

FROM INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

# INSIGHTS

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UPCOMING

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Bucharest, Romania



## Now, Isn't That Something!

### God's Grace in Romania through Ben and Anda Mogos and Insight for Living Ministries



Are you a heretic for teaching grace?

— Charles R. Swindoll

“Chuck, I’m ashamed to admit it, but I was a legalistic pastor.”

Ben Mogos looked Chuck Swindoll in the eye. Twilight had fallen. The soft glow of candles on the table and spotlights shining up on the Library of Celsus illuminated the young pastor’s face and the older pastor’s understanding eyes. “I was a believer, already in ministry, but I didn’t understand grace,” Ben confessed. “I worked under a man who told me to beat people with the Scriptures. I would deliver messages like that and receive praise. But later, I felt so guilty.”

“The Holy Spirit was moving you toward grace . . .” Chuck prompted.

“Long before I even knew what grace was!” Ben’s voice filled with gratitude. “The change started when I took a seminary course with the BEST required reading—your book *The Grace Awakening*. Chuck, it was the first time I felt built up, *healed*, by the Scriptures—not beaten down!”



Ben and Anda, whose story we began sharing in the last edition of *Insights*, grew up in communist Romania—Ben in a home with parents who proclaimed the gospel in secret . . . Anda in an atheistic home of a man committed to the communist army. After the revolution, Anda’s father became a believer. Then, Ben and Anda—who had not yet met—also placed their faith in Christ. After meeting at a summer camp, they ended up at the same Bible college, fell in love, married, and began in ministry.

The young Mogoses were dedicated to serving the Lord. But guilt tugged on Ben’s heart as he preached legalistic messages; he couldn’t escape the feeling that he was missing something. Then, Anda’s father—who had been

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*Continued inside*



COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATING BIBLICAL TRUTH AND ITS APPLICATION



While attending Dallas Theological Seminary, Ben and Anda Mogos deepen their understanding of grace by reading Chuck's book *The Grace Awakening*.

discharged from the communist army with leukemia and returned as Romania's first chaplain—died. Anda was devastated. She had believed wholeheartedly that the Lord would heal her father. Her heartbreak grew into disillusionment.

Meanwhile, Ben began looking for new training opportunities. Through some missionary friends, he and Anda learned about Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). It quickly became their “impossible dream.” There was no way they could afford it, but they began to pray.

Ultimately, scholarships paved their way to Dallas. They had less than \$250 dollars; they knew no one in Texas, had never even visited! They came with faith in their hearts . . . and Anda with an ultimatum.

“I was in a dark place,” she recalls. “I had gone through a series of disappointments, and as we left for DTS, I told the Lord, ‘God, this is Your last chance with me.’ Thankfully, He complied! Getting to know Him

as the God of grace was like being parched and being given a bottle of water. It was so healing for me to meet God the way He really is, and not the way I thought He was.”

That introduction happened for Anda the same way it did for Ben—through *The Grace Awakening*. “I was in one room of our home reading *The Grace Awakening*,” Ben shares. “I got to a part that overwhelmed me so much that I had to share it with Anda. I found her in our bedroom, reading the exact same part with tears streaming down her face!”

As their lives began to be transformed by grace, Ben told Anda that he wanted to translate *The Grace Awakening* into Romanian. Not long after, they heard an announcement at DTS about an Insight for Living Ministries “brown bag.” Looking to expand into Europe, the ministry had invited interested students to bring sack lunches to an informative meeting. When Ben and Anda heard “Romania” in the announcement, they started packing their brown bags! At that meeting, Ben handed a staff member *The Grace Awakening*, asking, “What can we do to get this into Romanian?”

“Never could I have dreamed what would happen next!” he laughs.

What happened next was, over four years, Ben and Anda became the prototype for **Vision 195**. While both were enrolled at DTS—Ben in pursuit of a ThM and Anda of an MA in biblical counseling—Ben became an intern at Stonebriar Community Church, where Chuck serves as senior pastor-teacher.

As Chuck puts it, “Ben was an intern on steroids!” He not only met with Chuck and the other pastors regularly to get the behind-the-scenes of church ministry, he and Anda both interned at Insight for Living Ministries. They rotated through every department, learning Insight's beliefs, processes, and commitment to excellence.

