



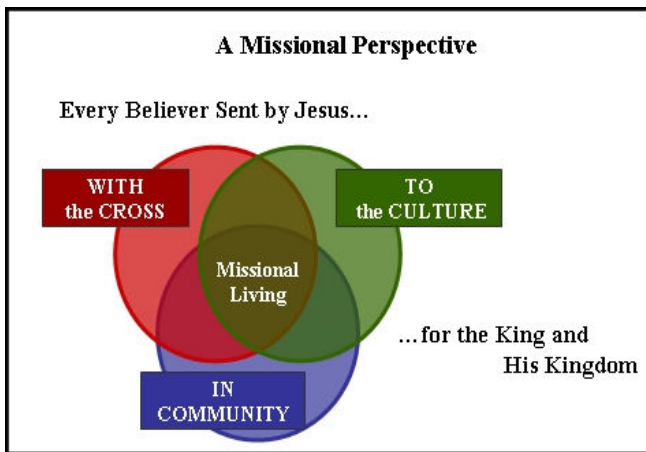
EQUIPPER

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Dear disciple of Jesus, on mission with God:

Our U.S. Regional Conferences this year have been emphasizing our calling to be churches *on mission with God*. We are not alone in this emphasis. Many leaders within the body of Christ are addressing the importance of being *missional* (see the diagram below and the video at <http://youtu.be/BiYwMRYpuy!>).



To be missional is to obey Jesus' command to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19). This obedience is a *lifestyle* of actively participating with Jesus as he ministers to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit. To be missional is thus to be faithful to both God's nature and the church's calling:

- **God's nature.** Talk of being missional must always begin with God who, as a triune communion of divine persons, is love. As an expression of that love, God created the cosmos. Since the fall, God has been redeeming the cosmos in and through Christ, restoring it to loving relationship (communion) with himself. Thus, we understand that our Creator, Redeemer God, in accordance with his nature and work of love, is *a missional God*.

- **The church's calling.** In our day, the Father continues to accomplish his mission of love to the world through the ministry of his Son Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit continuously forms and reforms the church to participate actively with Jesus in this ongoing ministry. Thus, by God's design, the church is *a missional people*.

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One of our challenges in GCI is understanding what it means to be a missional people in a *post-Christian* world. In that regard, I recommend the book, *The Missional Leader* by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk. I also recommend the Transformational Church consulting services provided by our Ministry Development Team (see pp. 2-3). These services help our churches engage actively and skillfully in ministry with Jesus within their particular context, including the community where they meet.

Journey on!

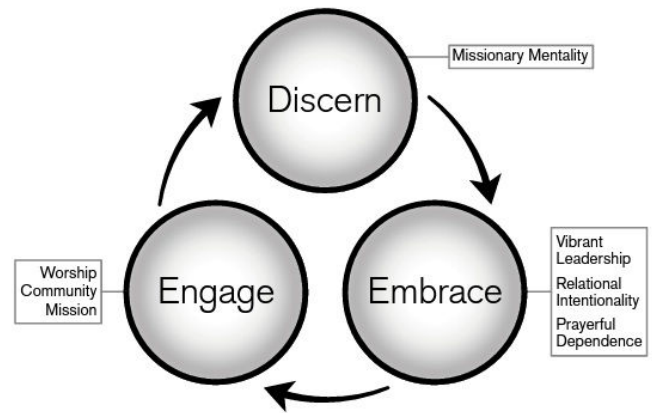
Dan Rogers, director, Church Administration and Development

Transformational Church (TC) consulting services

The GCI Ministry Development Team (<http://mindev.gci.org/Web%20Documents/MDT.pdf>) offers Transformational Church (TC) consulting services to GCI churches in the United States. These services help congregations discern their current level of participation in the mission of God, then make and implement plans for progress.

TC consulting services utilize tools provided by LifeWay Research. In an extensive study of thousands of churches, LifeWay identified seven characteristics possessed by churches that engage actively in what God is doing to help people come to faith; then through deepening communion with God, mature as followers of Jesus on mission with God.

