DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS
TRUST. LOVE. WITNESS. EQUIP.

Trust

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path” (Proverbs 3:5-6). We watched where God was working and joined him. For the past 20 years, our church has been linked with Romania after their Communist suppression.

After the opportunity and vision of a Romanian Discipleship Initiative came in the early spring of this year, Pastor Ralph Rittenhouse challenged our church to sponsor pastors and ministry leaders. Discipleship Essentials had just been translated and published in Romanian in December 2012. What resulted was the first Romanian Discipleship Summit, Nov. 1-10, 2013.

Gifts given by Florin and Timotei to Camarillo Community Church

“You have encouraged me to do some important changes in my life, in my family and in the church I serve. Thank you for your hospitality and for making available for me to get in touch with this great material, this wonderful church, and these special families. Thank you for making yourself available to God so He may work through you. May God bless you! In Christ, your disciple(r)…me.

1 Cor. 15:5” - Florin Gugulanu

“Most of all I was really impressed by how willing church members were to take part in this course. Their testimonies were very well integrated, and they were a great support for the course and the motivation behind the course.” - Timotei Stenia

“Thank you for blessing us so that we can bless others in return.” - Emanuel Grozea

God has a wonderful way to guide, to encourage, to give vision. This time here was a wonderful experience, the answer of two years of prayer. Thank you for everything. - Dorin Feiereisz

“Paul exhorts the Colossians, ‘So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him’ (Colossians 2:6). By faith in God, who is absolutely good, we plug into the power of the Holy Spirit and set off on a risky adventure to follow wherever Jesus Christ leads” (Discipleship Essentials, p. 138).
LOVE

Love is a sacrifice. It is not a contract and does not require reciprocation. Our potential is in Christ, and our mutual love of Jesus results in joy! “Thank you for discipleship, wonderful meals, smiles, hospitality, all of you! The summit was an opportunity to learn about discipleship to see the implementation in practice, through participation in different quads. I was impressed by the zeal, clear way of defining purposes, love in serving of the people from the church. We felt appreciated and beloved.”

– Jeni Rosian

One of our guests was Nicolae Rebega. When he was eight years old, in the 1990s, Scott and Roxanne Packham met him in the orphanage system through Heart of Hope Ministries. Recently completing seminary in Bucharest, he cherished the opportunity to learn and experience being with those who have loved him through the years. “My heart beats the same as yours because our hearts belong to Jesus.”

Being in ministry, they are often the hosts, giving instead of receiving. This time they were guests. Livia Zdranc said, “I am thankful to God for these 10 days of grace. I can’t speak English but I could feel your love in every smile and hug. Thank you for all. You will be in my prayers. Psalm 91.”

WITNESS

Vanya from Holland responded, “The King will reply: I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Matt. 25:40). Thank you for all your love and sharing.” As Greg Ogden relates, “Jesus Christ has entrusted to his followers the message of the gospel, which contains the power of God unto salvation. The authority to share the good news comes through the Holy Spirit, who makes us witnesses. A witness is one who declares on the basis of personal experience what he or she knows to be true about Christ” (Discipleship Essentials, p. 164).
EQUIP

The role of the pastor is to equip (Ephesians 4:10) Christ-followers to do the ministry. Over the past centuries this has not necessarily been the expectation of church attendees. “The summit’s theme is a vital one for our growth in faith. Because of this summit, discipleship and discipling became very important subjects for me” – Costi Iancu. Changing these traditions and perceptions to align with Scripture is challenging, and pastors must be intentional to transfer ministry to the body. This was a turning point for Romanian and Dutch ministry leaders and pastors.

- What I desired in my church, I have found in your church. I am enriched by the experience from here. Thank you for your trust to invest in us. May this investment abundantly enrich you, too. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 2 Cor. 9:13-14; 2 Cor. 4:15 – Sorin Capatina

- “I did not exactly know what to expect, but what I have found suits, confirms, and equips the calling as I feel in my heart months ago already. Hence it was all my Father prepared for me, thanks!”

- “The SOAP method is a good method for the church. People read, but writing brings order to thoughts and I will suggest this method to our church. I have also learned many other useful things through the week.”

As a part of equipping pastors, potential derailing of discipleship in a church was shared by Pastor Ralph:

- Perceptions as “just another Bible study program instead of a lifestyle change”: Highjackers may have different agendas.
- Process degeneration: Some fail to memorize, do homework, and resist being transparent.
- Failure to reproduce: If the expectation is not to repeat the process, relational discipleship stops.
- Ministry distractions: Special occasions, holidays, other less important events replace priorities.
- Scheduling time to meet: Busyness, seasons of life.

Becoming conscious of eternal priorities is essential. These “sinkholes and potholes” alert us to be aware to keep the main thing the main thing.

Many meals served by volunteers for our guests

COMMENTS FROM HOST HOMES

“They became like sons to us. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of it.”- Karen and Dave Van Zee

“It was a great experience. We made a new friend.”
- Mary and Terry McTavish

“It helps your faith to know that God had brought these guys here and that we got to play a role in His Plan. We would do it again.” - Julie and John Laubacher
“We are living in a time when the church is rediscovering the truth that transformation in Christ occurs through the disciplines of [spiritual] formation.” - Greg Ogden