

August 2024

# MISSIONS

**Timotheus  
Bible Institute  
Building Up the  
Church in Europe**

**TeamWorkers Abroad  
A Construction Project in Peru**

**MOP 2024  
Six Days of Missions Education**





# THINKING IT THROUGH

BY ALLAN WILKS

## See for Yourself

John 1:35–49

John the Baptist had disciples. But, as he preached, called for repentance, and baptized day after day near the Jordan River, he told his disciples that his ministry was all preparatory for someone else. Then, one day, while two disciples were standing nearby, John suddenly pointed to Jesus, who was walking by, and said, likely with great excitement, “Behold the Lamb of God,” or simply, “See for yourself—the Lamb of God!”

We might try to imagine the disciples’ thoughts at that moment, but the Bible doesn’t tell us. We do know, however, that the men followed Jesus. Seeing Him for themselves and being armed with John’s testimony was enough.

John the Baptist had experienced a moment like this earlier. As he was baptizing Jesus, a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) This was God’s great gift to John: an invitation to see for himself the identity of the One he had been preaching about.

After seeing Jesus, John’s two disciples wanted to know where He was staying, presumably so they could spend more time with Him. The Lord graciously responded to their inquiry with an invitation to know more: “See for yourselves,” He said.

One of those two disciples was Andrew. He was so excited that he went to his brother Simon (soon to become Peter) and told him that they had found the Messiah. Maybe Simon was skeptical—after all, that was a bold claim—so Andrew’s response was to take him to Jesus. We can imagine Andrew saying, “Just come and see for yourself!” Peter did, and this interaction was the beginning of his lifelong loyalty to Christ.

Nathanael was a skeptic when Philip made a similar claim about the Lord. “See for yourself,” replied Philip, and Nathanael, too, was completely won over when he met Jesus.

Just as those disciples received invitations to see for themselves, so the apostle John invites us, in the fourth Gospel, to see

who this amazing person is. The entire book is just such an invitation, and by the end of it, John feels he hasn’t even scratched the surface of what can be said about Jesus (John 21:25).

This invitation is at the heart of missions: to see for ourselves who this man is and then to follow Him. John begins his Gospel with the famous words: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The essential idea of a word is communication, and this is exactly what the Lord Jesus is. After centuries of God communicating His holiness and love via the Scriptures and the prophets, He sent His precious Son and invited the world to see who He really was.

Of course, we can’t literally see Jesus today. John’s purpose is to allow us to see Jesus through his eyes. And countless people have become followers of Christ simply from reading John’s account.

**This invitation is at the heart of missions: to see for ourselves who this man is and then to follow Him.**

This idea of seeing for ourselves is especially relevant in our postmodern age. To the person who avoids any discussion on truth or doctrine, we may say, “Just see for yourself. Meet Jesus Himself; study Him; learn from Him; listen to Him; see His purity and love and compassion and authority. Then, you will understand who God is, who you are, why you are precious to Him, and what must happen for you to enter His glorious kingdom of light.”

John has much to tell us about Jesus—how He is light and life and truth and resurrection and food and drink. But, mostly, John tells us to come to the foot of the cross and see for ourselves. Ralph E. Hudson expressed it well:

At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light  
And the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith I received my sight,  
And now, I am happy all the day!<sup>1</sup>

*Lord, may I be more like You every day so others may see You and come to know You, whom to know is life everlasting.* ■

*Allan Wilks, CMML vice president, technology*

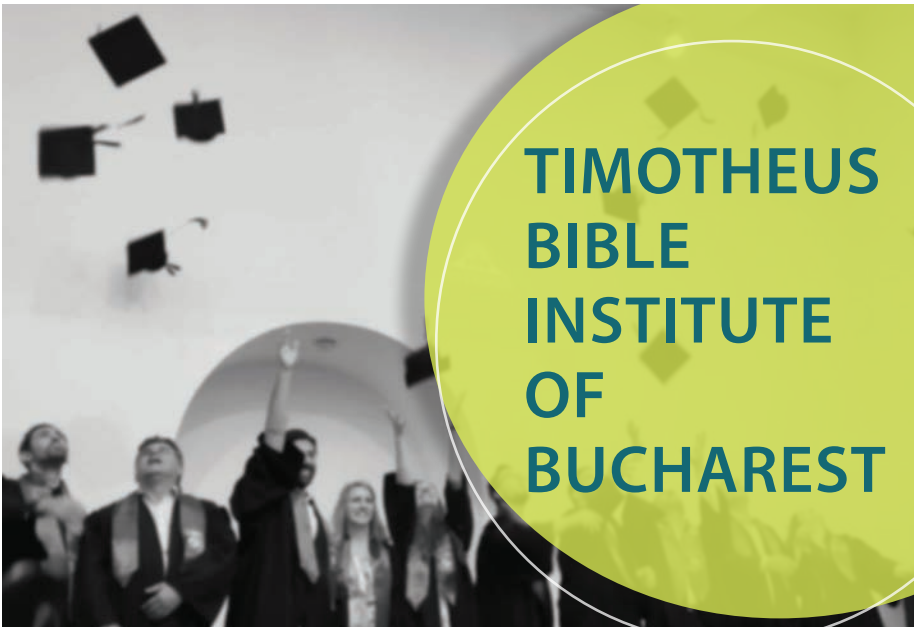
<sup>1</sup> Isaac Watts and Ralph E. Hudson (refrain), “Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?” 1885.

