



MAKING DISCIPLES IN BRASOV, ROMANIA

BY: Cristian Martinez

BMA Missions

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God has called our family and team to make disciples in the city of Brasov, Romania, as we seek to obey the commandment of our Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We understand this commandment as both preaching the gospel to those who are not yet trusting and following Jesus and teaching believers how the gospel can change every area of their lives, transforming them to look more and more like Jesus.

How do we do this in our city?

We pray. We spend time in prayer both individually and together. We pray to the Lord of the Harvest that he gives us the compassion of Jesus who saw the multitudes as sheep without a shepherd. About 90% of our city identifies with the Eastern Orthodox Church, which gives a false hope of purgatory and human works contributing to salvation. Less than 5% of Brasov's population identifies with some form of evangelical church. So we also pray for the harvest in our city to come to know Jesus and for more laborers to make disciples, and we do this as we prayer walk through the streets of our city. We pray because salvation only comes from God, and we depend on him.

We preach. We speak about and call people to respond to the good news of God, reconciling sinners to be in a close relationship with him through Jesus' life of obedience, his death in the place of sinners, and his resurrection from death in victory. As a team we do this by meeting people at local farmers markets, building relationships with our neighbors, investing in local college students, and two of us even work at a local coffee shop so that we will have regular opportunities to speak with customers and coworkers, as well as with Ukrainian refugees that are coming into our city.

We gather and equip. We do not go to make disciples as isolated individuals, and we do not seek to make disciples who are isolated from the Christian community. We need one another to make disciples. We have seen how God has used us as

a group to expose people to the gospel: One of us has started a spiritual conversation while another one has clearly explained the gospel and answered questions. Some share testimonies while others prepare their homes for hosting, sharing, and caring for people. Also, as missionaries, we do not see ourselves as the only ones doing ministry, but we recognize our call to equip local Romanians to do the work of the ministry as well.

At this moment we meet weekly at a local coffee shop with a group of ten adults and seven children (not counting our team) where we have been clearly explaining the gospel and equipping in evangelism. This group is a mix of Christians and

non-Christians, and we are preparing one of them for baptism. We also grow as disciples in a smaller setting where women meet with women and men with men every other week to apply in a personal way what we study in the Bible, to pray for one another, and to keep each other accountable.

These, together with a college study and serving and bringing Bible teaching to Ukrainian refugees, are some of our team's efforts as we prepare to form a church that makes disciples in our city and sends missionaries to unreached people groups in countries south of Romania. We ask that you join us in prayer for God to do this in his grace.



DISCIPLE OF EXCELLENCE

BY: Margaret Anderson
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“Shadi is an excellent discipler.” This is the first thing BMA Missionary Charlie Costa said when describing what discipleship looks like in his church in Lebanon. What makes Shadi an excellent discipler? It’s his focus on relationship building, systematic methods, and biblical foundation that makes his approach to discipleship excellent.

Relationship Building

Shadi focuses on one specific area of a certain people group which lives in the mountains above Beirut. Shadi loves the people; they aren’t

just a number to be added to the church for numbers’ sake, but they are real people in need of a real Savior. This leads him to build authentic friendships by doing life with people and truly caring for them as people.

As the friendships grow, people become more interested in Shadi’s faith, which they can see in his actions and in his words, and they begin to ask questions. This opens the door for Shadi to invite them to home groups where they can learn more about Christ in a small-group setting, and he begins to meet with them individually.

The people are a non-Muslim people group who give more veneration to the person of Jesus, but they believe he’s only a prophet. Talking about Christ is normal for them, but they will face some challenges in their thinking as they discover Christ as their Savior.

Systematic Methods

This people group tends to think extremely systematically and logically. For them to accept a new thought or idea, things should be rational and make sense. Shadi realizes this, so he leads them through a study of Scripture from creation to Christ, and this leads them to the issue of salvation. They will read passages of Scripture and answer four questions: What does this passage teach us about God? What does it teach us about man? What does it teach us about living a life pleasing to God? Who am I going to tell?

At the end of each session, they have to decide what to do to apply what they learned, and then apply it in the days to follow. At the next meeting, they will discuss how things went. This approach allows people to get involved as active participants, not passive listeners.

Biblical Foundation

Shadi’s method of study, called Discovery Bible Study, is beneficial because it is strictly reading Scripture, retelling the story, and discovering its deeper implications. This is helpful to this people group because they have no knowledge of Scripture. Costa says, “Once they’ve accepted Christ, we up the dose of Bible study and take them even deeper.”

Costa adds, “Discipleship is valuable because it allows the individual to voice questions, doubts, challenges, and temptations, and the discipler is then able to respond more relevantly to these issues from Scripture.”



mission:world

NEWS

TAKE THE GREAT COMMISSION PERSONAL

BY: Dr. Steve Crawley
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In 2004 my wife, Daura, and I went to Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for a week of training in Evangelism Explosion (EE). Renowned pastor Dr. D. James Kennedy, the founder of EE, led the training. At one of our intermissions, we engaged in general conversation, and he asked if I was in the ministry. I responded, “No, I’m just a layman.” He then asked me what “just a layman” meant. I explained that I was not serving in occupational ministry but as a corporate executive.

