



River's Edge Church
Plant
PAGE TWO



The Cowboy
Church
PAGE TWO



Church-Planting in
Milan, Italy
PAGE THREE



Meet the Pastor:
Chris Martin
PAGE FOUR



CHRISTIANITY IN

action

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CHANGING LIVES



MARCIE OLD

In 2002, Marcie's life was turned upside-down through a series of events that led to a painful divorce.

After starting the healing process of the divorce, her spiritual radar went up when she heard of someone else going through a similar experience. Divorce drew

her to single moms. She felt she could understand a woman who had a hole in her heart and wanted to fill it.

Five years later, the beginnings of the Single Mom's Ministry manifested at Linworth Road Church in Columbus, Ohio. The ministry started meeting every other month with seven moms and 15 kids, and included dinner and discussion.

Now the group has more than doubled in size and continues to grow. They have also expanded the ministry to offer classes on parenting and self-defense. There are pool parties, spa nights, and Bible studies—all with free childcare provided. The church has also rallied behind this group to host a time where moms could bring their cars in for free minor repairs and maintenance.

Marcie said it has been exciting to see the young women grow in the Lord and minister to each other through their hurts and pains. Although her journey to heal has been difficult, God has used Marcie to truly love people and show that He is a "father to the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5).

Marcie attends Linworth Road Church in Ohio:
www.linworthroad.org.



MISSION TO THE CITY

By Andy Gray

WHAT IS MTTC?

Mission to the City (MTTC) is a service-oriented evangelistic outreach in the urban and inner-city areas of Minneapolis.

WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED?

After getting saved, the Lord increasingly put on my heart a desire to reach people of other cultures and communities, particularly African-American. After going on an international trip and having an amazing experience, the Lord showed me that I didn't have to go half-way around the world to connect with people from different cultures, but that I could reach international communities through our urban areas. Our church decided to offer MTTC in 1999.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME HIGHLIGHTS?

Opened eyes for sure, starting with mine. Meeting and serving a Somali single mother of six who had lived in the U.S. for five years without ever being invited to an American's home was definitely a highlight. Connecting personally with a young man who now lives with us has been one of the most blessed experiences of my life. The partnerships that have developed with other ministries have been wonderful.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS?

One dream is helping other churches host their own MTTC trips, such as Cornerstone Community Church, who hosted their own urban mission trip in 2009.

Andy attends The Urban Refuge in Minnesota:
www.theurbanrefuge.com.

MISSION USA

NEW CHURCH PLANTS

RIVER'S EDGE CHURCH: BATESBURG-LEESVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

By Jason Williams & Jay Croft

In many small towns there is a need for a vibrant move of God. The same is true with Batesburg-Leesville, South Carolina.

River's Edge Church is a plant from Riverbend Community Church in Lexington, South Carolina. We know that God has called us here to make an impact. About a year ago, Riverbend hosted an event called, "Church Planting Conversations," to see who was interested in church planting. During that meeting, several families who had been visiting Riverbend attended and asked if the leadership would consider Batesburg-Leesville. After much prayer, we started to move in that direction.

In September of 2008, River's Edge started meeting in a home each Friday night. Each week, we would hear stories of God moving in the lives of people who had never experienced a relationship with Him before. Soon we needed to find a place that could hold everyone. God provided our current location, The Leisure Center, for a price well below the normal cost of rent. We are presently meeting on Sunday nights and are still seeing God move in the lives of the people. Praise God for His faithfulness.

We launched our first Sunday service this past March. Our vision is that, through River's Edge, God would change this city; that people of all ethnic backgrounds and anyone who does not fit in at



Members of River's Edge on their Christmas float.

the typical small-town church in rural South Carolina, would feel comfortable worshipping together. We want people to experience the community of genuine Christ followers.

Check out River's Edge Church:
www.riversedgechurch.cc

OPEN RANGE FELLOWSHIP: LONE JACK, MISSOURI

By Dave Putthoff

The Sermon on the Mount takes on new meaning at Open Range Fellowship, GCC's first "cowboy church."

With a gospel presentation from the saddle atop a colt experiencing its first ride, Open Range publicly launched weekly services last Easter. Approaching our first birthday, 120 people attend every Saturday at our Ransomed Heart Ranch indoor arena. Open Range started as an evangelism initiative of Lee's Summit Community Church reaching into rural areas with little evangelical witness. I, along with Pastor Frank Slaughter, began with monthly outreaches at

rodeos, horse clinics, trail rides, and equine events. It has quickly become a noticeable presence.

Open Range is unique in more than just its name. Baptisms commonly take place in horse troughs. Hay bales and arena bleachers replace pews. Coming straight out of the fields into "church" is perfectly acceptable with worship in a barn. Welcoming tracked-in mud goes beyond "come-as-you-are" to folks that won't set foot in a traditional church building with a steeple, stained glass and marble.

Though our methods are "outside the fence," we stay true to living out New Testament Christianity in Action Today. We joke about being "redneck," but we are really reaching out to sharp,



Dave and Terry Putthoff

business-savvy ranchers, cowhands, outdoorsmen, hunters, farmers, horsemen, and city slickers. Young bucks and outsiders embrace our masculine setting. Sermons are void of pretty-boy sap, mamsy-pamsy softness, and vague invitations. Worship is heart-felt and full-throttle. "Horsing around" to find common ground in contextualizing the gospel has never been more fun!

