



Indigenous Mission Project Newsletter – October 2007

Baptists in Romania

Total population of Romania: 22.3 mln. Religion: Eastern Orthodox - 87%, Protestant - 7%, Roman Catholic - 5%, other and unspecified - 1% (according to 2002 census).

The first Baptists in Romania were of German extraction. Karl Scharschmidt, a carpenter by trade, had been baptized by Johann Gerhard Oncken in Hamburg in 1845. Later he came to Romania and settled in Bucharest.

The Baptist Union of Romania is the third largest Baptist body in Europe. There are over 1,722 churches and about 100,000 members.

The Convention of the Hungarian Baptist Churches is comprised of 243 churches and nearly 9,000 members.



The President of Baptist Union of Romania since May 2007 is Dr. Otniel Bunaciu. He describes Romanian Baptists as “Bible-believing people who are committed disciples of Jesus Christ and have the goal of bringing the Gospel to a needy world”. He recalls that Baptists were harshly experienced through the trials of Communist persecution and hopes and that the current opportunity of free mission enterprise will be used effectively. “We are happy for what God has done in our midst but also want to fulfil our mission to the world.” Bunaciu travels across Romania visiting Baptist congregations in order to discover how the Union can better help congregations to fulfil their tasks.

Church Planting in Romania by Indigenous Missionary: Jakab in 2006

Church planter Jakab is married (his wife is a nurse) and they have 2 children. The Baptist Union bought a house where they live now. Jakab is planting a church in his town of Miercurea Nirajului (MN). Presently there is small fellowship of only four people. When asked about effective methods he answers that he distributes the Gospel of Luke and tries to win people basically by personal contacts. He often goes to the streets, local market and shops to meet people and the Gospel with them.

Jakab says that “the traditional method of inviting people to Christian meetings or worship is not effective, so we look for



new ways and open doors. People are becoming more and more individualists and are busy with their work. Though, the church planting is still in its preliminary phase, but we believe that the mustard seed will become a big tree...”



The view of Miercurea Nirajului (MN) where missionary Jakab is planting new church

Church Planting in Romania by Indigenous Missionary: Jakab in 2007

Jakab and his church planting team primarily focus on young couples who have children. They invited some families from the neighbourhood and have succeeded to make friendships with them. Some of them come in regularly for a chat and the kids gladly play together.

There was a baptism in the neighbouring church in Magherani and it was good occasion to invite several people from MN. For most of them this was the first time ever to witness an adult baptism. It was a special experience for them.

Church planting team also started mission work among the teenagers and young people. There are regular youth meetings in Magherani and young people from MN were invited to join the youth group several times. They really enjoyed it.



Meetings organized by missionary Jakab for youth and families

The church planting team is also planning to start a mothers-and-toddlers group, where children could play together and mothers would enjoy a chat. There are also many opportunities to help the poor. Some of the neighbours live in terrible situation. The church planting team distributed some toys for the children as well as food and clothing.

Church Planting in Romania by Indigenous Missionary: Daniel in 2006

The ministry in Stoenesti started from the scratch... The meetings started in the house of a Gypsy man named Mihai. In a room of his house sometimes up to 50 people crowded to worship God and have fellowship with one another. Seven people attended regularly each Sunday.

The church planting team faced an opposition from the Orthodox priests and local authorities who charged them of proselytizing and threatened the people attending new church.

The strategy of indigenous church planter has been to help each member of the new church to become friendly with the people around them and keep inviting them to the new established church. Natural opportunities to invite new people to church became holidays, such as Easter or Mother's day.

After six months of regular meetings in Stoenesti there were 9 members and 9 friends as well as many children.



Home meetings in Stoenesti have become foundation of new church

Church Planting in Romania by Indigenous Missionary: Teodor in 2006

New church in Vişeu de sus started in 2006 as the indigenous church planter Teodor organized a week long evangelistic campaign. The response was very good and many people participated. A concert during that campaign drew at least 200 people.

Following that the church planting team visited local schools and kindergartens before Christmas. They sang songs and shared the story of Jesus birth as well as gave Christmas gifts to children. After Christmas the team also visited local hospital and several families who are not Christians. During those visits New Testaments, Christian literature, audio cassettes etc. were given away.

The attendance has been growing and many others prayed to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. 2 people were baptized. In spite of numerous obstacles especially from the Orthodox the church planting team organized another evangelistic campaign. The plan was to run a special evangelistic meeting once a month.

Church Planting in Romania by Indigenous Missionary: Teodor in 2007

The team focused on evangelizing as many people as possible. In February another evangelistic campaign was organized when preachers and singers shared the Gospel, Christian brochures and magazines were given and eventually several people invited Jesus to become their Lord. The work of follow up with the people that attended the campaign was continued so that they can fully understand the gospel, be baptized and become members of the church.

The evangelistic team was able to obtain the permission from local authorities for broadcasting Christian programs by a cable TV station so that more people might watch Christian programs.

In May an instruction seminar about sharing the Gospel was organized. 10 church members attended this seminar. After the seminar a couple of groups were formed and visited many families, shared the Gospel, distributed Christian literature and invited people to come to the new church. The goal is to visit every family in Viseu de sus during the next 2 years.

Some of the church members have immigrated to Spain, Italy, Germany and other Western countries but the church has grown in spite of that. Two kinds of classes have been developed: one for new members of the church in order to teach them the basics of the faith and the other class aims at spiritual formation in order to help the church members grow and use their spiritual gifts.

The fact that the new church meets in a private house is an obstacle for some. Therefore the leaders are praying for a separate building for new congregation. There are 29 members and another 3 getting ready for baptism. The weekly attendance is about 50 people including the children and the friends visiting the church.

As you read these testimonies, please pray for growth of new planted congregations in Romania.

In Christ,

Daniel Trusiewicz
EBF Mission Coordinator
www.ebf.org/imp

To help planting reproducing churches! To help growing healthy churches!

For the glory of God!

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