These seven characteristics of missional churches are dynamically interrelated in the *transformational loop* shown at right. TC consulting services help churches understand this loop in their context, providing a “scorecard” by which they may assess their current situation and formulate plans to “grow deeper.”



Transformational Loop: The New Scorecard

TC consulting services are thus not about operating church growth programs, but about discerning God’s activity, embracing what he is doing, and engaging actively in his ongoing mission to the world. In short, TC services help churches live in union and communion with our Triune, missional God.

The assessment part of TC consulting services utilizes LifeWay’s *Transformational Church Assessment Tool* (TCAT). This online survey instrument allows members of the congregation to give their assessment of the congregation relative to each of the seven TC characteristics. The data derived is then analyzed by the TC consultant (several members of GCI’s Ministry Development Team are certified by LifeWay to provide this assistance). That analysis is then shared with the congregation’s leadership team to discuss implications and draw preliminary conclusions.

Following this assessment and analysis, the TC consultant leads the congregation’s pastors and other key leaders and workers in a *Discovery Retreat*. In this highly interactive day-long workshop, participants discuss the findings of the assessment, summarize the implications, then formulate plans for steps forward as they seek together to engage more actively in what God is doing both in their church and communities. Participants in these retreats report that they provide new levels of unity and missional focus.

Following the Retreat, the TC consultant produces a report summarizing what the group has discovered and presenting recommended next steps (action plans) that provide the congregation with a road map for the journey forward on mission with God. The TC consultant is then available to assist in the implementation of these plans.

To learn more about the Transformational Church consulting services offered by GCI, see these websites (and see page 3 for a testimony from a GCI congregation concerning their use of these services):

- <http://mindev.gci.org/services.htm>
- <http://www.lifeway.com/n/Ministry-Focus/Transformational-Church>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/GCIChurchDev#grid/user/2140E4217CC25B78>

One church's report concerning TC services

Abundant Grace Church (AG), the GCI congregation in Rochester, NY, is utilizing GCI Transformational Church (TC) consulting services. Here is a report on the progress they are making in implementing action plans formulated through their TC Discovery Retreat.

1. Develop a process for identifying, recruiting and training future leaders

- A new process has been implemented. Since the Discovery Retreat, 13 AG leaders completed 8 sessions of John Maxwell's "Developing the Leaders Around You." According to Leonard Banks (AG pastor, in the blue shirt in the picture at right), all of these leaders are more confident and willing to pass the baton of leadership to others.
- Mary equipped Linda, a member living in Charlotte (the Rochester community where the church meets), to replace her as the leader of the food cupboard.
- Larry is equipping Pablo, a member living in Charlotte, to replace him as facilities manager.
- Leonard is equipping Thella, a member living in Charlotte, to replace him as worship leader.
- Mary (prayer leader), Dan (security leader), Carol (greeters leader) and Ihor (treasurer) are training their replacements



2. Equip AG members living in Charlotte to lead the food cupboard ministry

- Mary and Linda are training Charlotte resident members to fill the ranks of the food cupboard ministry.
- The ministry no longer requires food drives. Other charitable organizations and local residents are supplying the food for the cupboard.

3. Develop a disciplemaking pathway

The goal here is to have a clear structure with appropriate programs that help the un-churched understand Jesus' gospel, that help new believers become grounded in the Christian faith, that help those grounded discover their spiritual gifts and equip all members for ministry, and that then releases equipped believers to do ministry. The intent is to make disciples who are actively involved in disciplemaking ministries in and through AG.

- GCI elder Lloyd is working on this large project as a GCS class assignment. He is using GCI website and Pastor's Resources, GCI Statement of Beliefs and other disciple-making resources. He has a deadline for the un-churched and new believer portion of the pathway of September 30th.
- Unfinished business: Who will train and when will the training take place?

4. Establish Faith-Talk groups (evangelistic small groups) in Charlotte

- Now that Mary is prepared to hand off the leadership of the food cupboard to Linda, she wants to form the first Faith Talk group in Charlotte (December goal).
- A few others aspire to start FaithTalk groups but have no specific plans at this point. All agree that this must be done.

Note: For information about GCI FaithTalk group resources, go to *FaithTalk equipper* at <http://faithtalkgroups.blogspot.com/>.