



EQUIPPER

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Happy New Year!

2011 brings fresh opportunity to participate in mission. But what is mission and how do we participate? Note the following:



- Christian mission is the **Mission of God** (*Missio Dei*, in Latin).
- Our English word **mission** comes from the past participle of a Latin verb that means *to send* or *sent*. In the *missio dei*, the Father is the *sender*, the Holy Spirit the *sending agent*, and the incarnate Son of God (Jesus Christ) the *sent one*.
- In his going on the Father's mission, Jesus ministers in the power of the Spirit and includes with him, as co-ministers, his followers (the church). Therefore, we appropriately speak of the church as *on mission with God* in his reconciliation of all things through Jesus Christ (Col. 1:20).

Given this understanding of mission, we have titled our GCI-USA 2011 regional conferences, **On Mission with God**. I look forward to seeing you there. For conference details, go to <http://www.gci.org/event/11/conferences>. In preparation, we have posted pictures and videos at <http://gci-usa.blogspot.com/> showing our US congregations participating with Jesus in God's mission. Below and on page two are some related observations.

- The church is called by God to be *missional*, yet not everything a church might do constitutes mission. Mission is what the Triune God is doing. Thus, an important question for the Church is this: *Are we actively and effectively participating?*
- Mission is not a super special assignment for extraordinary people. Rather, the Bible says that God calls into his mission ordinary people (1 Cor. 1:26-31), who trust in and willingly serve an extraordinary, missional God.
- Though we appreciate the work of "mission agencies," it is a mistake for a person or a congregation to see mission as only supporting missionaries to other nations. Mission involves us personally, collectively, and directly in God's mission first in the local community, then beyond.
- A church is **missional** as it participates in the missional ministry Jesus is doing to multiply his disciples. Jesus' mission (a **journey** in which we are called to share—see page two) has distinctive patterns: seeking the lost; nurturing believers; equipping workers; and multiplying leaders, ministries and churches.

Enjoying the journey,
Dan Rogers, CAD director

Note to GCI-USA pastors: An updated version of the **GCI Pastoral Continuing Education Program Guide** is posted under *pastor resources* at <http://online.gci.org>.

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

The Journey with Jesus

By Ted Johnston, CAD communications

To be *on mission with God* is to be *on journey with Jesus* as he ministers the love and life of God to the world. Regarding our participation, consider the following:

- It is *Jesus' journey*, yet he includes us individually and together. What a joy, high calling and sometimes wild ride!
- The ultimate destination of the journey is the fullness of the kingdom of God, where humanity will experience unimpeded communion with God and one another.
- God created and placed humankind on earth as the locale for this communion. Though human sin ruptured communion, God refused to be thwarted. He entered into covenant with Abraham—promising that his seed would bring to the world ultimate blessing: forgiveness of sin and restoration to communion with God.
- From out of Abraham's descendents and others, God formed and elected Israel to be a nation in covenant with him on behalf of all humanity. Within Israel, God created the "womb of the Incarnation" of the Son of God who in the person of Jesus Christ is Abraham's promised seed.
- Through incarnation, the Son of God became "God with us," as one of us. His coming to earth inaugurated God's kingdom, and his representative/substitutionary (vicarious) birth, life, baptism, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension and continuing intercession accomplishes humanity's redemption. As part of his earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned ("com-missioned") his Apostles to journey with him as he fulfills the Father's mission on earth.
- To advance that mission, the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to empower, inspire and guide the church so that Jesus' disciples may participate actively and skillfully in their Lord's discipling ministry.
- The role of church leaders is to lead by example, teach and train in order to *outfit* (equip) believers for the journey—travelling with Jesus as co-ministers as he extends God's kingdom reign and thus blesses the world.
- Ultimately, God's mission will be fully accomplished when Jesus delivers the fullness of the kingdom up to the Father.



A Missional Ecclesiology

Adapted from "What is Missional Ecclesiology" by Paul Hooker. Hooker's paper is posted at <http://www.negapby.org/missionalecc.pdf>.

Missional ecclesiology is a way of understanding the nature of the church (*ecclesia*) of God. It means understanding that the church does not merely *have* missions; instead, the mission of God creates the church, which is called on mission with God.

Biblical mission begins with the **Missio Dei**—God's own "self-sending" in Christ by the Holy Spirit to redeem and transform God's creation.

The church is not a building or an institution but a **witnessing community**, called into being, equipped by the Holy Spirit and sent into the world to testify to and participate in the ministry that Jesus is doing in the world, in fulfillment of the Father's mission.

For a church to live out a missional ecclesiology means more than deciding which community service projects to undertake for the year. Rather it means actively living out the following commitments:

- Pastors and ministry leaders modeling a *missional lifestyle*, then offering teaching and training that equips people of all ages for participation with God in his mission (Eph. 4:11-13).
- Conforming church programs and activities to the reality that the church is called, gifted and sent by God on mission into the world.
- Being a community that participates actively in the work that Jesus is doing in the Spirit to make disciples in the community nearby the church's place of assembly and then beyond.