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GREAT
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CHURCHES

CHRISTIANITY IN

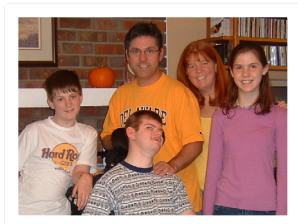
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VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 3 | SUMMER 2013
www.gccweb.org

CHANGING LIVES

THE FATHER'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

By: Chris & Lisa Rogers



"I think you need to see a specialist." These words in 1991 began a difficult journey with our 3 month old firstborn.

The remainder of Wilson's first year was one specialist visit after another, each time the news becoming more grim. Mitochondrial myopathy is Wilson's condition. He is unable to see, speak, walk, or care for himself in any significant way. Most with this diagnosis are not expected to survive their teenage years; however, now at 22, Wilson has proven those experts wrong, presenting a whole other set of challenges.

Through the years, God has given us grace each day, showing us who He is, His design for the church, and His heart for the family, preparing us for Wilson long before he was born. We had become a part of the GCC church at Clemson, SC in 1983 and those precious friends served Wilson literally every day for over a year. Now our GCC church in Woodstock, GA continues to serve and support Wilson.

God has spoken through this broken young man to show us a picture of our utter dependence on God and his unfathomable, unconditional acceptance of us. Wilson sits in his wheelchair, soiling a diaper, laughing at the same squeaky toy he has laughed at for 22 years, yet he touches our hearts and inspires us no different than if he had been valedictorian and captain of football and debate. It isn't performance – it's the unconditional love of our Father for His child.

As of this year, all of our "Great Commission babies" are now high school graduates and Wilson is starting the next chapter of his life. Wilson's work is the same as it is for all of us – enjoy the Lord in the moment and be available as he impacts the world around us for Christ. And that's a pretty exciting job description, isn't it?

LIFT UP YOUR EYES

By: Tom & Jean Dunham



After graduating in 1983 from THE Ohio State University College of Optometry (Go, Buckeyes!), Jean and I and our growing family moved back to our home state of North Dakota. We began to reach out on the campus of the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks along with two other families. We were basically a home church for the first couple of years, but as the work bore fruit we moved into a 'church' building in 1985 – and then a larger one in 2004. I was recognized as a pastor in 1991.

I have maintained an optometry practice since 1983 and also served – along with Jean and our seven children – in Cottonwood Community Church. We presently have two gifted and capable full-time pastors in Bob Bartlett and Patrick Schultz, and are training more faithful men.

Several passages from Scripture have motivated me over the years. One is from Lamentations 3:27 – *"It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth."* Jean and I embraced the notion that it was good for us to work HARD. Also, from Ecclesiastes 9:10 – *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might."* If we were to do our very best, we couldn't spread ourselves thin and do EVERYTHING, but would endeavor to 'win' in the few and most important callings (marriage/family, church, career).

My ambition has been to capitalize on opportunities to share the gospel, plant a seed, or invite a new person to church. My optometry practice has been the means of providing for my family, but it has also been a 'field.'

Most importantly, Jean has been the perfect 'helpmate.' She's embraced the calling of God for our lives, she's encouraged me in all that I've undertaken, and she's modeled contentment. We are now enjoying our new phase of marriage and family as our children get married and provide us with grandchildren!

MISSION USA

NEW CHURCH PLANTS

T4T (TRAINING FOR TRAINERS) IN COLUMBIA, SC

By: Ray Vaughn

I am confident of this: We can reach the world for Christ through God's power and the cooperation of every Spirit filled believer.

In a process called T4T (Training for Trainers) we are reminded that every disciple is in essence a trainer for Jesus. Every person is therefore to "Go, and make more trainers of all the nations, baptizing them and training them to obey Jesus." If every person is to do this, then the way in which we go about it must be simple! The tools and strategies we use need to be simplified to just basics. A person getting started in any sport is taught the fundamentals. These basics get everybody, naturally athletic or not, in the game. While our culture can naturally influence knowledge based discipleship, we need to go back to the scriptures and promote obedience based discipleship. It is not enough to know the basics, but we should be actually using them.

