



# EQUIPPER

The monthly Ministry Development newsletter from Grace Communion International in the United States

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[www.gci.org/MinDev](http://www.gci.org/MinDev)

Dear minister with Jesus:

Summer is nearly over. I hope you have taken time for some relaxation (golf?). Actually, summer is quite busy for the 700+ volunteers who staff our Generations Ministries camps and short-term mission trips. *HUGE* “thanks” to them all!

So far this year, GenMin has held 15 camps and 3 mission trips. Still ahead are two camps and two mission trips (including *Cruising for Christ*—see the announcement below).

A key reason for GenMin camps and missions is to provide churches with powerful tools for building *cross-generational, cross-cultural community*. This fall, many GCI congregations will receive home returning campers and missionaries. This ***camp-to-congregation connection*** affords great opportunity to integrate camp and mission trip participants more fully into the fellowship and ministry of the local church. See page two for suggestions.



Crossing Borders mission trip



Greg Williams

Thanks to all who support GenMin camps and missions through giving prayer, time and money. An effective way to support GenMin financially is through contributing to the ***GC Next domestic mission fund*** (go to <http://genmin.gci.org/donate.html>). The fund supports the *GC Next* work of GCI’s Generations Ministries and Church Multiplication Ministries. Pastors and treasurers, as you prepare your 2011 church budgets, please consider a regular (automatic) monthly donation to the fund.

God’s blessings to you all,  
Greg Williams, GenMin director

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## Announcements & Resources:

- At ***IT LOOKS LIKE THIS...*** (<http://gci-usa.blogspot.com/>) we’ve posted videos with district pastors Eric Shaw and Heber Ticas discussing church planting (click on “multiply”), and pictures of Ground Zero Church’s open house (click on “seek”).
- **BuildingChurchLeaders.com** offers a training pack that gives ways to capitalize on ***the strengths of a small church***. Download it for \$14.95 from <http://buildingchurchleaders.com/downloads/practicalministryskills/leveragingstrengths?tCode=C7AF69E462&dCode=B639BCBFF>
- GenMin announces ***Cruising for Christ*** – a day-long cruise from Florida to a mission project in the Bahamas (December 27, 2010 - January 1, 2011). This event is for teens age 13-18. For details, go to <http://www.sepflorida.com/>.
- See page 3 for information concerning the ***Exponential Conference 2011*** coming to Orlando, FL in April. Note: early-bird registration pricing expires on September 3.

Equipping pastors, ministry leaders and ministry workers for participation in ministry with Jesus.

## Facilitating the *Camp-to-Church Connection*

by Greg Williams, GenMin director (<http://genmin.gci.org>)

GenMin camps and short-term mission trips are life-transforming events. Many congregations use them to help build cross-generational, cross-cultural community within their local church. Here are tips for facilitating the *Camp-to-Church Connection*.

### Connect through camps:

- Send to camp young people from within and outside your congregation.
- Offer scholarships where needed (and help campers raise funds).
- Send adults to share camp with the youth. The adults gain valuable ministry experience useful back home. The greatest benefit is to bond with the campers.
- Provide prayer support leading up to and during the event.
- Send the campers a care package with food, notes and other things that kids like.
- Visit and serve at camp if possible (one group of women provided a laundry service during camp).
- Be sure adults (members and leaders) connect with the campers when they return home. Become a prayer partner with one of the campers—share life together through weekly contact.
- After they return home, have campers give a talk, slide or video show, or put photos on the bulletin board or in the church newsletters. *Celebrate the camp experience*: be sure to invite the non-churched youth that attended camp and include their families.
- Pastors can use the camp teaching curriculum as a sermon series after camp, providing an exciting review for campers and drawing the adults into the Christ-centered camp theme. GenMin camp curricula are posted at <http://genmin.gci.org/campministries.htm>. In the near future we'll also be providing video discussion starters, called **GenMin Life**. Look for this new feature coming soon to the GenMin website.
- Camps and Missions are a highlight of the summer for many youth. Figure out how to create equally impactful youth activities during the fall and spring, to keep the momentum going. Such activities include retreats, lock-ins, or local mission projects.



