

# The Heart of PARTNERSHIP

Over the past several years, the North American Baptist Conference has worked diligently to recruit, assess, equip, and support church planters and revitalization pastors in deep and meaningful community – all for the sake of seeing the Gospel spread across North America.

As part of this shared mission, most planters enter into a multiplier agreement. This covenant invites each multiplier to actively engage their region and the broader NAB family, while also investing relationally and strategically in the planting and renewal of churches across our conference. Multiplication is not a solo effort – it is a shared calling.

One meaningful way we cultivate that shared calling is by connecting our multipliers to the global mission of the NAB. Through vision trips and sister-church partnerships, we give planters exposure to our international mission fields. We believe NAB churches grow stronger and more aligned with the heart of God when they learn from and serve alongside brothers and sisters in our global family.

Recently, as part of connecting multipliers with the global mission of the NAB, nine pastors and leaders from NAB churches partook in a vision trip to Romania. Stu Streeter, VP of Church Multiplication, alongside Pastor Drew Steinhart of Disciples Church in Medina, Ohio, led the team of planters and revitalizers to experience

firsthand the ministry of Camp Falcon Rock and to explore sister-church partnerships with our brothers and sisters in the Convention of Hungarian Baptist Churches of Romania (HBC).

Partnership is at the heart of trips such as this; they are not only about building partnerships between churches in North America and sister churches in Europe or elsewhere, they are made possible, in part, due to the churches and individuals who choose to partner with the NAB through their generous gifts. When you give to the NAB's Ministry Resource Fund on an ongoing basis, you are helping to support Kingdom work such as this.

Over the course of a week, the team led and taught at the annual HBC Spring Mission Conference and traveled throughout Transylvania to preach and share in more than eleven congregations. But it was more than just preaching; it was spending several days with sister churches, learning congregational rhythms, praying with local leaders, and listening to pastors faithfully serving in Romania.

"It's one thing to know that in Christ we have brothers and sisters spread throughout the world," Drew shared. "It's an even greater gift to get to know some of these brothers and sisters, to learn their names, to serve alongside them, and to be enriched by entering into their unique and beautiful culture of worship and devotion to the Lord."

What began as introductions quickly became genuine friendships.

All nine team members heard stories of perseverance. They witnessed small congregations carrying deep faith. They saw leaders faithfully shepherding their people through social and economic challenges unfamiliar to many of us in North America.

And they were, to a person, humbled.

It was a beautiful and unifying time – hearts knit together as they witnessed what God is doing among the nations.

This global partnership is not peripheral to our mission; it is central to who we have always been as the NAB, and it is central to who we are becoming.



Already, fruit is emerging. Pastor Mario Rodriguez from Tabernáculo Bíblico Bautista Nueva Jerusalén in Kitchener, Ontario, has begun regular Zoom prayer gatherings with his sister-church partner. Vince Rediger, one of our newest planters, deeply encouraged two small Romanian congregations led by a lay pastor, and he is now exploring ongoing ways to serve alongside them.

This is multiplication in its truest sense—not merely exporting resources but exchanging encouragement.

These are early relationships – but they are meaningful ones. They reflect the kind of Gospel multiplication that extends beyond borders, strengthens local churches, and reminds us we are part of something far bigger than ourselves.

And this kind of ministry and the others highlighted in this issue of *Onward* are only possible because of your faithful generosity.

Recently, I read the story of Jesus feeding the multitude in Matthew 14, and I wondered what went through that young boy's mind when the disciples looked to see if anyone had any food to share. Did he look around at the size of the crowd, look at his small lunch, and wonder if his small offering could make a difference? As we read the rest of the story, we see how Jesus multiplied the small offering of food.

Your faithful monthly gift of \$5, \$10, or \$25 – or whatever amount – when combined with other small gifts, will make a big difference. Thank you for prayerfully considering this invitation to partner with us. I look forward to journeying with you on this work the Lord has given us.



**TERRY OKKEN** | Director of Advancement

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