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FRONT COVER: TBI Faculty and graduates in Bucharest, Romania—Elisei Rusu

BACK COVER: Romanian shepherd—©AdobeStock





## God's Instrument in Building Up the Church in Europe

BY ELISEI RUSU, PH.D.



**Top right:** Students conduct research in TBI's library. **Above (from top):** TBI graduates express their joy; A student looks for books; Adriana's English classes are an important part of the TBI curriculum; Faculty and graduates celebrate outside the main building.

**T**heological schools are specialized higher education institutions with one purpose: bringing glory to God through sound theological training that prepares godly servant-leaders for local churches and ministries. This has always been the purpose of Timotheus Bible Institute of Bucharest (TBI), the only university-level theological school with Brethren roots not only in Romania but also in Europe.

TBI was established in 1992 as a dream come true following our young years of underground training when the Securitate, the infamous Romanian secret police, was chasing us. After the fall of Communism in December 1989, the resulting freedom enabled my wife, Adriana, and me to start TBI with the help of two other Romanian Christians. Today, we continue serving as professors there: Adriana teaches English as a ministry tool, and I teach courses on ecclesiology, pastoral theology, Christianity in postmodernism, church administration, and biblical counseling. Adriana also mentors women at TBI, and I also oversee the school's international relations.

### Growth amid opposition

TBI's history is as tumultuous as Romania's over the last 35 years. First, the Romanian society was not ready for a theological school in this post-Communist era. Many Romanians did not like the idea of TBI because they grew up in an atheistic culture. So, during the school's first 15 years, 1992–2007, some local authorities would not cooperate with the TBI administration and created much red tape. This opposition became obvious when a "land shark" wanted to take for business purposes the property that houses TBI and Antioch Church, the oldest Brethren assembly in Romania (1899). We fought in the courts for more than seven years to protect God's property.

Gradually, things changed, and people became more open to evangelical Christianity. TBI's influence began to grow inside Romania. By the mid-2010s, TBI was recognized as a higher education theological school, and TBI graduates were accepted to



teach Christianity in the Romanian public school system. More believers enrolled at TBI—not only Christians from Romania but also from other European countries where Romanian expats had started churches. Realizing the need for training, these churches started sending their servant-leaders to TBI. Students

“More than 750 students have trained at TBI, and now, they serve the Lord in Europe.”

from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Moldova, and Spain joined the Romanian students in studying God’s Word and sound theology. In the last

33 years, more than 750 students have trained at TBI, and now, they serve the Lord in Europe as elders and deacons, missionaries, public school teachers, or leaders in ministries such as radio, TV, and publishing.

### Pandemic lockdowns, war, and refugees

At the end of February 2020, Romania experienced a burst of COVID-19 cases, and the country entered lockdown. The safety measures allowed only 10 people to meet in the same place at once. We sent our TBI students home and started online classes for all courses.

Due to different waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, we taught our classes remotely from March 2020 to April 2021. The new setting was challenging for the whole TBI family, students and professors alike. It took some time to adapt to the new methods of teaching, produce new materials suitable for online learning, and create new ways of evaluating students and their work. However, these challenges did not stop the education process, and all of us continued to honor the Lord by teaching and studying His Word.

For a time, the students and faculty returned to campus, but by February 2022, TBI decided to move the second semester to online classes only due to an increase in COVID-19 cases within the school.

