



January 12, 2010

Dear Family and Friends,

Here is a picture of me with my friend Alexandra Musha, a little girl that I know from my work at the orphanage ministry on Saturday mornings. If I were about 5 years older and more mature, I would like to adopt her!

I am working in the orphanage with my friends the Mathers who run Stepping Forward Romania Ministries. They work with abandoned children who live in government run institutions in Bucharest. The orphan problem began under the dictator Ceausescu who ruled Romania under Communism for 40 years. When Communism fell in 1989, about 100,000 abandoned children were found to be living in orphanages under difficult conditions. I was one of these children who would have spent my life in an orphanage if I had not been adopted, because my birth mother was not able to care for me because of poverty and her family situation.

Although Romania has recently joined the European Union and things are improving here, it is not likely that these institutions will be able to be closed in the near future, so there are still children who need love, attention and to hear the gospel message. Stepping Forward Romania is building a camp in the country for these kids to be able get out of the city and enjoy a great camp experience and to hear the gospel message. I feel blessed to be able to spend time with these children. This is an aspect of my ministry that I did not anticipate when God lead me to teach in Romania, but I am so lucky to be able to spend time with these kids. A funny story, the Mathers ministry raised money to buy Christmas gifts for all of the children that we visit on Saturday morning and each child got to ask for what they specifically wanted. Well, a lot of the little girls wanted baby dolls. And we got ones that cried when they are moved around and tipped over. You should have heard all of the crying in the room the day that we were wrapping all of these baby dolls for the little girls in the orphanage!

I am back in Bucharest after my crazy but amazing 10 day trip to FL. We are finishing up the first semester of school in the next few weeks. I have learned a lot about teaching this fall and I feel like I am becoming a much better teacher as I am mentored by experienced teachers at the school and as I learn by

doing....I am thinking about studying for a teaching degree when I begin my college education.

Just previous to this trip, Bucharest Christian Academy had our Christmas Concert. The concert went very well. I was the director of the elementary program and for my first effort at directing, I think it went very well! I also had the chance to sing with the Senior High Choir. If you are on facebook, you can view several parts of the concert on my facebook page. It was a wonderful night. The snow was falling so hard that we had to start the concert an hour early so we could all get to our homes and then the next day school was called off for a snow day. Bucharest is very beautiful in the snow. At Christmas each sector of the city decorates the streets with many lights and Christmas trees. I am not used to living where it is cold, and when I was in FL, I had to get some jackets, gloves, scarves, etc. to bring back with me!

I was able to visit with many of you when I was in FL! There was not enough time to do everything I wanted and spend as much time as I wanted to with each person, but it was wonderful to be back and to see people even for a short while. It was great to be able to join the FMEFC church worship team, even if only for one Sunday!

I am excited to teach for my second semester. I am planning lessons for my elementary students and I will be helping with a play in the senior high choir class. We are leaning towards Seussical the Musical.

One of the things on my mind will be praying to discern where God is leading me for next year. I could stay in Romania for another year now and work in one or more of my various ministries before I start college, or I can go back to FL and begin college with the plan of returning to Romania when I have my degree. I do feel a call on my life to work in Romania. If you would pray about this for me, I would be grateful!

I am excited to have been asked to play guitar at the wedding of my friends Nate and Amanda, (Amanda is the daughter of two BCA teachers) this March!

I will have a spring break in March and I think I will stay in Bucharest and explore the city. I never have quite enough time to do that!

Well, that is what is going on right now in Bucharest! Thank you all for your love, support and prayers! Here are a few pictures that I took. The first one is out my kitchen window the night I returned to Bucharest from FL. It was snowing and very beautiful. The second is me riding the subway to school. The third is the

little path I take to get from the alley that I live on to the big street where I catch the tram. The last is my apartment building.



Take care and God bless you. Mike