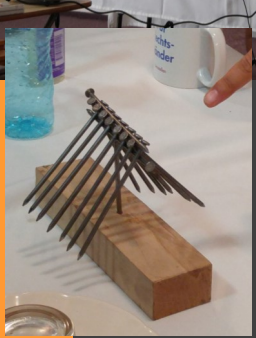
### Manda's Ongoing Support



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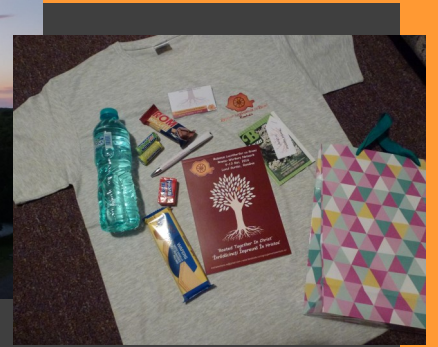
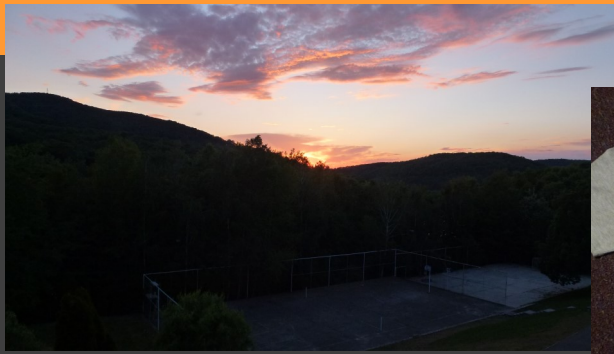


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