During each of these lockdowns, the dorms were empty, and the campus looked deserted. Around the time of the first one, we had been excited because we had just added an exterior elevator to the school building, which would help people with disabilities. So the TBI administration prayed for guidance on how to use the facility.

Then, on February 24, 2022, Russia attacked Ukraine, and thousands of refugees flooded into Romania and neighboring countries. Many Ukrainians, mainly older people and young mothers with small children, ran from the war with only the things on them. Many of them wanted to go to European countries where they had relatives and friends. First, however, they had to travel to Bucharest and visit the Ukrainian embassy, the only place where they could receive their passports. Because these Ukrainians needed a place to stay for a few days, the Christians who had helped them at the border asked us to house them.



This was a new open door to share Christ and His love with destitute people. With a team of more than 40 students and graduates, TBI offered housing, transportation, and



medical help. We also provided spiritual and emotional support. Many Ukrainians arrived scared and without direction. So we gave them Bibles and New Testaments in Ukrainian and Russian, and we saw them start to relax and gain courage and direction. Some became interested in learning more about a personal relationship with Christ, and when they left TBI, they asked for Bibles and New Testaments they could give to their friends and relatives.

In less than five months, TBI faculty, students, and graduates helped hundreds of refugees recover and go to their place of choice. Some returned to Ukraine when international organizations helped build refugee camps inside western Ukraine; our teams continued to provide humanitarian aid and Christian literature.

## Post-pandemic developments

Now, with the pandemic and a couple of years of recovery behind us, TBI is creating a master's program for church management. This is another strategic move because many servants, although university graduates, do not have the training needed for effective ministry in their local churches. With this two-year program, TBI will meet that need. Lord willing, the master's program will start this fall. The professors are preparing the courses now, and a waiting list of Christians is in place. As part of this program, we will equip students for their ministry in a postmodern society and to work with younger generations, especially Generation Y (millennials) and Generation Z.

Another important ministry of TBI is theological research that materializes into publications. To progress academically, instructors must author books and articles in theological publications, both in Romanian and in an international language. TBI's biannual publication, *Timotheus*—for which I serve as writer and editor—publishes theological research findings for professors, graduates, and students.

The professors are also interested in writing books and chapters of books relevant to Romanian society. For example, in 2017, Protestant Christianity celebrated 500 years since the Reformation. TBI published two volumes on the Reformation, one in Romanian and one in English. Last year, TBI held a conference on "Biblical Solutions for Contemporary Issues" and addressed

postmodern influences in the world and church, gender identity, social unrest, and artificial intelligence's impact on theology and church life. The presentations were published in the book *Biblical Solutions for Contemporary Issues*.

## Reaching Romania through media

TBI organizes annual conferences, and its professors are invited to take part in national and international conferences. Over the last seven years, our professors have participated in more than 120 such conferences. Adriana and I organized and partook in more than 25. The topics included spiritual formation, spiritual leadership, family life and parenting, church government, and biblical counseling.

National TV stations also invite us to contribute to interconfessional panels on topics important to modern Romanian society. Four TBI faculty members join from time to time, and two others—myself and Ieremia Rusu, TBI's president—regularly participate. This TV program is a wonderful opportunity to share Christ with hundreds of thousands of viewers.

We also regularly speak on Christian Radio Network's *The Voice of the Gospel*. We address contemporary issues from a biblical perspective and answer people's questions. TBI professors regularly receive invitations to present on radio programs in Bucharest, Sibiu, Suceava, and Iași. For example, Adriana has spoken on parenting and given her testimony, and I am a regular contributor on contemporary and social events.



**Opposite Page: (top, L-R)** Students participate in Elisei's biblical counseling class; Faculty, staff, and current and former students celebrate TBI's 25-year jubilee (2017); During a lockdown, Adriana teaches a class online; **(middle, clockwise from top left)** Ukrainian refugees arrive at TBI; Adriana plays with Ukrainian children while Elisei witnesses to their parents; Refugees prepare to leave TBI.



**This page: (top to bottom, L-R)** Elisei interprets at an international conference; This Romanian radio station invited Elisei to address contemporary issues from a biblical perspective; A host for Radio Vocea Evangheliei București interviews Adriana; Pastors and their wives in Alexandria, Romania, attend Elisei's course on biblical counseling; On TV, Elisei discusses Christian values and the environment.





**From left:** Elisei preaches at the 110th anniversary of the church in Ploiești; Elisei poses with Adriana and the students whose final dissertations he supervised.



