



Traditions vs Belief!

Manda & Josh Pidgeon

Traditions vs Belief...

It's always a privilege to share our story with churches and small groups. When I was asked to give a talk about what Christmas means to me, what it looks like in Romania and about our ministry, I deliberated for quite a while about what I could share. With any talk, my aim is always to encourage people to put their own faith into action wherever God has placed them. For us, that has been Sydney for the last while.

It can be easy during this time of partnership raising, to live in a state of limbo and waiting, but the real work is already happening- in our local neighbourhood, as we travel to Melbourne and other places, and still with the Roma-Workers Network in Romania through the internet.

This Christmas, I've been challenged about the importance of creating healthy traditions within our own family, as we raise Isla to know the truth of Christmas, and how to "live in the world and not of the world." For us, we will have to decide what traditions we'll keep from those we've grown up with, and as we move to Romania, what we might adopt from their culture. Perhaps we'll begin putting our clean shoes out on the evening of 5th December for St Nicolae (St Nicholas, not Santa) to put a gift inside.

But whatever traditions we accept and

discard, the most important thing is that these don't contradict our beliefs.

I have shared with many of you, that in Romania, I deliberately wear gold jewellery and choose not to cover my head as many do. There have been many times that I've been asked what denomination I'm from. When I say I'm a follower of Jesus, but in Sydney I attended a Baptist church, this has often been met with a sense of surprise and response such as "you can't be Baptist- you don't have your head covered, and you're wearing gold jewellery." My response is often along the lines of "... that's tradition and not belief..." which opens the path for conversation about the important difference between the two.

I would like to challenge you to think about what traditions you have in your life, and how these reflect what you believe.

Melbourne in October & January...

Josh: "In October we spent 10 days in Melbourne, while I completed a course on preparing to learn a second language. Introducing me to a variety of learning methods and tools, the course had us develop a language learning plan. This largely revolves around having a language helper who natively speaks the language. Praise God that I have been referred to a Romanian man living in

Please Pray...

» **Pray** that Isla will continue to improve her sleeping routine, especially during this time of teething. Pray also for our health, energy and rest.

» **Pray** for safe travels to and from Melbourne, and **Pray** that the Transition Training will equip us well as a family. **Praise** God for good connections so far with the new churches we have shared with, and pray for those we will connect with in January.

» **Praise** God for His provision so far, and please **pray** that He will raise up our necessary financial shortfall to allow us to move back to Romania in March.

» **Pray** that the new RWN website will be used to its potential, and that workers will 'own' it.

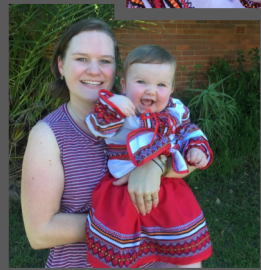
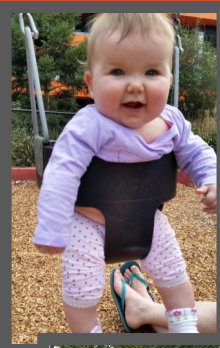


Bringing the hope of Jesus to the Roma people in Romania

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Western Sydney. I have begun meeting with him each week, and am gradually learning more and more words, and learning how to put them together. Pray that I would be able to absorb the various characteristics of what I have already learned, to then build on it. Please pray that God would also connect us with a local language helper once we move to Romania, to continue after we have moved. Pray that there would be ministry opportunities with my language helpers even as I learn the language.

In a few weeks, we will be returning to Melbourne for further training. This training is aimed at the personal emotional and mental upheaval of moving halfway around the world. Please pray that I would understand and process all that will be taught. Pray too, that I would cope with the intensity of this 10 day training, as it will probably be quite draining."

(Manda) Over the 10 days, this training will help equip us better as a family. There is a wonderful team leading the sessions, including a team who will look after the babies and kids. This will be the first time Isla will be with someone other than us for any length of time, and I'm a little anxious about how she (and I) will cope. I'd really appreciate you upholding us in prayer during this time, and that Isla will adapt well to having someone else look after her.

Whilst we're already down south, we are taking the opportunity to share our story and plans with several new churches. We have been invited to stay with a couple from the local church on Phillip Island for a few days, and hope to be introduced to several of the pastors down there, as well to share with a couple of churches. We will then stay for several days in Glen Waverley and will share with another Romanian church and hopefully another, though plans are still being finalised. Please pray for this time, that those we share with would be encouraged, and also that God will continue to raise up more supporters to partner with us.

Budgets, Partnership Raising & Leaving...

Many people continue to ask us when we are leaving for Romania. The answer is that we are aiming to leave in March. However, as part of International Teams' requirements, we are not allowed to book our flights until we have 100% of our ongoing financial support raised or at least pledged. We currently have about 43% of our budget raised, meaning we still have a way to go.

We are now getting to the important end of needing to raise the remaining financial and prayer support, and we would like you to pray about joining our team. If you feel God prompting you to do so, please go to iteams.org.au/pidgeonjm and make this known, as this will help us know how much more we need before we can book our flights. Our greatest need is for regular ongoing monthly commitments, however big or small, as with any income, it helps us ensure we have enough funds for each month. One off gifts are still very helpful though, as they make up the difference in what we might be lacking. Can you help us leave in March?

Isla's adventures...

Our little girl is getting more adventurous and social by the day. She loves smiling, waving and saying "hello" to just about anyone who gives her attention. She also gets excited from around 2pm each day saying "hello Dad", knowing that it can't be too long till Daddy gets home from work. And, "Hello Isla", well I think she's still working out how to put that in context ;) Either way, she is enjoying being on the move as she commando crawls around, bears her own weight as she stands and tries to walk whilst we hold her hands, and runs around her activity table at a pace that has us ensuring our toes are out of the way. We'd appreciate your prayers for Isla to continue to improve on her sleep, especially as she now has two teeth with more starting to push through. And, most importantly, please pray that she will know how much Jesus loves her!

In His hands, Manda & Josh, and Isla

Photos: Sharing at Stanhope Anglican Church's ladies Christmas dinner; Isla's first swing in Melbourne; Romania's 100th Birthday (with it's current borders); Our Christmas tree.

Upcoming Events

*Transition Training
@ Belgrave Heights, VIC
Jan 3-12th*

*Sharing with several
churches @ Phillip Island
Jan 12-17th*

*Sharing @
First Romanian Baptist
Church, Endeavour Hills
@ 10:30am, Jan 20th*

*Aiming to leave for
Romania in March 2019*