



'It is what it is!'

Manda & Josh Pidgeon

The first half of this year has been a whirlwind of activity, learning and adrenaline, but we can't thank you enough for your prayers, love and support which has seen us not only survive but thrive.

Isla continues to be our little trooper. Her calm yet cheeky nature makes us fall more in love with her each day. Her newly found laugh is rather adorable, and her ability to roll around is now keeping us on our toes. To think that, in her short four and half months, Isla's been to 3 other countries and on 7 different planes, let alone all the driving around- God really knew what was needed in our little miracle.

Before we knew we were pregnant, our family organised to fly to Fiji to celebrate my Mum's 'significant' Birthday. So, knowing that Isla would be young, but that we would have the support of family, we continued with this plan. With Isla being just 7 weeks old, 17 of our immediate and extended family, all flew to Fiji, staying in the one resort. It was certainly a special time away and, in some ways, a forced rest, and a good test run with Isla for the bigger trip to come.

NEW WEBSITE...

After a few delays, but just before our time away in Fiji, we managed to finalise and launch the English part of our new website for the Roma-Workers Network,

on 7th April. I am incredibly thankful to Jeremy and Magda, who worked with me on the website over an 8 month period, and especially as they also had a baby girl just six weeks before Isla was born. Having the new website has already been a big blessing as we have been able to start creating worker profiles, and were able to use it for our conference registration process.

Over the coming months we hope to have the website available in both English and Romanian, as well as to have the workers engaging more and more with each other through this network platform.

RWN CONFERENCE...

The phrase Josh and I used most days in the lead up to and during the conference was "it is what it is". The conference came together well, however, we had changes to the program up until the Monday of conference, and we had workers contacting us until the Wednesday saying that they'd just heard about the conference, and asking whether it was too late to still come. Thankfully, having worked in Romanian ministry for over a decade, this rarely phases or frustrates me now, but each change just makes me smile and reminds me that this is God's ministry, and He is doing His thing with it.

You could say that the conference was another small glimpse of what heaven

Please Pray...

» **Praise** God for safe travel, good health and helpful conversations with workers and colleagues whilst we were in Romania.

» **Pray** that we will continue to find a healthy balance between our family life, work and ministry. And, **pray** that we will continue to be growing in our own faith.

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

» **Pray** that the new website will be used to its potential and for the ongoing effects from the conference in the lives of those who attended.



Sharing the love of God in Romania & Australia

E: bubbalewy@hotmail.com | W: manda.pidgeon@iteams.org | Website: www.mandapidgeon.com

International Teams | PO BOX 1123, Baulkham Hills NSW 1755 | www.iteams.org.au | 02 9890 2244

will be, as we learnt throughout the week what it means to "Shine The Light Together". We heard from three different people on this topic, as they shared from God's Word each morning, and encouraged all the workers in their own faith.

The network as a whole is aimed at "encouraging, equipping and empowering Roma-Workers to reach Roma people and communities with the Gospel." The conference is just one aspect of this vision. Seeing the workers caring for their whole selves by taking a week out to physically rest, be fed spiritually, and prayerfully return to their ministries refreshed, is just what was needed. Unfortunately, due to ministry or other commitments, not everyone was able to come for the whole week. However, even to have them there for a day or two was a blessing, as they were able to see and understand the aim of the network for themselves, and to help them to understand that the RWN is not aimed to be "yet another" thing to add to their busy schedules.

The workshops themselves were quite profound and touched a lot of hearts, as we each analyzed our various ministries with the Roma. The workshop topics included "Mutual Trust", "Rejection and Healing", a "Jesus-centred Youth Ministry Strategy" and a time of Q&As. We also heard from Paul, whose inspirational testimony included how God brought him back to life after being dead in the morgue, being tortured and imprisoned with Richard Wurmbrand and Brother Andrew, and working with the Roma people for over 3 decades- if that's not a motivation to keep pressing on in ministry regardless of suffering, then I don't know what is.

The 50 workers who came to conference all had two things in common- they love Jesus, and they work with Roma in some capacity. It was so encouraging seeing them put their denominational and cultural backgrounds aside, and focusing on the reason we were all together. It's also been encouraging to hear from workers over this past month since conference, that a number of workers are already coming alongside each other and reaching out. Please join us in praying that this stone that has skimmed the surface, will continue to create a ripple effect across the whole of Romania.

One worker who came said "It was a great time meeting new people and being able to be part of the workshops and everything we have learned here, it was great, and it has great value for us in our ministry with Roma. It was a refreshment for my soul and it was a good relaxing time for my body in this beautiful view and panorama here, but most important was that I was fed by The Word. Thank you to you who have given. Your gift, small or big, prayer or money, made this possible and this conference was possible because of God and because of you guys, so a big thank you for all of your investment in this conference and all of your hard work and to make this possible, and on behalf of my family, thank you and may God bless your efforts."

I would like to add my thanks to all who prayed for the conference and to those who provided sponsorships to enable workers to attend, who otherwise wouldn't have been able to come. It was a true blessing, and enabled us to also support several workers with their travel costs, as well as giving some additional gifts to several who helped make the conference happen. I can't thank them enough, especially whilst organising a conference from the other side of the world, and with a new baby.

POST CONFERENCE VISITS...

As soon as we had packed up from the conference centre, Mum, Josh, Isla and I drove about 7 hours up to Baia Mare in the north of the country. Arriving about 11pm, we stayed in a small pensiune (B&B) before the next morning meeting with a family who are working with Roma. I did a cultural training with the wife during my Timișoara days, so it was wonderful to meet the rest of her family and to mutually share about our ministries. We also had the opportunity to briefly catch up with another old friend that I trained with in Timișoara before heading south, and the following day spent a few hours in Alba Iulia. We visited the citadel and St Michael's Catholic Cathedral, as well as enjoying some yummy food at a festival that was happening at the time. Being a sweltering summer day, however, we continued on driving south and arrived back in Râmnicu Vâlcea in time for dinner.

