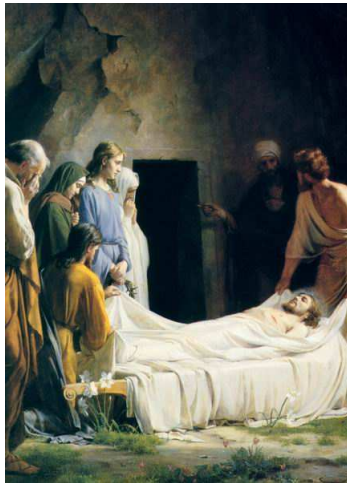




The monthly ministry development newsletter of Grace Communion International

Easter greetings!

This month brings us to **Holy Week**—the focal point of our annual worship calendar. The days listed below (2010 dates in parentheses) commemorate stunning events in the self-giving of the Father, Son and Spirit for the salvation of all humanity.



Jesus' burial:
*Experiencing death for us,
as one of us.*

- **Palm Sunday** (March 28). Jesus enters Jerusalem to suffer, die and rise to new life with us and for us. All of his incarnate life is his sacrificial gift, but the week beginning with Palm Sunday brings his self-giving to its triumphant fulfillment.
- **Maundy Thursday** (April 1). Jesus gathers his followers on this evening for the Last Supper. During supper, he introduces the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) by which we continue to experience deeply his self-giving as the true Bread of Life.
- **Good Friday** (April 2). Jesus pours out his life-blood through prolonged beatings and crucifixion. In his own human flesh, as our representative and substitute, Jesus the sacrificial Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the whole world (John 1:29).
- **Holy Saturday** (April 3). In the darkness of a sealed tomb, Jesus, on our behalf experiences the horrors of death in the body (his burial is pictured at left).
- **Easter Sunday** (April 4). At the dawn of the "eighth day," through the re-creation of bodily resurrection, Jesus walks out of the tomb a re-born, glorified human. Through his resurrection, Jesus conquers death and acquires for humanity new life.

As we rehearse these events we praise Jesus Christ for who he is and for all he did (and does) on our behalf. Let us remember that *his story is our story*— Jesus is the permanent union of God with *all* humanity. He is God with us and for us, as one of us!

We in Church Administration and Development pray that this year's Holy Week gatherings will bring great blessings as you remember and rejoice in the presence of the incarnate, crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ!

In the rest of this issue, we look toward **Pentecost** (May 23 this year), thinking about the Holy Spirit's call to the church to participate with Jesus as he fulfills the Father's mission in our world. At times, our focus on this mission can be lost amidst the "stuff" of doing church. The article on page two reminds us to **Keep it simple!**

-Dan Rogers, superintendent of U.S. ministers

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 Holy Week: commemorating the self-giving of God for us.

2 Disciplemaking pathway: Keep it simple!

Note to pastors and DPLs: Pastors participating in track two of the *Pastoral Continuing Education Program*, please be sure to record the completion of your assignments at www.wcg.org/online. CEUs are not credited until you log in completion and then receive approval from your DPL. DPLs please provide this approval, using the online system.

Keep it simple! *From the CAD Ministry Development Team*

Being the church is not about administering complex programs and strategies. It's about sharing in what Jesus is doing to help people participate in God's love and life. We think of this participation as a *journey* that takes people *from union to communion, making disciples with Jesus*.

The Spirit forms and calls the church to this mission. According to Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger in ***Simple Church*** (B&H, 2006), churches greatly enhance their effectiveness by having a clear, focused (*simple*) discipling process. In MinDev, we refer to it as ***the discipling pathway***. There are many ways to name the steps in the pathway. We use a nomenclature that we find accurate and memorable. You may prefer another. What is important is to envision and then implement a consistent, *simple* process that helps people participate in what Jesus is actually doing in our world.

The sample logo at right illustrates the use of an alternative mission nomenclature in a fellowship we will call ***Journey Church***. This church sees itself as a group of Christ-followers journeying from union to communion with God, helping others as they go.



The second line of the logo abbreviates the congregation's mission statement: "Helping people participate with God: journeying from union to communion, making disciples with Jesus." The logo's emblem illustrates their motto, showing a journey in union with Jesus. Forward movement (growth in maturity) is implied.

The third line presents the progressive steps in the journey: ***Belong. Believe. Become.*** For an individual, these are steps from *union* (inclusion with God) to *communion* (active participation with God).

For the church, these are steps taken to help people participate in Jesus' love and life. First, the church connects with unchurched people—meeting them on their "turf" and demonstrating that God loves and accepts them. The message is simple, yet profound: "You ***belong.***" Second, the church helps people ***believe*** this truth by establishing ("baptizing") them in the assurance of the gospel of grace in Jesus. Third, the church helps them ***become*** (grow) by maturing as disciples who serve as workers in Jesus' ongoing ministry to help people participate with God—journeying from *belong*, to *believe*, to *become*.

Perhaps in this sample discipling pathway you recognize the nomenclature we use in MinDev: *seek* the lost, *nurture* the believer, and *equip* the worker. Whatever the words used, what is important is having a consistent and simple process for staying focused on Jesus' patterns of loving and living in our world. Effective churches help people understand and participate in these patterns. They equip people with tools and opportunities to connect with non-churched friends. They have ways to help those who respond become established in the truth of the gospel. Thirdly, they equip those who believe to grow deeper in communion with God as workers and leaders in Jesus' discipling ministry.

Note that this pathway embraces people *as* they are, *where* they are. It then assists them in journeying forward—one simple step at a time.

What is your congregation's discipling pathway? Is it *simple*? Is everything you do organized around it? Is it accessible to people at all points on the journey? Does it encourage them and help them journey forward? We encourage you to read ***Simple Church*** and discuss it with your team. MinDev exists to help you live out these principles within your context. For assistance, visit us at www.wcg.org/mindev/.