## Practical and academic guidance

Another important ministry of TBI is biblical counseling. It grew during the pandemic, when many young families were experiencing tensions in their relationships and seeking help. The main family issues were (and still are) communication, acceptance, patience, and job insecurity. I teach biblical counseling at TBI, and during the pandemic, I trained some of my colleagues to do biblical counseling. After, all of them led efficient, helpful sessions with younger instructors, students, and other Christians.

During one memorable session in April 2020, a group of more than 40 young Christian professionals asked me to teach on work ethics during the pandemic, when all of them were working from home. Some were single, but most were married, raising young children, and living in apartment buildings. In Romania, as in many European countries, apartments are small, which amplifies the challenge of working from home.

I spoke about ethical principles at work (no matter the location) and the spiritual aspects of work. Then, I presented some guidelines and methods for working from home, especially for people with young children. The presentation lasted 45 minutes, but the Q&A session went much longer—more than 75 minutes. These professionals asked practical questions: how to use time wisely, how to interact with their spouse when both have work to do and small children to care for, and how to relate to their children while balancing family and work. Another important question regarded how to safeguard their time with the Lord when they are bombarded with so much news.

The participants asked for my PowerPoint presentation so they could use it as a reference. We were encouraged to see so many young Christians who want to lead transparent and honest lives to honor the Lord.

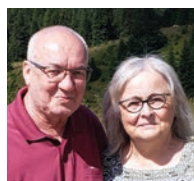
Last year, I preached a series of 12 sermons on what the Bible says about emotional and spiritual problems. The series was titled *Healing the Soul*, and many people asked me to turn it into a video series. TBI professors, graduates, and students joined the project, and this spring, we began broadcasting the biblical counseling videos based on my sermons. We are also preparing materials on Christian ethics, apologetics, and devotions and prayer. This is another new ministry that has become a tool pastors and elders use to help people address their emotional and spiritual needs.

Mentoring is another TBI ministry. Older professors mentor the junior instructors and the TBI students. Sometimes, this ministry goes beyond the four-year program when graduates stay connected with their professors and ask to continue their mentoring relationship in their new phase of life. Right now, I mentor three junior professors and two graduates involved in leading large Christian organizations.

## Influencing students and society

TBI is God’s instrument in building His church in Europe on many levels, and His work is beyond everything we have dreamed of. Taking its perspective from the biblical view of God, humankind, and the world, TBI is committed to stressing Christian doctrine and ethics, Christian service, and academic excellence. TBI’s calling in Christian higher education is to create an environment that nurtures the academic community in and by the truth of God’s redemptive love in Christ and to equip its members for lives of dedicated service—whether in the full-time ministries of the church or another worthy calling.

TBI’s ministry is complex and covers immediate and long-term needs in the Romanian and European societies. It also uses its influence to provide solutions to those challenges. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless the ministry of Timotheus Bible Institute of Bucharest and that more dedicated Christians will join as professors and students of God’s Word. ■



*Dr. Elisei and Adriana Rusu are commended from Northwest Bible Chapel in Chicago, Illinois.*

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



To learn more about TBI’s history, read Elisei Rusu’s article in the October 2012 *Missions* issue.

# TeamWorkers Abroad A Project in PERU

BY JONATHAN PECK



In mid-spring 2024, eight believers assembled by TeamWorkers Abroad visited Parcona, Peru, to help Becky Hulshizer (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 22) prepare a location for a youth ministry, which reaches more than 60 young people and some parents weekly. The work team consisted of four Americans, two Chileans, and two American teens: myself, Fred Scott, Justin Wallace, and Dicky Amaya; Carlos Oporto and Mario Painemal; and Nadia Keyser and Elias Welch (Fred Scott's grandchildren). The work was ambitious and arduous for the two-week time frame because of the demolition, clearing, preparation, concrete, masonry, and plumbing work involved.

The property included a building, a nonfunctioning bathroom, and a large, unfinished courtyard. We focused on relocating the bathroom and finishing the courtyard. Once complete, the facility would allow more latitude and flexibility in the youth ministry.

As is often the case, God provided people and resources precisely when needed to complete the work. The local assembly helped tremendously with volunteers in manual labor and food prep, and Jedidiah Lichty (MPH Day 22) from northern Peru contributed his invaluable expertise and tools to most of the project.

Once on location, the team's work began with tearing down old brick and adobe walls and demolishing the bathroom and its concrete floor. We dug up the plumbing and installed new pipes for the relocated bathroom and a washbasin. Next, some team members excavated the foundation of a missing section of the perimeter wall, while others prepared rebar cages for the wall's concrete base, footings, and pillars.