In 2010, the couple graduated from DTS and Chuck ordained Ben. With a healthy church, wonderful



Ben delivers nutritious spiritual meals to hungry listeners at Agape Church in Bucharest, Romania, using Chuck’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study and preaching method.

friendships, steady incomes, and a comfortable home, returning to Romania didn’t make sense. Yet, the Lord was calling them home. Ben looks back:

Our days in Dallas were the *best* time of our lives. Why would we go back? Everybody else that we knew in Romania was trying to GET to the United States for a better life! But the Lord *called* us back. So we prayed: How would it happen? What would we live on? Whom would we work with? Where would we stay? Then one day, it dawned on me: If God was able to bring us from Romania to the US with just a couple hundred dollars in our pockets, could He not do it the other way around?

Stepping into the unknown back to Romania marks one of the Mogoses’ biggest leaps of faith. Their return brought them to Romania’s capital, Bucharest. In this city of 2 million, only one half of one percent are evangelical Christians . . . even fewer are Christians who understand God’s grace. Ben describes their calling:

The Lord called us back here with a vision to plant a church that would be Christ-honoring, gospel-centered, and *grace-oriented*. That’s why we named the church Agape Church. That’s our mission statement: transformed by the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.

Agape Church started with five people meeting in Ben and Anda’s apartment living room. Ben “just did”

what he had learned at DTS and from Chuck—he taught the Scriptures, leading the little congregation in verse-by-verse exposition. As these five nearly strangers began to study the Word, share meals, and host events, their numbers grew.

Romanians’ hungry souls were drawn to the spiritual meals Ben prepared every week from the Scriptures using the methods Chuck has laid out in *Searching the Scriptures*—the same methods Insight for Living Ministries is now using to train pastors for **Vision 195**. As Ben says, “Nothing compares to sharing God’s Word, making it applicable, and then watching the Holy

Spirit transform lives!”

As Agape Church outgrew one location after another, Ben and Anda welcomed their son, David, and the Lord worked behind the scenes growing another dream—one they had been praying about since 2006. “In 2011, when Insight asked, ‘Would you translate Chuck’s messages into Romanian?’ I knew the ‘right’ answer was, ‘I’ll pray about that,’” Ben says laughing. “But I couldn’t hold back. My answer was, ‘YES!! Like, yesterday, YES!!’”

Then, in 2012, the Lord took Agape Church to a location Ben and Anda could never have dreamed: the small theater of a former communist community center in downtown Bucharest . . . just a few yards from the National Theatre. Ben says, “Everybody in Bucharest knows about this building, and if you ask me how we got it, all I can say is, it was God’s doing! In Romania, still years after the revolution, it matters who you know. And we didn’t know anybody except the Lord.”

As the Mogoses continued Agape Church and Anda launched her counseling ministry, they also began working to establish Insight for Living Romania. The office officially opened in 2015 and now runs under Ben’s leadership as pastor and Anda’s as executive director, through the donations of God’s people.

And that’s the story—the one only God could write of how the fearful young boy who once kept watch while his parents illegally transcribed Christian resources . . .



Ben records his Romanian translation of the *Insight for Living* program. The broadcast airs on several radio stations throughout Romania.



In 2013, a team from Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, led a marriage conference at Agape Church.

and the hungry young girl who once waited with her communist father in the line for food rations came to proclaim His grace in their homeland among a people starving for spiritual nourishment.

Today, Agape Church meets in another location near the National Theatre and is the only evangelical church in downtown Bucharest. Along with *Insight for Living Romania*, it's also one of Romania's only

voices of grace. Which takes us back to that night at the Library of Celsus . . .



“Do evangelicals in Romania accept you, or are you a heretic for teaching grace?” Chuck asked. The starry sky, the sounds of a string trio, the breathtaking remnants of history thousands of years old—none of it could overshadow the significance of this conversation in *this* place.

