

Responding to God's call to Romania: the story of Trevin Wax



photo by John Gill

While there are many opinions of what defines success – wealth, fame, business acumen – Trevin Wax recognizes that success in God's eyes takes on a different flavor.

"In God's eyes, it doesn't matter how much you acquire in the eyes of others, how popular you are, how successful your

business is or even how many evangelistic tracts you hand out. True greatness means suffering, serving and sacrifice."

Wax is a first-year master of divinity student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and this is a quote from his book "Red Letters: Devotional Thoughts on the Eternal Words of Christ." In the preface to the book, Wax said his desire with the book is to help people learn, love and live the words of Christ.

Suffering, serving, sacrificing, learning, loving and living the words of Christ are modeled by Wax's life.

Wax was born and raised in Murfreesboro, Tenn., just outside of Nashville, and attended the same Christian school from kindergarten through high school. Wax said he became a Christian at age four and was baptized at age eight, crediting his parents for greatly impacting his spiritual growth.

"Both of my parents are strong, committed believers and my dad is a Sunday school teacher and chairman of the deacons in our church," he said. "I see in my dad the character that a Christian should have and both of my parents have the

After graduating from high school in 1999, Wax worked for a year and went on two more mission trips to Romania. Between the two trips, Wax became convinced that God wanted him to go to college in Romania and in September 2000, he made the move.

Adjusting to the culture

The first year in Romania, Wax lived in a local village and focused on learning the Romanian language and adapting to the culture.

“It was a great village and a great experience to live in that kind of a setting,” he said. “I lived in a house with no running water, no indoor plumbing and where the chicken you eat for Sunday dinner was running around the night before. It was very rural, but the people were fantastic. I was able to begin preaching, teaching and working with the youth in a church in the village.”

After the first year, Wax began working on his bachelor’s degree in pastoral theology at Emanuel University of Oradea, becoming the first American student to enroll at the school.

While taking classes, Wax said he filled in for pastors at several different local churches serving as a “circuit-riding preacher without the horse.”

“Because pastors are so few and far between they usually have more than one church and they can’t be in every church at once,” he said. “When the pastor would be in another church I would fill in at one of his other churches, and I had four main churches that I preached in.”

The churches ranged in size from two to 60 people and Wax said that he grew as a minister from the experience.

“I would lead worship, do the prayer hour and preach and all of this in Romanian,” he said. “It was definitely a challenging experience. It was one of those things where I jumped out of the boat like Peter and drowned a few times before I started walking.”

Wax’s devotional book on the words of Jesus began to develop in 2002 as he did serious study in the Gospels.

“I wanted to have an outlet for my study, so I decided to do a weekly email devotional as I went along where I took something that Jesus said and expounded on it briefly,” he said.

This evolved into the book, which was published in 2004, an 18-week study based on the words of Christ. Wax said he recently emailed devotional number

173 and would eventually like to have a year’s worth of devotionals.

Getting married and coming home

Wax met his future wife, Corina, at Emanuel University shortly after he moved to Romania. They were married Dec. 21, 2002. On June 25, 2004, son Timothy was born. In May 2005, Wax graduated as the valedictorian of his class. He said that one lesson he learned was that though Romanian Christians are poor financially, they are rich spiritually.

“One year I went home for Christmas. When I got back to Romania and went back to the family that I had been staying with on weekends in the village they had saved me a shoebox they had gotten for Christmas,” he said. “It hit me for the first time that they were the type of people who were receiving Franklin Graham’s Samaritan’s Purse shoeboxes and they thought enough to save me a shoebox.”

“That is when it hit me that the people who receive those shoeboxes are real people, who have real emotions, real needs, real heartaches and real happiness and joy. I learned that people are people no matter how poor or rich they are.”

After graduating, Wax returned to America to earn a master of divinity and chose to go to Southern Seminary for several reasons.

“Southern, being the oldest of the Southern Baptist schools, was a factor and it was close enough to my home for us to be able to go home sometimes,” he said. “I knew that it was strong as an academic school. Southern puts out thinkers. I wanted an education where I would not only be trained in preaching and teaching, but also as a thinker and a writer.”

Wax began his studies at Southern in August 2005, working in the biblical and theological studies track in the School of Theology. He said that once he graduates, his ministry will probably include work in America and Romania.

“God hasn’t revealed to us where He wants us to be established, but we will either be in Romania most of the time and America some of the time or vice versa,” he said. “Preaching, teaching and writing are the main gifts God has blessed me with and I want to use them for His glory.”

By Garrett E. Wisball

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gift of discernment and they have used it well and passed that on to me.”

In 1997, at age 15, Wax’s future life work began to come into focus. That year, he took a two-week mission trip to Romania with his dad and pastor, where they led several evangelistic services. Wax said that trip “got his feet wet” and every year after that he went back on mission trips with his church.

“I was the first person to sign the list every year that we went back,” he said. “I fell in love with the country and God really gave me a heart for the Romanian people.”