Dr. Kennedy quickly shared with me that I was not “just a layman” but a soldier in the army of the living God.

That week of training and sharing the gospel back in 2004 revolutionized my view of what it meant to live with a missional mindset. The training helped me understand the need to take the Great Commission personal, as it was given to me as well as every church member whether we were in occupational ministry or not. Up to that point, I had been “sub-contracting” the fulfillment of the Great Commission to our church’s pastor and staff, along with our associational missionaries. Yet my eyes were opened that week to the fact that I, too, was sent by my church with no less responsibility than a full-time missionary. I was to be God’s ambassador in my circle of influence.

At that time, I worked for a rather large company. I had access to people that many pastors and missionaries would never have the privilege to engage. In a sense, I became a “corporate missionary,” realizing that God

had sent me to that company for much more than drawing a paycheck. Understanding that my mission field was my company and other social circles where I was involved changed the way I saw and interacted with people around me. I became more soul conscious and began to pray for the Holy Spirit to enable me to share the gospel with boldness, conviction, and persuasion. In essence, I began thinking more like a missionary might think on the arrival to a new field.

In our men’s MD5 discipleship ministry, we begin the process by assessing where we are in our spiritual journey. The assessments used include Jim Putman’s Real Life Discipleship Wheel to determine our stage of spiritual growth (Dead, Infant, Child, Young Adult, Parent), a spiritual gift analysis, and our MD5 Orientation Assessment, which consists of 54 questions. One of the questions is “Do you have a personal plan for fulfilling the Great Commission?” Invariably, men assess themselves lower on this question than most any other.

I believe the reason for this phenomena is that we as believers fail to take the Great Commission personally. Yet making disciples and fulfilling that commission is the ultimate mission of the church! It is the mission of every born-again man, woman, boy and girl. If you ask most church members what their job is, most would agree it is to share the gospel and make disciples. Yet how many actually do?

The fact is that we are not “just laymen and laywomen.” We are all soldiers in the army of the living God! When it comes to the Great Commission, let’s take it personal!





eight years, eight missions

BY: Pastor Oscar Gaitán
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Many were the tasks that Jesus left to the church, but one of the clearest tasks was to disciple. The way our church disciples is by taking one person at a time, women to women, men to men. They make a weekly appointment for twelve weeks and they share twelve steps after receiving Jesus. These lessons are complemented by the vital part of discipleship, which is the investment of one's life in another person, just like parents to children.

When we started eight years ago in the Masaya mission, my wife, my daughter, and I began discipling three neighbors: I discipled Reynaldo, Tamy discipled Noemí, and Lidia discipled Cristina. After 12 weeks, each of them took another person and we continued with other new converts. This is how God has guided us in opening eight missions: Masaya, Las Flores, San Marcos, La Dalia, Matagalpa, Sébaco, San Juan de Oriente and Cuba.

Each mission carries in its blood the importance of discipling one on one and it has been the specific way in which God has used us to disciple person by person and that has led us to hundreds reached for Christ, as well as the beginning of the missionary work in different places.

Our church is a cell church and we have centralized the task of the church through each leader who directs a cell at home. Four years ago our country went through a political situation and we had to close the church building but not the church. Once the situation passed and we returned to meet on Sundays, we had multiplied from 12 cells to 18. Then came the Covid-19 pandemic and the same thing: We closed the building but not the church, and when we were able to come back together, we multiplied the cells from 18 to 27.

We also work with children in small cells. We have 26 houses where we have dedicated Sunday to Sunday to teach and interact with them and their families and now average 240 children in these houses on Sunday with more than 60 people serving in this ministry.

Lifeworld has been a part of our ministry for many years in our country of Nicaragua supporting different radio ministries, programs aimed at couples, and workshop programs for those who serve in the ministry of teaching children. In December of last year, we opened the new mission in Sébaco and we were going through difficulties for its continuity, but thank God for the assistance of Lifeworld that allowed us to continue.

When we opened the mission in Cuba, the presence of Lifeworld was already in the heart of Bro. Jesús Martín. He had heard the message of

salvation through the radio ministry that Lifeworld had been broadcasting on the air for many years with The Christian Contact, a program by Pastor Richard Róbinson. Jesús Martín listened to this program and that seed sown came to germinate years later when we visited the country. We met Bro. Jesús and he shared with us the perfect plan of our God and how Lifeworld was an instrument to reach his life. Today he is our missionary and is the leader of a beautiful mission in Cuba.

The Centro de Vida church is celebrating in May her eighth anniversary with eight missions, but we are not stopping there; rather, it is our vision to establish cell groups in more cities. Thank you, Lifeworld, for always joining efforts through our common goal, which is to spread the gospel of salvation as it is carried throughout the world.