The Library of Celsus stands prominently in the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus . . . just a few yards away from the Ephesus Theater, the amphitheater where the silversmith Demetrius started the riot that drove the apostle Paul out of the city (Acts 19). Paul had been preaching a gospel unlike any the people had heard. Demetrius made his living crafting shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. Outraged that Paul had convinced many that gods made by men are no gods at all, Demetrius organized the tradespeople to rid Ephesus of the apostle.

Legalism isn't all that different from idolatry. Both rely on human-made constructs. Ben, preaching near Romania's National Theatre, could have been driven out of Bucharest just as the people in the Ephesus Theater drove out Paul. Ben and Anda, through their church and *Insight for Living Romania*, have proclaimed the same message he did—and it's just as radical as it was then:

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*  
(Ephesians 2:8–9)

“For a long time, the other evangelical leaders didn't trust me,” Ben answered his mentor. “But they've watched our ministry, and I am excited to tell you that the Baptist college there, even though they don't believe all the things I preach, has *just* invited me to teach!”

A broad smile spread across Chuck's face. No matter how many years go by, the power of grace never fails to amaze him:

“Now, isn't that something!” ■

Visit [insight.org/Romanian](http://insight.org/Romanian) to share this article and find more information about our Romanian-language ministry.

# Searching the Scriptures

## from Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth

by Terry Boyle

Executive Vice President and Chief International Instructor  
for *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries

“We would like to change up your routine for a little while if you’re willing . . .”

Tom Hayes and I shared a cup of coffee in Tel Aviv at the start of the Insight for Living Ministries Israel Tour in March of 2018. As Insight’s executive vice president and chief international officer, Tom is my main point of contact with our international headquarters in Frisco, Texas.

“We want you to develop a curriculum to help pastors in countries where there is no easy access to sound pastoral training,” Tom continued. “We want to help them study the Bible carefully for themselves and lead them to craft solid sermons that will feed their churches.”

I took that back to my wife, Rosie, and we prayed it through. Quite a lot would have to change; I would have to preach and broadcast a lot less to make room for this new project. But toward the end of our trip, in Jerusalem, we decided to go for it. The starting point would be Chuck Swindoll’s book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*. From that foundation, I



Terry Boyle, Insight for Living United Kingdom’s regional pastor, delivers the *Searching the Scriptures* training curriculum in the first seminar for international pastors.

would build a training seminar to equip pastors to use Chuck’s Bible-study and delivery methods—so they can pass them on to others. Through one leader training other leaders, who train others, we can make disciples in all 195 nations!

So it began: a year of writing. In August 2018, I got to spend some time with Chuck, and we worked through my outlines, making notes and swapping jokes and stories as we went. By November, it was time to bring a progress report to the directors, and I was encouraged to see that “the board” was “on board.” Full steam ahead to August 2019.

Layouts were finalized, edits signed off, and we, too, were on board the *Windstar* for Insight for Living Ministries 2019 Greek Isles Adventure. Chuck and Cynthia had invited all of the ministry’s international pastors on this tour of the Aegean, and it was the first time so many of us had been in the same place at once. These pastors are the ones who will be pressing on with **Vision 195** for the foreseeable future—the ones



The *Searching the Scriptures* training seminar for international pastors is presented on the Insight for Living Ministries 2019 Greek Isles Adventure cruise.



The *Searching the Scriptures* training curriculum will equip pastors to use Chuck's Bible-study and sermon delivery method.

who will reach the ends of the earth in obedience to Christ's call. On our journey, while tracing Paul's and John's travels throughout Greece and Asia Minor, I was able to hand them the very first copies of the *Searching the Scriptures* training manuals.

Since that moment, we have begun simultaneous translations that will allow us to encourage and train pastors and Bible teachers in eight key regional languages. That's not the ends of the earth, not yet. But Jerusalem's behind us, and we're on the way. ■



# From Israel to the Ends of the Earth

*"And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*  
(Acts 1:8)

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March 1–12, 2020

Join Chuck Swindoll and Insight for Living Ministries in Israel for a spiritual pilgrimage you'll never forget. Your faith will deepen and your love for God's Word will take on life-giving new dimensions! For more information, go to [www.insight.org/events/israel](http://www.insight.org/events/israel) or call **888-447-0444**.



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