



GC2 equipper

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Dear minister of Jesus,

We in CAD hope you were blessed last month in your celebrations of Jesus' ascension and Pentecost. It's encouraging and validating to know that Jesus stands in our place before the Father as fully God and fully human. And it's comforting to know that the indwelling Spirit leads and empowers us to actively share in Jesus' ongoing ministry (The Father's mission) in our world.

This issue addresses an important aspect of that mission—church planting. As Dr. Joseph Tkach has said, we envision Grace Communion becoming a *church planting movement*. But you may be asking, “Why start new churches?” And, “How is it done?” These important questions deserve careful answers.

When Jesus ministered on earth he started (“planted”) a church—his church. As Jesus' followers lived and shared the gospel, they gathered people into new communities of faith—they planted churches. Throughout history, Jesus' church has engaged and transformed communities and cultures through this process. Church planting thus has Scriptural and historical precedence. It has been, and continues to be an essential, Spirit-led aspect of Christian mission.

We know that Jesus possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He also possesses what we lack. Thus in faith, we can pool the resources and gifts he has given to us, and confidently join Jesus in what he is now doing in the Spirit through church planting to reach new people that we have not yet reached.

In the lead article in this issue of *GC2 equipper*, GCI Pastor Glen Weber begins to answer the question, “Why start new churches?” Glen also shares an idea for prayer by which anyone can contribute to a movement of church planting in our midst. In addition, our Information Technology department shares with us pointers (and an important request) concerning updating each congregation's online member records.

Thank you for your faithful service in Jesus' ministry,
Randy Bloom
Church Administration and Development

Why start new churches?

By Glen Weber (District Pastoral Leader and Senior Pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Eagle Rock, CA)

At the 2009 regional conferences, Dr. Joseph Tkach shares his vision of *Grace Communion International* as a “church planting movement.” This vision is based on the realization that church planting is a vital part of our participation in what Jesus is doing with his church today.



We learn of the earliest church planting movement in the book of Acts. Following Pentecost, on their way home from Jerusalem, the early disciples eagerly shared the story of Jesus with numerous people and many became followers of Jesus. These new disciples gathered in homes and new churches formed.

These new churches then sent out missionaries (church planters), including Paul and his team. Paul travelled to Philippi (in Macedonia), where he met a group of Jews who gathered at the river for prayer. Paul led Lydia, the group’s leader, to Jesus. As a result, a small church formed in her home. Paul followed this church multiplication pattern practically everywhere he travelled.

Church planting is not a “new program.” It is a vital part of our participation in what Jesus has been doing within our world for nearly 2,000 years. Church planting is as vital to our involvement in Jesus’ mission (ministry) as are our worship services, Bible studies, small groups, and other core ministries. Yet, many have asked why Grace Communion should plant churches when our existing congregations are in “survival mode.” Why should we, as pastors, partner with others to start new churches or mobilize to start a new church ourselves?

While pastoring in Spokane, WA, I partnered with a ministry known as *Mission Spokane*. In order to learn what percentage of our county population was actively attending church, we asked churches to report their attendance over a five-year-long period. We found that only 18% of the total population attended church in any given month – one of the lowest rates in the United States. We also asked the churches to report how many new believers (not transfers from other congregations) had been added to their membership during the survey period. This is where we saw the great impact that church planting has in a community.

Of the 363 churches in the county, 39 were new church plants. They added more new believers than all the other congregations *combined* (including mega-churches). This data verified a well-known fact: new churches are generally more effective at reaching new people than are established churches.

“But,” some might object, “GCI has only small congregations—how can they plant new churches?” One of the most successful church planting denominations is *The Foursquare Church*. Rod Koop, Foursquare’s director of church multiplication, gave a surprising statistic when he spoke to our 2009 Regional Conference in Southern California. He said that the “average Foursquare church has an average attendance of 56 people.” Yet, they have found that small congregations can help start new churches by working together and sharing resources.

Rod also mentioned that churches “with fewer than 200 people in attendance are FOUR TIMES more likely to plant a new church than churches over 1,000 in attendance.” And as we learned in Spokane County, starting new churches is the most effective way to reach new people.

In addition to helping established churches grow in ministry effectiveness, we want to join in Jesus’ ministry of starting new churches. Church Multiplication Ministries (CMM) is available to help pastors, congregations, and potential church plant leaders prepare now to start new churches within the next few years. The vision of becoming a church planting movement can become a reality as, together, we follow the Spirit’s lead.

Take time to pray

By Glen Weber

At the National New Church Conference in Orlando this April, I attended a workshop given by Neil Cole, a respected leader of the “organic church movement.” As his session ended, his cell phone alarm vibrated. He said this was his “10-2 reminder.” He explained that several years ago he felt moved by the Spirit to set his alarm to ring two minutes after ten each morning as a reminder of Jesus’ words in Luke 10:2, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Whenever his alarm rings, Neil asks God to provide leaders and workers who can be sent into the harvest field. He also tells those who are with him what he is doing – even if he is in the middle of a presentation.

Dan Rogers, director of GCI, Church Administration and Development, has a vision for twelve new church plants each year within the United States. This goal will be achieved as God provides new pastors, worship teams, and other leaders and workers to participate in a church planting movement in our midst. What if we all set our alarms for 10:02am, and joined in prayer each day, seeking the Lord’s provision toward the fulfillment of this vision?



Computer tip (and request): please update online records

Pastors, please update your congregation’s online member records (most have this updating performed by their congregation’s treasurer or financial secretary). Updating includes confirming that all current members are accounted for, and that the status of each member on record is correct. Perhaps some members in your file are now former members; perhaps you have new members not yet listed, etc. Thanks for your help!

Here is how to update your online member records:

- Login at www.wcg.org/online
- Click **Update your roster** in the blue **Quick Links** box on the right side of the home screen
- If you leave the box blank it will display everyone currently assigned to your church; you can then go to each record and update it accordingly
- If someone is currently listed as an **Adult Member** or a **Youth Member**, and is no longer attending or has moved out of the area, you will need to change their membership type to **Former Member**
- If someone is currently an **Adult Affiliate** or **Youth Affiliate**, and is no longer attending or has moved out of the area, you will need to change their membership type to **Former Affiliate**
- If someone has died, you will need to change their membership to **Deceased** and you will need to enter their date of death. If you do not know the date of death, then enter an estimated date of death and place a check mark in the box next to *estimated*
- If someone has been baptized you will need to change their membership type to **AM** if they are over the age of 16, and **YM** if they are under 16; then enter the date of baptism. If you do not know the date of baptism, enter an estimated date and place a check mark in the box next to *estimated*. If they were baptized in another fellowship, please enter the date they were baptized there
- As you proceed through the screens, it will ask you questions--answer in as much detail as you wish.



Questions about updating? See section 6.3 of the *WCG Online Manual*, or call IT Support at 800-350-4466.