



EQUIPPER

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

July 2013

Volume 8, Issue 7

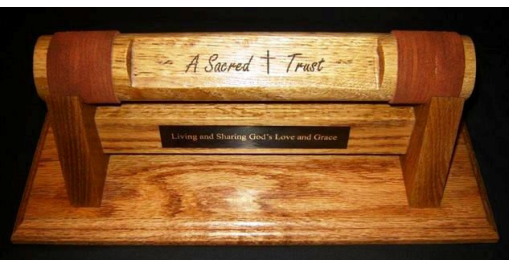
MinDev.gci.org

Dear pastoral leader,

Last month former GCI pastoral intern Jason Frantz was commissioned as the new lead pastor in our Kansas City, Missouri congregation. This milestone followed a lengthy journey involving several people working together for many years.



Above: "Passing the baton" ceremony. Left to right: Ray and Carol Meyer, Julie and Jason Frantz. Below: the baton with stand; made by a Kansas City church member.



As a young man, Jason was groomed for ministry by Pastor Jim Valekis in our Tipp City, Ohio congregation. During that time, ministry developer Ted Johnston, through GenMin and other programs, helped equip Jason for ministry leadership. A couple of years ago, Jason entered GCI's pastoral internship program working with Pastor Rick Shallenberger in our Cincinnati West, Ohio church. Then Jason moved to Kansas City where he worked with Pastor Ray Meyer for about a year as an associate pastor. Last month Ray retired and "passed the baton" of pastoral leadership to Jason.

Jason's story is an example of how God is leading us to *GNext* by raising up a new generation of pastors and church planters. A key part of Jason's story is what Ray did to formulate, then implement a *pastoral succession plan* within his Kansas City church—a plan that included his own retirement. Ted tells Ray's story on page two—I hope you will read it and be inspired to think about your own succession planning.

By sharing Ray's story, we're not suggesting that you should (or could) do exactly what he did—each situation has unique factors. However, GCI-USA policy (clarified here) is that by age 62, each senior pastor (employed or bivocational) begin working with Church Administration and Development (CAD) to prepare a *pastoral succession plan* for their congregation(s). The plan will evaluate the congregation's leadership and financial resources, its plans for future development (a process that can be facilitated using CAD's Transformational Church consulting services) and the senior pastor's own needs and goals related to their eventual retirement.

As noted on page two, Ray asked CAD team member Ted Johnston to superintend his congregation's succession planning. Ted was happy to do so, and worked closely with Ray and his leaders over the last three years. I am grateful to Ray and his wife Carol for the exemplary way they handled this transition.

If you are a senior pastor near, at or beyond age 62, please contact your district pastor or any other member of our CAD team. We'll be glad to assist with your succession planning in the same way that we assisted Ray and his congregation.

In Christ's service,

Dan Rogers, superintendent of US ministers and CAD director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Pastoral succession planning
- 2 Ray Meyer's succession story

RAY MEYER'S SUCCESSION STORY

By Ted Johnston, GCI ministry developer and regional pastor

As noted by CAD director Dan Rogers in his letter on page one, Pastor Ray Meyer contacted me about three years ago requesting that I assist his congregation in Kansas City, Missouri in preparing and implementing a pastoral succession plan. I was pleased to accept his invitation. I have known Ray and his wife Carol for many years and have a personal knowledge of the Kansas City congregation going back to when I served there as an assistant pastor in the late 1980s. I was deeply moved when Ray told me that his goal was to leave his congregation with “a qualified, competent, capable new young leader” who would lead the church into its next generation. A key step in the plan, of course, would be Ray’s retirement, ending a 44 year-long career in pastoral ministry.



Pastor Ray Meyer

One of my primary concerns was for Ray and Carol. What would these steps mean for them? Ray shared his plans for retirement, including the financial, emotional and spiritual preparations that he and Carol had been making. It was not that Ray *needed* to retire; but that he sensed that the time was right to “pass the baton” of leadership to the next generation. His concern was that this hand-off be conducted in accordance with God’s plan for the long-term health and effectiveness of the congregation.

Ray and I examined various succession alternatives—together seeking God’s will for his congregation. In doing so, we considered Ray’s personal needs and goals; the congregation’s needs and resources (including leadership and financial resources) and the like. Given these variables, we arrived at a couple of options, which Ray asked that I assist him in presenting to his leadership team and advisory council. This I did on a visit to Kansas City a couple of years ago. Ray’s leaders and advisors then came to a consensus recommendation that Jason Frantz be invited to become their new associate pastor. He would work alongside Ray for about a year, completing the training process that had begun earlier through Jason’s internship with Pastor Rick Shallenberger in one of our Cincinnati, Ohio congregations.

In June 2012, Jason, his wife Julie and their three young sons moved from their home in Ohio to Kansas City where Jason began working with Ray. At about the same time, Ray and his leadership team invited me to bring CAD’s Transformational Church consulting services to their congregation. Through those services, the congregation was helped to take a detailed, prayerful look at its existing strengths and challenges related to their journey forward in ministry with Jesus. Jason took part in the planning process, and will now shepherd the journey forward with coaching assistance from CAD.

Ray’s story is truly exemplary. I encourage you to watch my interview with him (you’ll find it online at <http://youtu.be/2z3q-dJt-YU>). I conducted this interview while I was in Kansas City a couple of weeks ago to lead the service in which Jason was commissioned as the new lead pastor of the Kansas City church. This moving service was the culmination of an approximately three-year-long succession journey involving many people working closely together with a clear view of the future of the Kansas City church.

As Dan noted, we ask all GCI-USA senior pastors to lead their congregation(s) in a similar succession planning process. We in Church Administration and Development are here to help.

I am excited about the way God is leading us into our next generation (what we refer to as *GNext*). Our gracious Lord truly has a future for us and plans to take us there! I am grateful to him and also to visionary people like Ray and Carol Meyer who are devoted to helping us discern and pursue God’s will.