I have always had a heart for the Great Commission and a passion for God's

glory to be multiplied throughout the earth. With every speaking engagement I would enthusiastically verbalize this passion and encouraged others to obey it. Despite the compelling speeches very little was getting accomplished. I soon realized that I was never giving practical tools to actually accomplish the very thing I kept insisting we do. It was in this 'kairos' moment that I learned of T4T and how God's glory was being multiplied all around the world through simple approaches. I eagerly sought to be trained and soon discovered the great necessity there is to train others in these basic tools.

Subtle changes were made in our ministry in Columbia, SC. Language such as accountability, reproducible, pattern, discipleship, generational growth, all became a part of our DNA. The simple thought of going to those far from God versus strategizing ways to invite them to us began to take action. We have been able to see groups spring up in apartment complexes, bars and college campuses as a result of our efforts. Those that are open to Jesus by far outnumber



the laborers we have in our small house church network. This has compelled me to be training more and more people outside our network. One particular young man really received these tools and immediately obeyed. As a result he started four group bible studies within a few weeks with his co-workers. All of which are far from God!

Our heavenly Father wants His Word to go out. He desires that it would fall on every tongue, every tribe and every nation. We really can reach the world for Jesus through God's power and the cooperation of every Spirit filled believer.

EN ESPAÑOL

By: Tim Rude

Walnut Creek Church located in Des Moines, Iowa consists of a number of congregations throughout the Greater Des Moines area. Walnut Creek/Shalom is one of those congregations and is largely Hispanic. Shalom meets each Sunday at 12:30 pm with around 45 people normally in attendance.

In 2011, a young man from a church called Iglesia Shalom started attending the Downtown congregation as well. God transformed his life while attending there. Later when Iglesia Shalom found itself in need of a building in which to meet, he asked Walnut Creek Church if they could

meet there and his request was granted.

After a few months, Iglesia Shalom leaders approached the Walnut Creek leadership and said they wanted to be a part of WCC. After prayer and counsel, Iglesia Shalom was welcomed as a congregation of WCC.

Now after two years, Walnut Creek/Shalom is an active congregation of the church where lives are being touched each week. The service is in Spanish with the exception of the message which is interpreted in Spanish. Recently Walnut Creek Church has begun a new ministry teaching ESL (English As A Second Language), which is helpful for some Shalom members. Additionally, the ESL class provides an opportunity for members of Shalom to reach out to other



Hispanics in attendance each week.

All of the Walnut Creek Church has been enriched by the faith and friendship of the Walnut Creek/Shalom congregation. In addition, Walnut Creek/Shalom has been an unexpected blessing as an important component to our goal of filling the greater Des Moines area with the teaching of Jesus Christ.

INTERNATIONAL



ASIA MINISTRY

By: Doug Brown

Editor's Note: Doug Brown has pastored GCC churches in the U.S. for over 30 years. Recently, Doug decided to make Asia his primary ministry focus. Here is a report of what the Lord is doing in Asian churches affiliated with GCC.

"... for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

The Apostle Paul - 1 Corinthians 16:9

For two years Nonchan, a Japanese woman as an unbeliever, had been reading, studying, underlining and highlighting a Bible she purchased. Our missionary team (David and Danielle Cervenka and Rebecca Evans) shared the Gospel with her. This "thirsty woman" became a follower of Christ this past December. Since then, she has led three

other Japanese to the Lord!

We held our third annual Leader Summit in Taichung, Taiwan this past February with GCC pastors and our Asian partners. It was a rich time of fellowship, worship, prayer, gospel sharing in the community, good food and amazing God stories. Countries that were represented were: Hong Kong, Taiwan, a Creative Access Country, Japan, Philippines and the U.S.

David and Pam Loveland, missionaries to Taiwan for nine years, and their team planted a Great Commission church in February. They are reaching out to an area that has little to no church presence. This fall, two from the U.S. are joining the Taiwan mission team for a one year internship.

Also in the fall a team of five from Ft. Collins will travel to a creative access country to study abroad at two universities. Their



David Cervenka, Nonchan, and a new believer.

purpose is to learn language and culture and when they return they will be able to engage more effectively in international student ministry on U.S. campuses.