Check out Open Range Fellowship:
www.openrangefellowship.com

INTERNATIONAL

LOCAL CHURCH IMPACTS LA CEIBA, HONDURAS

By Terry Lewis

For the past 10 years, the destination has been Le Ceiba, Honduras—the third largest town in the country—to partner with our GCLA church in that community.

Over the years, we have shared the gospel of Christ to hundreds of people by first meeting physical needs like medical care, housing, food, school supplies, etc. But the greater benefit is what the experience does to challenge the short-term missionary's faith and world-view.

Members of Grace Point have started Total Health, a non-profit medical relief



A short-term mission team with a local family.

organization that recruits doctors, dentists, surgeons, nurses and other medical professionals to travel to Le Ceiba to offer free or low-cost medical care and hear the gospel. Last year alone over 10,000 patients were seen and what is more, Total Health has now raised the funds to hire a full-time Honduran doctor, administrator and pharmacist.

In addition to Total Health, Total Home was established as a non-profit organization to help individuals and churches participate in building homes for needy families. The church identifies the family and for \$4000, we build them a wonderful home.

In August of 2009, I took 16 folks from Grace Point down and we built two homes. One family had nine people living in a makeshift hut



with a dirt floor. In a week we finished, dedicated and helped them move into a five-bedroom concrete block home with a cement floor. As a housewarming gift, our team also built three sets of bunk beds. When we shared our testimonies and the gospel, the whole family prayed to receive Christ. God has allowed us to play a wonderful role in impacting this city for Christ, and we hope to continue to do so in years to come.

Terry is the pastor at Grace Point Community Church in Ohio:
www.gracepoint.cc.

PLANTING A CHURCH IN MILAN, ITALY



Frank and Pam Apisa

By Frank Apisa

The day I put my trust in Jesus as my Savior, I told Him, "Whatever you want me to do, I'm ready to do it." Since then, God has put Italy on my heart.

The Lord sent my wife, Pam, and I to Turin, Italy first. He has established a

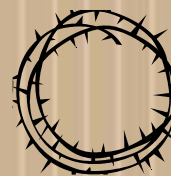
thriving church there, raised up two other pastors and through them, is training and raising up other leaders. The church is well-established, and the national leaders-in-training are coached by the elders. This growth has allowed us to move out and make disciples in other cities.

Last September, Pam and I moved to Milan, Italy, joined by a young student, Tony. Another couple will be joining us this coming June. We feel like God has opened all the doors for us here. It seems like everyone wants to practice speaking English. We have met three students who work with a student organization and they have helped greatly by allowing us to register students inside the university and use its classrooms free of charge.

Last year, we had two mission teams who led English Clubs in March and October. The October team came from the Turin church which proved to be very successful. Since then, the Lord has given us the opportunity to continue English clubs three times a week. We have also started two Bible studies and, this past January, we began our first worship service.

Recently, the father of a Ukrainian family that lives near us received the gift of eternal life and was baptized at our first service. Praise the Lord! Keep us in your prayers that the Lord will continue to lead us and guide us to make disciples.

For more information on Great Commission Europe, log onto:
www.gcweb.org.



INSIDE GCC

PUBLICATIONS

FAITHWALKERS DEVOTIONALS



The Faithwalkers Journal is the daily devotion written by Great Commission pastors and widely read throughout Great Commission churches. This little booklet is perfect for keeping at your

desk, in a purse or backpack, or next to your bed. The Faithwalkers Journal is also available online.

If you would like to start receiving the (free) daily emails of these devotionals, or you would like to purchase the booklets, log on to www.gccweb.org/media-resources/publications.

MEET A GCC PASTOR

THIS EDITION: CHRIS MARTIN

Chris lives in Ohio with his wife, Louise, and their four children. After joining the Great Commission church movement at Ohio State University, he began pastoring in 1987 in Akron, Ohio. In 1991 he moved to the Columbus area to serve at Linworth Road Church, first as the missions/evangelism pastor and now as the point leader for an incredible team of elders, staff, and church family.

Life Verses: *Isaiah 60:22, The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation.* "This promise," writes



Chris, "sealed in my heart 30 years ago, continues to direct my life towards the heart of God. Though my gifts are small and abilities limited, I believe He can use me alongside the men and women He has placed me with to do great things."

Advice: "Never lose your passion to keep growing.

Keep reading, keep asking, keep seeking, keep putting yourself around others who will push you to get better at what God has called you to do. Don't coast—there is world to reach and God desires the best from every one of us."

MAKING DISCIPLES

JOHN HOPLER - DIRECTOR, GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES



Over the past six months, leaders from Great Commission Churches met with leaders from Great Commission Latin America, Great Commission Europe, as well as leaders working in Asia.

It was refreshing and encouraging to see how God is changing lives everywhere—in the United States, in Central and South America, in Germany, in Ukraine, in other parts of Europe, in the Philippines, in east Asia, and in India.

40 years ago, God stirred the hearts of 30 college-age people to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. Their prayer was that Jesus Christ would raise up a growing movement of churches devoted to Him and the Great Commission.

Has God answered that prayer? He certainly has!

When God does His work, all we can do is thank Him. He is the One who began this work. And He is the One who will complete it.

This June, please pray for pastors and wives in Great Commission churches as we meet in Omaha to celebrate 40 years of making disciples.

As He has been for 2000 years, Jesus Christ has been the great Life-Changer in the Great Commission church movement these past four decades. To Him be all the glory!

