



GREAT
COMMISSION
CHURCHES

Project Care

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In the early 1990s was one of the most important chapters in the history of the Great Commission church movement-- Project Care. God worked through Project Care to bring about reconciliation between GCC pastors and former members.

The Great Commission church movement began on college campuses in 1970. Initially we were a grassroots movement of young people, largely separate from more established Christian churches. Most early members were “fatherless,” first generation Christians, led to Jesus Christ by other young people who did not have much guidance from older believers. Almost all of the early leaders were young men in their twenties and thirties who were learning and growing in Christian leadership. Our early immaturity and isolation contributed to some errors and weaknesses that were later addressed in Project Care.

During 1970s and 1980s, former members brought criticisms of our movement. Even though we believed that many of the criticisms were unfair, exaggerated, or based on false reports, some were valid, whether universally or in specific churches. In particular many of the strongest criticisms were aimed at the leadership and teaching of Jim McCotter, a pastor who was the primary leader nationally during the 1970s and 1980s. (Jim left the leadership of the movement in 1986 to pursue business ventures and has had no leadership or ministry role with GCC since he left. For a longer statement about Jim, log on to: <http://gccweb.org/about/relationships-partnerships/jim-mccotter-statement>.)

As a result of the criticisms, in 1991 we conducted Project Care, a movement-wide effort to reconcile with any who had a grievance with us. This included the writing of the 1991 *Errors and Weaknesses Paper* (<http://www.gccweb.org/assets/gccweb/weakness.pdf>), in which GCC pastors acknowledged wrong practices and imbalanced teachings from the past.

Since Project Care began, God has led pastors in Great Commission Churches to pursue excellence in humility, gentleness and empathetic listening. Although we had always promoted the importance of humility and leaders being servants, since the late 1980s and early 1990s Jesus Christ has led us to set a higher standard in servant leadership, personal and organizational accountability, unity with the body of Christ, and responding humbly to criticisms. Here is how Great Commission Churches has developed over the years:

- In 1994, pastors in GCC churches approved the GCC Articles of Association, which established the goals and purposes of the association and confirmed that each GCC church is autonomous, voluntarily uniting with our association for mission efforts in the United States and overseas. GCC provides accountability to churches, but does not appoint church staff or dictate how a church conducts its affairs.
- In 1998, GCC established doctrinal and accountability standards for appointing and removing pastors, including a process for addressing concerns with a GCC pastor.
- In 1999, GCC developed the Great Commission Leadership Institute program that equips pastors in Biblical doctrine and practices.

- In 2002, GCC joined the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.
- In 2007, GCC became a member of the National Association of Evangelicals.

In closing, today we are confident that the general concerns from the past have been addressed. This confidence has been strengthened by the fact that there has been a reconciliation and restored relationship between GCC and men who were among GCC's most vocal critics in the past (<http://www.gccweb.org/about/history/reconciliations>). This does not mean that pastors in GCC do not have areas in their lives in which to grow. As sinners saved by the grace of God, we recognize that we have flaws and blind spots—and that we need the loving and gracious reproof of other believers if we are to become more and more like Jesus Christ. We also recognize that because we are flawed people ministering to flawed people relational conflicts and misunderstandings will arise. In every church or church association, there will always be a need to pursue reconciliation. Our commitment is to pursue a God-honoring process towards peace with all men wherever possible.

Therefore, if you have questions related to this paper or concerns related to GCC or a GCC church, please contact me (info@gccweb.org). I promise to listen to you with sympathy and to make a good faith effort to resolve your concerns. Our heart is that God will be honored through our lives in order that the gospel of Jesus Christ might spread to the ends of the earth.