



Broken Pieces  
Coming Together

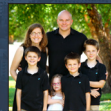


Hurricane  
Harvey Relief

Japan Update



Meet the Pastor:  
Tom Brown



# CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

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## CHANGING LIVES



### SERVING THE WHOLE FAMILY

By Phil Krause

My first exposure to vulnerable children was in my own home growing up. My mother faithfully served as a foster parent to more than 15 children during my high school years, and I was blessed to be their foster sibling. Since that time, the Lord has continued to grow a passion in my heart for kids from hard places and has blessed me with a lifelong teammate who also shares this passion.

In July of 2014, my wife and I became licensed foster parents. It wasn't until we sat in our Children's Services office week in and week out that we realized it wasn't just children who are vulnerable. We watched entire families face such steep mountains as they attempted to keep their families together. The Lord has truly opened our eyes to see that whole families are to be our ministry. We knew what our next steps needed to be, helping to preserve families in crisis.

We began the process of starting a Chapter of Safe Families for Children in Columbus, Ohio, just 10 months ago. This amazing ministry understands that families in crisis are missing one key component in keeping their families together: community. Furthermore, one of the greatest resources of the Church at large is community. When families are struggling with homelessness, addiction, joblessness, or medical emergencies, and have no one to help with their children, the church has an opportunity to step in and be their family.

Our church community at Awaken Church has been crucial in helping Safe Families become a reality in Central Ohio. We are so thankful for our community, who is learning (along with us) what it means to provide true, biblical hospitality—welcoming strangers into our home and calling them our family.



### PRESERVING FREEDOM OF SPEECH AT NC STATE

By Hannalee Gordon

God placed a burden for people on my heart around high school. My classmates. The lady at the grocery store. The gentleman walking down the street. I went to NC State with a desire to love people, but I was lacking the tools.

I met a student group called Grace Christian Life my freshman year of college. It was odd. They were actually going around campus, talking to random students about Jesus Christ—every week. It was normal for them! They taught me how to share the story of Jesus and my own personal story of how I was saved. They were serious about God's call to "make disciples of all the nations." I jumped in immediately. I was so excited because I knew now what to do to love people well.

Fall of my junior year, I became president of our student group. The administration at NC State noticed us consistently going up to students and sharing with them. They approached a pair of us one day and said we were violating a policy. They said we could not continue to do what we were doing. After some research, we realized that the college was taking away our right of free speech. We had ADF (Alliance Defending Freedom, a non-profit organization that defends student speech rights) write a letter to NC State, offering to help change the policy. They were not interested in changing anything, so we took courage and sued the school. We stood up for all the students at NC State who should be able to strike up conversation with anyone about anything.

God was faithful. After months of prayer and obedience despite fear in sharing the gospel, NC State agreed to change the policy. With a new excitement, we continued reaching students for Christ on campus.

# M I S S I O N U S A

## BROKEN PIECES COMING TOGETHER TO MAKE A BEAUTIFUL WHOLE

By Ryan Smith

*I love art! I come from a family where art is important and it is something we find ourselves getting together to do. It may be around holidays or family vacations but art will eventually find its way into our activities.*

Mosaics are one of my favorite forms of art. How a craftsman can take broken pieces and turn them into something beautiful is—well, beautiful!

The fact is, we are all broken pieces. Sin has left our lives shattered, battered, and dangerous around the edges. Too often, the enemy, does what he can to convince us that

because we are broken we are also useless. We are simply trash.

The great thing is God is the ultimate Artist. He can take the most broken of pieces and put them together to make something beautiful.

We, Mosaic Delaware, are a church plant sent out by Grace Point Community Church in Lewis Center, Ohio to the city of Delaware, Ohio. Our hope and prayer is to help people see that being broken is a beautiful thing because God can take that brokenness and turn it into a masterpiece.



We are beginning to work on ways to help people see value in their brokenness. From getting involved in the “dirtier, rougher” areas of our city, to helping people develop rescue plans for their life, to identifying gifts and passions in their stories, we are excited to see how God is going to use us to transform the people of the city of Delaware to eventually transforming the city itself.

## HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF THANK YOU GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES

By Nacho Pecina

*After the hurricane in Houston, Grace Community Church began relief effort. Here are some stats as of December 3, 2017:*

- 53 volunteers, 17 projects in Houston and Rockport, Texas, worked to clean-up, paint, and remove trash.
- 12 relief teams assisted in repairing sixteen homes, and provided food, water, and gift cards.
- Partnered with Children's Hunger Fund (\$3,000) to pack several thousand food boxes for families.

- Assisted with The Urban Refuge Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota to give a trailer (\$12,000) to a needy family in Houston.

- Partnered with Attack Poverty and No Place Left to see over 125 decisions for Christ.

Thank you all so much for your compassion and desire to provide for those who so desperately need it. The condition of some of the homes affected is heartbreaking. It will take a long time for many of these families to get back to normal. Please continue to pray for the relief and rebuilding efforts and for the love of Christ to become the biggest news in town.



As the Apostle Paul was thanking the Philippians for sending him financial help, he said it was “good of you to share in my troubles” (Philippians 4:14). Each of you who contributed to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey have certainly shared in their troubles and blessed them with your generosity.

