



# EQUIPPER

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Dear minister on mission with Jesus:

2014 is almost over—*what a year!* For me and my wife Susan, it has meant moving from North Carolina to Southern California. Beginning next month, Susan will be working for Grace Communion Seminary (GCS) as assistant to the registrar and I'll be serving as director of GCI-USA Church Administration and Development. We're excited about what lies ahead and already feel at home among those who serve GCI and GCS out of our home office in Glendora and throughout the nation.

Whatever our role in Jesus' ministry, we're called to join in what he is doing in the power of the Spirit to fulfill the Father's mission. GCI regional pastor Randy Bloom wrote about the theology of mission in the September 2014 issue of *Equipper*. On page two of this issue, he continues. It is vital that our approach to mission be theologically shaped!

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Greg and Susan Williams

In GCI, God is giving us a clearer vision of what Jesus is doing and how we (individually and collectively) may participate. We've come to understand that God is shaping us into a *church planting movement*—living and sharing the gospel in ways that give birth to *all kinds of churches for all kinds of people in all kinds of places*. Through our participation in this movement, we're seeing established GCI churches transform and new ones start.

God is raising up in our midst leaders called to pastor our established churches and to start new ones. In the November 19 issue of *GCI Weekly Update*, we reported on several senior pastor transitions. In some cases, God has raised up young leaders just beginning pastoral ministry. In others, leaders are making mid-career shifts. Recently, we've assessed some young potential GCI church planters. Be encouraged—God is leading us forward and providing resources for the journey!

Where are we headed? I'm fond of saying that *we are church planters*. By that I mean that all of us, young or old, big congregation or small—whatever our situation personally or corporately—we all have an important part in seeing existing churches transform and new ones start. Why? Well it's not because we're trying to build a kingdom for ourselves. It's not about us—it's about Jesus and what he is doing to build his church for the sake of the world. I thank God that he has invited us to take part. And every part is important—each member, each congregation, no matter their resources, is of great value.

Dear friends, we're in this together—we are family, called to lock arms to work together. I consider it a great privilege to partner with you in what God is doing in and through us. I'm excited about the year ahead!

Happy New Year to you and yours,

Greg Williams, associate director, GCI Church Administration and Development, USA

*Outfitting GCI churches and ministries for a mission-focused journey with Jesus.*

## Implications of Trinitarian Theology for church and mission, part 2

By Randy Bloom, with Gary Deddo (Note: part 1 appeared in the September 2014 issue of *Equipper*)

What does Trinitarian Theology teach us about God and his church? Recalling that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit orients us not only to God but to everything else in his creation. The Father sent his Son in the power of the Spirit as a free expression of his outgoing love for the world. But God's love didn't stop there with that first sending or mission. The Father and ascended Son then sent the Spirit to continue the Son's saving, redeeming and reconciling mission, reaching out to every human in the world. All this activity is the mission of God.

In our union with Jesus and by the Spirit we share in the love, life and (in a special way) the nature or character of our Triune God (1 Peter 2:3-4). And we are given the privilege of being a part of his ongoing missional activity. We get to pass on to others what we have been given and have received. So as the church we can't help but be on mission with Jesus. Why would we not want to? Some people talk of "being the church" as though it is something distinct from being "missional" or as something we must "do" or "become" *before* we can focus on Jesus' mission. This is a false dichotomy. Being united to Christ means we continually receive from him and grow up in him *and* we join with him in his ongoing mission. Let's explore what sharing in his mission looks like.

### **Incarnational living**

As Jesus was sent by the Father, so Jesus sends his church (John 20:21). This passage indicates the missional aspect of God's nature, our participation in God's mission and the nature of our participation. The Father revealed himself by sending his Son to come and live among us. So he continues to make himself known to the world through the flesh and blood lives of his people. As Jesus lived with people, where they were within their cultural context, so does the church live. This is often referred to as "incarnational living."

The church is a living expression of the Son in the world, sharing his gospel and helping people receive the life of the Triune God (John 17:18; 20:21). Christians remain active in the world; not separating themselves from the world, but also not drawing their life or identity from it. We do so to be channels of the Spirit's life-transforming work.

### **Mission entails outreach**

God, who is love, is always reaching out to people. As an instrument of God's love and grace, the church is created, gifted and empowered by the Spirit to participate in the movement of God's love toward people. So the church gathers together and is built up in order to reach out to people, sharing the Good News and helping them respond to God's love.

### **Mission entails sacrificial service**

In Luke 22:27 Jesus said he came to live among people as one who serves. Missional/incarnational living, in its outward flow of activity, entails serving people. When motivated by the indwelling Spirit of Christ the church gains a deep outgoing concern for people that is expressed in tangible acts of service (Matthew 5:15-16; Matthew 25:31-40; James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:17-18). In its union with Christ and by the Spirit, the people of the church will invest time, energy and financial resources to reach others. Such efforts may also involve giving up certain old patterns and ways of being together in order to reach others and welcome them in. Meeting people where they are to journey with them together, to a place where neither they nor the church have been before, requires self-denial (Mark 8:34-38), courage and faith.

### **Motivated by love**

Jesus described the motivation for living: love for God and love for people (Matthew 22:37, 38). God's love, as revealed through the doctrine of the Trinity and the incarnate life, death and resurrection of Jesus energizes the church's work. As we seek to be with Jesus and enjoy discovering our unique place in God's mission, we will experience the joy of seeing lives transformed in the process, ours included! In this way God is glorified and signs of his Kingdom multiply.