FROM ANTIOCH TO TORINO

By: Paul Meiburger

Torino, Italy is like a modern-day Antioch - an urban melting pot of internationals. "Il Rifugio" (the Refuge), the Great Commission Europe church in Torino, reflects this international flavor with Albert from Albania, Bruna from Brazil, Iman from Iran and Keesong from Korea.

Torino is the second largest occult center in the world with an estimated 5% involvement. While Italy is culturally Catholic, atheism and agnosticism prevail in the hearts and minds of many, and there are less than 1% evangelical believers in northern Italy.

Il Rifugio - Torino is in a transition period as we attempt to pass on more leadership responsibility to young European leaders. Andrea is one leading Italian who came to know Jesus after an English Club

sponsored by a short-term mission team from America. At that time, his brother was slipping deeper into the occult. After much prayer, he too experienced a radical life transformation, embracing Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Several new leaders are currently emerging as well.

Il Rifugio is located near the University of Torino, where we do weekly spiritual interest surveys. Most of the students are open to discussing their thoughts, yet still cling to their unbelief. Small groups form a large part of our ministry strategy, and recently a small group in Korean was initiated (most Koreans in Torino do not speak Italian). "Into the Wilderness" is another ministry focus, with participants from all over Europe experiencing various Alpine mountain adventures centered on thematic Biblical principles. Next year we will also host our first full European Leadership Training (Euro LT) which will



unite selected developing leaders from Europe and America in intensive learning communities. There will be many practical ministry outreaches, including some in focus countries for our joint United for Europe 2014 expansion effort.



GREAT
COMMISSION
CHURCHES

NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION TODAY

INSIDE GCC

UPDATED GCLI MATERIAL

The GCLI program is a church-based curriculum, used by elders to train other elders within their church. This 4 volume set, together with 16 CD's, is the "elder orientation" for pastors/elders in our association. Each volume covers 2 of the 8 core values of Great Commission Churches, as well as a section of the GCC Statement of Faith. The GCLI is divided into lessons with practical life exercises that effectively equip men for ministry. The newest edition was published this year, with many updated articles and an article guide.

Costs are \$20/book or \$75/4-book-set, and \$10/audio-set.

Visit gccweb.org or call the GCC office with questions or orders.

MEET A GCC PASTOR

THIS EDITION: MATT GORDON



Matt and his family.

As an engineering student at the University of Florida, Matt got involved in Cypress Church in 1980 when the church was only a year old. Matt met his wife Jan in the college group, Gator Christian Life, and married while they were both students. Several years after graduation Matt was appointed as an elder and within several more years was working full time with the church. They have had the privilege of raising 11 children who are now between the ages of 5 - 26. Matt has had the opportunity to help launch several church plant teams in Florida and one in Spain. Besides local church responsibilities Matt serves the SE region of GCC as well as the National Campus Ministry. Most summers you can find the Gordon family with a number of their students "on location" at a LINC regional summer project helping lay the foundation for a new church plant.

Favorite Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:8

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."

Advice: It's not about you, what you can or can't do, but about God's grace to empower you to tackle the things He puts on your heart to do.

CHANGED LIVES

JOHN HOPLER - DIRECTOR, GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES



"For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6

In the first chapter of Genesis, while the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters, God spoke, "Let there be light" and there was light. The Holy Spirit is hovering today through the church---believers in Christ who live throughout the world. So too, when believers speak the light of the gospel to people, God's light shines in their hearts.

At the Great Commission Churches Pastors Conference in June, we heard example after

example from pastors of individuals who are sowing the gospel of light and life.

Some individuals focus on praying for their neighbors, looking for opportunities to share the gospel.

Others distribute testimony tracts or booklets containing the message of Christ.

Other churches focus on inviting friends, families and neighbors to their Sunday church service or other events so that they might hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How encouraging it is to hear of the many and diverse ways that Christians in GCC churches are "just sowing" the message of God's love.

So join in with other members of your church---and with Great Commission Christians throughout the world--to sow the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere.



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CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION is a publication of Great Commission Churches, published four times each year.

www.gccweb.org | EDITORS: John Hopler, Christian Clonch | LAYOUT: Tyler Dormanen

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