# I N T E R N A T I O N A L

## TRAINING BELIEVERS IN UKRAINE

By Timmy Powers

*One of the values that has been so important to me in my years with Great Commission Churches is our commitment to seeing every believer become a disciple-maker.*

As I have served overseas for the past 20 years, I have made this a hallmark of my ministry. However, over the past year, I became aware that I had been doing a respectable job in envisioning and exciting people with their calling to make disciples, but I was failing to effectively and consistently train them how to do that.

This past year, I have put more focus on equipping the saints instead of teaching them. I don't only train them in areas like sharing the gospel and helping a new

believer grow. I also give them lots of time to actually practice what they are learning. Not only have people enjoyed the more practical format, we are seeing real fruit.

Here is some feedback I received after my fall trip:

"Thank you, Timmy, for coming to equip us. As a result of the training, one of our families has taken a new step to reach out to unbelievers by starting a Discovery Bible Study in their home." – Igor, church planter serving near the war zone in Eastern Ukraine

"A big thanks to you, Timmy, for the unbelievably inspiring training you did with us. I am now, with a fresh enthusiasm, using



the simple bible study approach you taught us to use with unbelievers. The training also gave me a confidence in sharing my personal testimony that I have never had before." – Daryna; Kiev, Ukraine

"Timmy, we have started teaching some young believers the Commands of Christ that you taught us to use. It is very inspiring for everyone." – Masha; Odessa, Ukraine.

## JAPAN UPDATE

By David Cervenka

*Our family was sent out to Tokyo, Japan for long-term ministry about two and a half years ago through the coordinated efforts of GCC's Strategic Asia Leadership Team. The simplest way to summarize what we have learned these last two years is to say that now we understand the breadth, simplicity, and brilliance of the Great Commission as seen in Matthew 28:18-20.*

The primary command of this passage, as seen in the Greek, is to "disciple all nations." The vision is built into the command. We are to disciple entire nations. The formula for how to do this is also included right in the verses with the three associated actions: go, baptize, and teach them to obey all that He commanded us.

What we are discovering is that as we focus primarily on the vision and the formula included in the Great Commission, more Japanese come to faith, more are baptized, and the possibility of planting more churches emerges.

Caleb Eby is one of my closest partners in Japan. Caleb had a church start in his home, which began with a young Japanese man named Rin that he led to faith and baptized a couple of years ago. This young man is now joining Caleb in making disciples as well as training others to do the same.

Through these efforts, as well as the efforts of our Tokyo team, God has blessed us with more than two dozen discipleship fellowships, some of which are transitioning into church plants.



Church planter, Rin, just before his baptism with co-church planter, Caleb Eby

We absolutely do not have it all figured out and we have a long way to go, but we are so thankful for God's grace and the brilliant simplicity of His Word. Please pray that we would always stay faithful and submitted to Christ and His Word as we seek to fulfill His desire in this nation.

# INSIDE GCC



## BRIDGE BUILDERS 2018 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY & MISSIONS CONFERENCE

With over a million international students and scholars studying in the U.S. and 50 million, first-generation immigrants living in our cities, half of them coming from the least evangelized countries of the world, we have a golden, God-given opportunity to reach the nations from our own kitchen tables.

The focus of this year's conference will be on developing part and full-time workers for strategic ministries in the United States and overseas. We will be learning from churches that have a proven track record in developing and raising up workers.

There are two locations for the Bridge Builders conference. Bridge Builders East will be held at Oak Ridge Community Church in Clarksville, MD on May 18-20, 2018. Bridge Builders West will be held at Candlewood Church in Lincoln, NE on May 27-28.

## MEET A GCC PASTOR

THIS EDITION:

*Tom Brown*

Albert Camus wrote, "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy." This serious question was the only question that mattered to me as a freshman at Colorado State University. Is my life worth living? Through the merciful providence of God, I found myself surrounded by a Jehovah's Witness, two atheists, and a handful of Christians who all wanted to answer that question for me.

After listening to hours of debates and reading books from multiple perspectives, I was convinced that Jesus is much more than a man and that the Bible truly is a divine revelation from God. I found the answer to my serious question and many more.

That year I gave my life to Jesus and to helping others find the answers to the serious questions of life. I graduated with a degree in Philosophy, married Mandy, and went on staff with the campus ministry at CSU.



Over the years, our work with young people has led us on a church-planting journey through El Paso, Texas into Manhattan and Wichita, Kansas. Along the way, we have had four kids, including our daughter, Elizabeth, who has Down Syndrome and has helped us all become more fully human.

We're now in Wichita, four years into the life of Vintage Faith Church. We planted the church with a team of graduates from Kansas State University who are incredible people and a great blessing to me. Together we are striving to keep the main thing the main thing—lifting up Jesus Christ so that the world may know Him.

## OUR MISSION: LOVING ALL PEOPLE

JOHN HOPLER - DIRECTOR, GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES



*"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14*

As believers in Jesus Christ, our mission is simple: Love all people.

Jesus commanded His disciples to obey all that He commanded (Matthew 28:20). And what is the greatest commandment? In one word: Love.

In his epistles to the churches the Apostle Paul focuses believers on loving people. As we love believers and unbelievers, we become better disciples of Christ and we make more disciples for Christ.

As this newsletter shows, love is demonstrated in many different ways. By loving and restoring families. By sharing the gospel on college campuses. By serving people when catastrophes like Hurricane Harvey hit. By moving to other countries like Japan in order to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, join in the mission! Unite with your church, with other Great Commission churches and with all Christians everywhere to love all people, that Jesus Christ may be honored throughout the world.



NAE | National Association of  
**Evangelicals**

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