

INTERNATIONAL BRETHERN CONFERENCE ON MISSION 3
ROMANIA
1 - 6 JULY 2003

NEWS RELEASE

SUCCESSFUL IBCM3 CONFERENCE IN ROMANIA

The third International Brethren Conference on Mission (IBCM3) was held in Selimbar in central Romania on 1 - 6 July.

There were some 205 participants from outside Romania and about 100 participants from Romania (including the young people of the choir and other helpers). 55 different countries were represented - three more than at the IBCM2 conference in Rome in 1996. A number of countries were prevented from being represented by visa or financial difficulties or problems of availability of representatives.

IBCM Chairman, Fares Marzone, said: "It was a great privilege to participate in such a successful conference, and this feeling was shared, we believe, by all who were able to come. There was a great spirit at the conference. We are thankful to all our speakers and workshop leaders. The Lord definitely emphasised a number of points to us, for the benefit of our churches in the coming years:

1. The importance of *Good Leadership*, and this requires *visionaries*, . first of all, in terms of a fresh vision of God and for God, and, secondly in terms of leaders who know what is good for their local church, who plan today for tomorrow.
2. The importance of *Sound Teaching*; this implies *obedience* to "the Word which is the only foundation", as the Reformers used to say and as our IBCM3 logo reminds us.
3. The importance of *Numerical, structural and spiritual Growth and of giving practical help to people* . For this to happen *faith* needs to be exercised in the Lord as it is He who adds daily.
4. The importance of *Effective Evangelism*. Still today the Gospel makes difference when it is preached and lived faithfully, with *integrity*; showing the love of God to our neighbours and bringing spiritual, psychological, moral and material help.
5. The importance of *Church Planting*. In different ways, sometimes with great difficulties, opposition, even persecution, this ministry still works, since the New Testament principles work in every culture and in every age. This implies *strategic planning*.
6. Finally the exercise of the *Spiritual Gifts*. This implies a *sense of responsibility to the Lord* and total *mobilisation* of believers which is implicit in the Brethren approach."

"In addition, the conference saw planning for the future. There was a real consensus that more regular networking and contact is needed between the churches in the 130 countries where Brethren congregations are to be found. An international steering group will be formed to develop this. There is also an intention for form a related network to foster leadership training in our churches. Both our African brethren and our brethren and sisters from the Caribbean had meetings to discuss regional conferences in their areas. There is a definite proposal to have an African missions conference in November 2004, probably in Johannesburg."

The conference was a great encouragement to the Brethren churches in Romania.

Fares Marzone said, "The Union of Brethren Assemblies of Romania and the local brethren associated with Misiunia Pacea at Selimbar did a great job, and we can only thank them for what they did. Lifelong friendships were formed."

The next IBCM conference will be held in 2007, in north-west Europe or north America. The IBCM International Planning Group hope to announce the location and timing by early in 2004. They will also be working to reconstruct an IBCM International Consultative Committee, which will be representative of the different continents.

NOTES TO EDITORS

It is hoped that Brethren magazines in the various different countries will report on this conference and also give notice of the conference which it is planned to hold in 2007.

The IBCM3 conference was held at Misiunea Pacea in Selimbar in Transylvania. Local arrangements were made by a Romanian National Committee under the auspices of the Union of Brethren Assemblies of Romania. The conference was planned and promoted by the IBCM International Planning Group, comprising Fares Marzone (Italy - Chairman), Ken Newton (Australia), Paul-Gerhard Kalthoff (Germany) and Neil Summerton (UK). The Group consulted an IBCM International Steering Committee. It is this committee which it is now proposed to

reconstruct as an IBCM International Consultative Committee made up of corresponding members from different parts of the world.

Work is now going on to construct two permanent networks: the Brethen International Network (BIN) and the Brethren Educational Network (BEN). These two networks will work in co-operation with each other. The former will foster general contacts and networking between key people in the different countries where there are churches of Brethren background, while BEN will encourage leadership training and development. For further information on BIN, contact Harold Rowdon (harowdon@logic-net.co.uk) or Neil Summerton (summerto@hornsey.u-net.com). For further information on BEN, contact Paul Joshua (pauljoshua@vsnl.net) or Ron Diprose (rediprose@libero.it).

For further information about IBCM matters, contact Neil Summerton (summerto@hornsey.u-net.com).