It was so special spending time with our colleagues Mike and Elvira, and seeing some other friends also. Isla certainly loved all the cuddles and attention, though by this stage of the trip was sick of being in the car and in need of a rest. We extended our stay in Vâlcea by a day, allowing time to catch up on washing and sorting out all the conference materials, but particularly to let Isla have an extra days rest. Please pray for Mike and Elvira's family and especially Elvira's Mum, as it

Upcoming Events

Sharing at
'Hope for Europe' Night
Tues, 24th July

Isla's Dedication service
8:30am on 5th August
@ Castle Hill Baptist

Sharing at CHBC
26th August

Language Training
(for Josh)
6-15th Oct - Melbourne

Transition Training
(for Josh & Manda)
3-12 January - Melbourne

was sad to hear that Elvira's Dad passed away within a week of us leaving, after suffering from dementia for several years.

Our next stop was Bucharest, where we had the opportunity to meet two more workers over two days. It was lovely to meet these ladies and those they work with, and to once again share about the RWN and hear about and see some of their ministries. Please pray that these new connections, and all those made throughout the trip, will help grow the RWN in strength over the coming months and years, and that we will have wisdom about the next steps to take.

After our last meeting, we headed straight to the airport, concluding our trip. In need of some down time after such a full schedule, we stopped over in Singapore for three nights on the way home, and enjoyed taking Isla to Singapore Zoo. The humidity did take its toll, but she did love the elephants! :)

OUR VAN...

One more thank you goes to those who contributed towards the cost of our van several years ago. It is a true blessing to have a reliable car when we're in Romania, and also to now have a car seat which we took over there for Isla. In our absence, the car continues to be a blessing to our colleagues and several others doing ministry in Vâlcea. It's been used for summer camps (VBSs) that the local church have run, along with some teams from the UK. Along with other one-off events, it's also been used for running the Sunday School program at one of the Roma villages, and to bring the kids to church each month, which wouldn't otherwise be possible. The van has certainly been a worthwhile investment, which I expect will only continue, and especially once we move back to Romania next year.

TRAINING & PREPARING TO MOVE...

With the conference now finished, there is still a lot editing of materials to do, as well as getting all the workers onto, and using, the website. Alongside this we will now be ramping up our preparations for moving to Romania in around March next year.

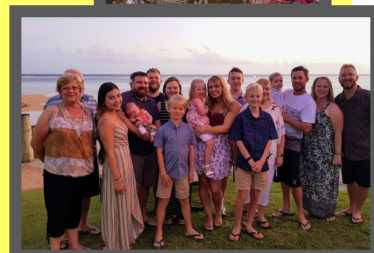
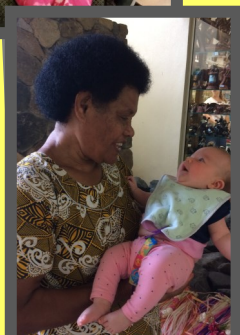
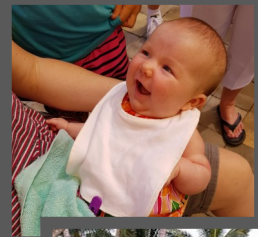
In both October and January we will be flying down to Melbourne for two separate trainings. The first is a language training which will be just for Josh, whilst I hope to be able to meet with several different churches, and hopefully be able to share about our ministry. We will both attend January's Transition Training, for Josh to prepare to move cultures, and for both of us as we transition as a family. Having done both of these trainings as a single and having worked in Member Care, I know the value in preparing well. Unfortunately, however, at this stage we don't have the funds available for both trainings, flights and accommodation for October's training. We know God is able to provide if He wants us there, but we continue to step forwards in faith. We estimate October's MILL training to cost about \$2500 including training, flights, accommodation and food. And, and we anticipate January's Transition Training to cost \$3300 for the training (accommodation and meals included) and flights. If God lays this on your heart to support us financially in this way, please go to www.iteams.org.au/pidgeonjm to give.

Another step in our preparations, includes sharing with churches and small groups about our dreams and vision for this ministry. We will briefly be sharing at all three services at Castle Hill Baptist on 26th August (8:30am, 10:30am, 6:00pm). We are also preparing to share in more details at a "Hope For Europe" Night, on Tuesday 24th July at 7:30pm, at the ITeams office- 27 Iron St, North Parramatta. If you know of any churches or small groups in Sydney or Melbourne, or perhaps elsewhere, who would be interested in hearing about our ministry through the Roma-Workers Network in Romania, please let us know, as we would love to be fully supported and ready to fly come March next year. The reality of our move is becoming more real with each day that passes, but we can't do this without you- nor do we want to!

And one last thing for now, is that we will be having a dedication service for Isla as we seek to raise and nurture her with the Love of the Lord. We will be having this at our home church, Castle Hill Baptist on 5th August, and you are more than welcome to join us. It means a lot to us to have the support of our family, friends and church family, and especially with so many changes ahead, we recognise the importance of providing a healthy foundation for Isla to grow up in.

In His hands,

Manda & Josh, and Isla





Reteaua Lucrătorilor cu Rromi
Roma-Workers Network
4-8 June, 2018
Vlăhița, Romania



'Shining The Light Together'
'Să Luminăm Împreună'

romaworkers.ro@gmail.com | www.facebook.com/groups/romaworkers.ro/
www.romaworkersnetwork.com

A message from an RWN worker:

"Dear Manda, I just want to say thank you for what you do for my country. This week, things might get hard, but do not discourage, because it is not your fight, God is fighting for you. I can't wait to go through this week!"

