

"Leading Southern Baptists to be on mission with God to bring all peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ."

IMB Strategy in Romania



We believe that it is God's will that every person in Romania hear the gospel and has **the opportunity** to become a worshipper of God, a disciple of Jesus Christ, and an active part in a local New Testament church. This will be a reality when the region is saturated with healthy, multiplying, evangelical churches in which there is:

- At least one church for every 5,000 people in large cities,
- At least one church for every 1,500 people in towns and large villages
- At least one church in every village.

As healthy churches, they will be indigenous to Romania and demonstrate the 5 functions of a church: 1) worship, 2) evangelism and missions, 3) discipleship, 4) ministry, 5) fellowship. These churches will be led by both lay and bible school or seminary trained pastors. They will meet in a variety of locations: homes, theatres, church buildings, etc. They will have a heart to win people to Christ and start new churches. They will have an impact on the world around them in preserving society and promoting the kingdom and glory of God.

In order that this vision might become a reality, we have developed a comprehensive strategy in which we focus our efforts and resources in ways that will help bring about a **CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT**.

A Church Planting Movement (CPM) is a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment. 1[1]

In order that the work might be indigenous and therefore multiply more rapidly, IMB missionaries do not work outside of the context of the local Romanian church but in cooperation with the Romanian Baptist Union and in direct partnership with their Baptist Associations and Churches.

Our strategy is based on 4 primary objectives.

1. PRAYER WILL SATURATE EVERY PART OF THE CPM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION.

God is Omnipotent, but in His sovereignty has chosen to work through us and through our prayers to accomplish many of His purposes on the earth. We know that His great purpose is that none should perish but all come to Him and give Him praise and receive eternal life. This desire is the driving force of missions. It is our conviction that a CPM is what will most quickly and certainly bring this about. In God's Word, we find the necessity of prayer related to every aspect of our mission.

We therefore seek to encourage pray for a Church Planting Movement in Romania in a variety of ways, among which are:

1. Developing our own personal prayer lives as missionaries.
2. Mobilizing and training Romanian Christians and churches to pray for a Church Planting Movement.
3. Developing prayer networks in the US in which individuals and churches are mobilized and communicated with on a regular basis to pray for the evangelism and church planting needs and work in Romania.
4. Prayer walking by missionaries, volunteers and nationals in areas where new church starts are planned.

2. TO USE SCRIPTURE TO PREPARE THE HEARTS OF THE LOST FOR A CPM.

Prayer is essential, but prayer alone will not bring about a CPM. To use the analogy of Matthew 13, prayer prepares the soil and the heart of the sower, but it is the seed, the

1[1] David Garrison, Church Planting Movements (International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention) p.7 To read the full text of this brochure or to receive a free copy please go to: <http://www.imb.org/CPM>.

Word of God that brings about new life. If there is to be a CPM, there must be abundant sowing of God's word. We must broadcast widely and believe that the Word of God is indeed living and active, and sharper than a two edge sword and WILL penetrate the hearts of lost people.

IMB missionaries in Romania are involved in projects of Bible and scripture portion distribution and using other printed materials containing God's word. We are using English language classes based on scripture. We are looking for creative and effective ways to get the Word into the hands and hearts of lost people through audio and video tape distribution, radio and television broadcasts, evangelistic web pages, etc.

3. CULTIVATE THE SEED AND REAP THE HARVEST OF SOULS THROUGH EVANGELISM

God's word also reminds us that after we cast the net, we must also draw it in. After we sow the seed and work the crop, we must bring in the harvest.

IMB missionaries are actively involved in evangelism through:

1. Modeling lifestyle and personal evangelism
2. Training of nationals in evangelism approaches.
3. Working with nationals in a variety of evangelism projects such as:
 - a. Use of Jesus Film
 - b. Small group evangelistic Bible Studies
 - c. Concerts
 - d. Children's ministry
 - e. Social ministry projects
4. Facilitating Southern Baptist volunteers who use their gifts, talents, energy and resources in many types of evangelistic training, projects and events such as;
 - a. Medical / Dental clinics
 - b. Vacation Bible Schools
 - c. Youth and Children's evangelistic camps
 - d. Personal evangelism in homes, schools, etc.

- e. Evangelistic meetings, concerts, drama, puppets, etc
- f. Other social and humanitarian projects.

4. TO GATHER THOSE WHO RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL INTO LOCAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING.

While God works through individuals, it has always been His plan to work through a body of people. In the Old Testament God displayed His plan through a people; the nation of Israel. In the New Testament we see the fullness of His plan revealed. His purpose is to bring glory to Himself through His mercy, love and grace poured out in the salvation the lost. The instrument He has chosen to demonstrate and accomplish His purpose is the church.

We therefore make our priority the planting of multiple, indigenous, reproducing, New Testament churches that are not dependent on buildings, foreign financing or seminary trained and ordained pastors. The churches we seek to plant have been described as POUCH churches 2[2] which are characterized by **P**articipative Bible Study and worship, a focus on the **O**bedience to the Bible in daily life, the ministry of **U**npaid and non ordained leaders, **C**ell groups or **H**ouse churches.

Our church planting efforts include:

- a. Casting a vision and training in the principles of Church Planting Movements.
- b. Train local lay church planters.
- c. Establish informal church planter training institutes in key Romanian churches.
- d. Model church planting principles through direct involvement with Romanian Baptist Churches in new church starts.
- e. Facilitating church to church partnerships between Romanian Baptist Churches Southern Baptist Churches for the purpose of evangelizing unreached areas and starting new churches.

CONCLUSIONS:

“Facilitate a church planting movement”.

2[2] Ibid, p.43

In some ways this seems like such a **simple task**. Indeed this strategy makes it possible to focus our efforts and energies towards a single goal in a way that has never been possible for IMB missionaries.

In other ways it seems **an impossible task**. We do recognize that a CPM is a work of God in the same way that true revival is His work. It is a work we cannot produce no matter how clearly we understand our people group, how clever the strategy or how vigorously we implement it. We are totally dependent on God to send to a CPM to Romania.

Yet God has called us to do all that we can in the power of His Spirit to prepare the way for Him to send such a move. This seems **an overwhelming task**. This strategy represents just a few of the steps in accomplishing this task. This strategy is continually being revised as it is implemented, but the purpose and vision will remain the same.

To be sure, it is a **necessary task**. We have seen the results of church planting as usual in these last ten years in Romania and the mission is not being accomplished, the Great Commission is not being implemented. There must be a change, but not to another inefficient strategy. More than 97% of Romanians still do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ^{3[3]} and thousands of villages and city districts still do not have an evangelical church. The time has come that all Great Commission Christians in Romania come along side our national brothers, combine our prayers, efforts and resources to prepare the way for God to send a move of His Spirit. A move in which thousands of multiplying New Testament churches are born and millions of souls are born again.

3[3] According to the 2002 census in Romania, Evangelical Christians represent about 2.4% of the total population of 21.7 million. For other census facts, go to <http://www.oci.ro/recensament/CENSUS.htm>

