



EQUIPPER

The monthly e-magazine from the Church Administration and Development team of Grace Communion International

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Dear disciples on mission with Jesus,

I appreciate what Joseph Tkach wrote in the May 22 issue of *GCI Weekly Update*. He called upon GCI congregations that have mostly older members to focus some of their resources on assisting younger members and churches in their journey to *GCnext*. By doing so, they will make a substantial contribution to our shared vision of *all kinds of churches for all kinds of people in all kinds of places*.

GCnext

As our recent celebrations of Ascension Day and Pentecost reminded us, this work is not our own—it's our participation in what Jesus is doing through the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Father's mission. A key focus of that mission is multiplying new disciples, new leaders and new churches.

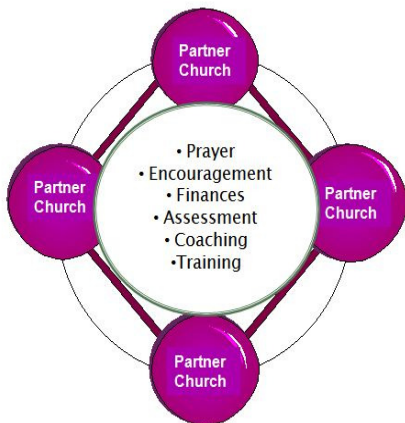
We see this movement of multiplication in the book of Acts, throughout the pages of church history, and in our world today as the Holy Spirit leads denominations, churches and ministries to active participation in mission with Jesus. I'm encouraged to see this movement gaining traction in GCI-USA, as together we journey to *GCnext*.

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Our US Church Administration and Development (CAD) team outfits our pastors and churches for this journey through the media, training, consulting, mentoring and coaching provided through Church Multiplication Ministries (CMM), Generations Ministries (GenMin), Ministry Development (MinDev) and the Pastoral Internship Program. The goal of these CAD services is to see established churches transformed and new churches started (read about a recent church plant on page two).

District Church Multiplication Network



Of course, not all of our congregations will transform, nor will all birth a new church on their own. However, all of our churches can share in our journey to *GCnext* through prayer, through participation in a District Church Multiplication Network (go to <http://cmm.gci.org/networks.htm>) and through donating to our **GCnext fund**. This fund is of great importance in that it finances what we are doing to recruit and intern new pastors and church planters, and to equip our existing churches for transformation. Because regular sources of denominational income only partially cover the expenses of this vital mission work, I urge your congregation to donate to this fund. To learn how, go to <http://mindev.gci.org/GCnext.htm>.

In Christ's service,

Dan Rogers, superintendent of US ministers

HEBER TICAS: MY STORY

About five years ago, I took part in the *Church Next Training* (CNT) provided by GCI's Church Multiplication Ministries on the advice of my Regional Pastor, Lorenzo Arroyo. He was encouraging me to think and pray about having the church I pastor become the "mother" of a new church. That idea was definitely not at the top of my list at the time—I did not see the need, nor did I have a desire for it. However, through CNT, I discovered that church planting could be totally different than what I previously imagined. My negativity was based on misunderstandings, misinformation and, in many ways, selfish desires.

At that time, my congregation was in a good place—moving into increased missional activity. We were excited, witnessing people coming to Christ as we addressed the profound need our community had for the loving grace of God. We had grown from a church of 60 to about 160 in attendance. But as I continued to read about church planting and the reasons why more churches are needed, I became convinced that the most effective means for the expansion of God's kingdom is to start new churches.

A passion was being birthed within me, with validation coming from different sources. Lorenzo decided to have a scaled-down version of CNT in Spanish for my Southern California district. Following the last session, I was approached by two men who attended my church. They expressed a desire to participate in a church plant. The Lord had placed a vision for church planting in my heart and now I was seeing others being moved in that direction.

Following the Spirit's lead, I put a team together and began to equip them for church planting. I was willing to send away from my church some key leaders for this new work. As I vision-casted with them, to my surprise not all were on board with my church planting vision. The financial burden, the loss of leadership and the same misunderstandings and reservations that had previously plagued me also troubled them. However, by God's grace we did not give up and we jumped through those hurdles.

My initial plan was to not be the key leader in planting the new church. I just wanted to be a mentor and cheerleader. However, I soon learned that this hands-off approach would not work. And so I began to lead a team of five families that grew to about eight before we launched the new church. We identified a focus area and Lorenzo and I did some training of the launch team for the task at hand. The whole process from recruiting the team to launching the new church took about 16 months.

The journey was exciting and humbling: exciting, as we engaged our community and witnessed God at work in people's lives; humbling, as we were reminded that God is on mission with us and that we are not to go forward alone. All the anxiety, fears and second-guessing went away as we launched the church with 163 people attending the opening service. It was especially joyous to see those we had met in the community or in our small groups.

It has been 17 months since we launched and we are moving steadily forward. Not all who come commit their lives to Christ, but those that do make it all worthwhile. My associate pastor Enoch Palacios is doing a great job shepherding the new church. About 60 to 80 now consistently attend. We are blessed to serve people who are facing all sorts of struggles including cancer, a whole family battling drug addiction and some struggling with alcohol addiction. One mother struggles with grief because her children were taken by social services. The strongholds grounded in our fallen humanity and Satan's devices are evident all around us. I'm convinced that God has called us to be a light-post bearing the light of Jesus in the midst of this darkness.

Though our resources are limited, I'm encouraged by my team's growth and commitment. Their passion has not been quenched. I pray that the Lord leads and opens doors for what lies ahead.



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