Higher Ground camp

### Connect through short-term mission trips:

- GenMin's short-term mission trips provide opportunities for people of all ages to partner in serving distressed people within and outside the US. Recruit a cross-generational group in your congregation to participate in one of these missions together. You will connect as friends in ministry forever!
- When they return, connect the "missionaries" into long-term, local mission outreach in close proximity to where your local church meets. Short-term missions are a great way to "jump-start" local, long-term mission involvement.
- Include un-churched friends in the short-term mission team. It is often the case that un-churched people will participate in a mission project before they will attend a church service.
- Have members donate used clothing, craft supplies, Bibles, toys, etc. that the mission team can use for outreach on the mission trip.
- When the missionaries return home, have a church service to celebrate their experience.
- GenMin has experienced mission teams that willing to travel to your congregation to help you start a local outreach/mission project. If interested in our help, email me at [Greg.Williams@gci.org](mailto:Greg.Williams@gci.org).
- GCI encourages its congregations to get involved in domestic (local) missions. Partnering with a local Christian mission agency is an easy way to start. Also, most schools are seeking volunteers and youth mentors – adopting a school might be a good way to begin. For examples of local mission projects, see **IT LOOKS LIKE THIS...** (go to <http://gci-usa.blogspot.com/> and click on "seek").

## Exponential Conference: A Life-Changing Experience

by Rick Shallenberger, Christ Fellowship Church (Cincinnati West) pastor

<http://www.cfcnext.org/>

Randy Bloom, who directs GCI's Church Multiplication Ministries (CMM) invited me to attend **Exponential** (National New Church) **Conference 2010** last April in Orlando. To be honest, I wasn't sure that this conference, which focuses on starting new churches, would be that beneficial for me. After all, I wasn't planning on planting a new church and didn't see any potential church planters in my congregation. So why spend the time and money? But I decided to go to support CMM and GCI's church planting vision. As often happens, God had more in mind for me.

CMM has a slogan, *All kinds of churches for all kinds of people in all kinds of places*. At the Exponential Conference, we heard numerous examples of this kind of movement taking place. Many of the workshops were given by those involved in planting "Churches without walls." These are churches in parks, on the basketball court, among the homeless, in jail, in shelters, in neighborhoods. Story after story was shared about God leading people to share the gospel and that sharing often turned into a "church." Not a church by our standards, perhaps, but certainly a vibrant movement of the Holy Spirit sharing the Good News about God's love and life with others.



Rick Shallenberger, Bermie Dizon and Anthony Mullins at Exponential Conference 2010

The plenary sessions were inspiring, encouraging and motivating. Church growth is taking place – or I should say, body of Christ growth, or kingdom growth is taking place. All kinds of churches for all kinds of people in all kinds of places is not an idea or movement unique to us. It's a movement the Spirit is leading throughout the country.

I was really struck by the fact many of the presenters shared they were working on their own. They were considered a bit extreme for their parent churches. What they were doing didn't fit into the mold of how many believe church needed to be done. But the fruit of their work showed the mold needs to be broken. It's not about how we've always done church, it's about reaching out with God's love and sharing that love with others effectively. This will undoubtedly mean something different for me in Ohio, than it will for you wherever you've been called to shepherd.

I urge you to attend **Exponential Conference 2011**. If you do, you will be praising God all the way home for the work he is doing, and you will be asking him how you can participate. You will learn alongside pastors, church planters and other leaders from GCI and other Christian fellowships throughout North America.

**EXPONENTIAL<sup>11</sup>**  
National New Church Conference | April 2011

Pastors and other interested members are encouraged to attend **Missional Communities: Discovering Old Truths in New Paradigms—Exponential Conference 2011**, coming to Orlando, FL on April 26-29, 2011. Their very low early-bird registration fee expires on September 3, so register now at <http://www.exponentialconference.com/>.