We discovered that the property receives city water for two hours each day and is without running water the other 22 hours. To help alleviate this problem, we installed

a 150-gallon water tank on the flat roof of the building. It fills up during the supply period and then provides ample water for the bathroom and handwashing station.

The demolition and prep work produced an abundance of debris, which would have taken several days to remove if done by hand. God marvelously provided a loader and backhoe that did the work in two hours. After,



**From top:** Fred Scott, Jedidiah Lichty, Nadia Keyser, Dicky Amaya, Mario Painemal, Justin Wallace, and Elias Welch break up the old concrete floor; As Jedidiah packs up, Dicky surveys the completed project; Jedidiah and Fred prepare rebar pillars while a young man from the assembly removes debris. **Below:** Nadia Keyser and Becky Hulshizer work with first graders.

## A TEEN'S PERSPECTIVE

**Nadia Keyser shared the following report:**

I chose to go to Peru so I could follow Jesus's command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (Mark 16:14-16). I also wanted to help and encourage the people there. The rest of our team stayed at a Peruvian family's house, and I stayed with Becky Hulshizer. I went with her to the nearby schools and helped her while she taught Bible classes for first to sixth graders. I did whatever Miss Becky asked: I passed out papers, made sure the kids paid attention, and handed out candy when they answered a question. At the construction site, I did simple jobs since I was "unskilled" labor. I'm thankful I could serve God in Peru, help in different ways, and practice my Spanish.



we kicked into high gear and spent the rest of our work days spreading gravel, bending rebar, building forms, pouring concrete, laying bricks, leveling concrete floors, building bathroom walls, installing fixtures, and hanging a large sunshade. Our final day of work required us to stay until 8:00 p.m. to finish the floor. As we worked, the neighborhood children who attend Becky's meetings excitedly gathered to ask when the facility would be ready for use.

By this point, we were worn out yet blessed. Besides the fulfilling work, we had enjoyed precious fellowship with our host family and the assemblies in Ica and Parcona. Fred Scott and

I had spoken at their meetings, and we all had felt loved and appreciated.

Please pray that God will mightily use this youth center to reach many for Christ and will give Becky greater opportunities and much fruitfulness. ■



The team eats dinner at its host's home.

*Jonathan Peck fellowships at Western Wake Bible Chapel in Apex, North Carolina.*

# Ask a Missionary?

Missions work around the world is unique—different from what friends and family at home encounter day to day. So, to learn about life on the field while getting to know our missionaries better, we asked them to share their firsthand experience or advice.

## QUESTION: What are some outreaches you do that readers could also do in their assemblies?

**PHILIPPINES**  **Jerry Uy**

I tutor a boy in speaking English and reading. Tutoring motivates the dad to bring his child at least once per week, which means sustained coaching opportunities with them. I have the opportunity to disciple the dad and demonstrate love for the family.

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**COLOMBIA**  **Angela Loudon**

As a very small and young church plant, we haven't done a lot of specific outreaches in our community yet, but we have noticed interest and positive responses when we offer Bible-based classes or workshops on parenting and marriage. It seems a lot of people are looking for support in these practical life needs.

**OTHER OVERSEAS SVC.**  **Neale & Barbara Goetsch**

We have used the following outreach tools here in our local assembly: We teach ESL classes that include a Bible study to practice reading and speaking skills. (One couple that attended now ministers in China and uses the same materials in their ministry.) We have also used the *Christianity Explored* and *Discipleship Explored* DVD series in the assembly and our neighborhood and received very positive responses.

**ASK YOUR QUESTIONS!** Visit [CMML.us/askamissionary](http://CMML.us/askamissionary) to submit your question—it might be selected for a future issue!

A shepherd in a dark jacket and hat stands on the left, holding a long wooden staff. He is herding a large flock of sheep across a grassy field. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a low sun, creating a misty atmosphere. The sheep are of various breeds, including some with long, shaggy wool. The background shows a line of trees and a fence in the distance, all softened by the haze.

For the Lord is the great God,  
And the great King above all gods.  
In His hand are the deep places of the earth;  
The heights of the hills are His also.  
The sea is His, for He made it;  
And His hands formed the dry land.  
Oh, come, let us worship and bow down;  
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.  
For He is our God,  
And we are the people of His pasture,  
And the sheep of His hand.

*Psalm 95:3-7*