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# CHRISTIANITY IN *action*

VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 1 | JANUARY 2009

## CHANGING LIVES

### BEN



*I grew up in a picture-perfect, religious household. I was pretty sure that God was real and I wanted to love Him, but I didn't know how.*

I tried to love Him in the ways that everyone said I should, but I always failed. I wanted so badly to please my parents and God, but I always fell short—VERY short. No matter how many times I went to church or read the Bible or tried to clean myself up, I always ended up back in the same spot. Until a Christian friend invited me to The Rock in Minneapolis.

I wasn't comfortable at The Rock at first. It went against almost everything I had been taught to think a church should be. In fact, a casual environment, coffee, and rock music were all things I was taught were the opposite of what God would call a church. There was a lot of talk about grace and about how you don't need to work to receive God's love and acceptance.

The more I thought about it, the more I felt God's love for me and the more I wanted to love Him back. The longer I attended The Rock and the more I talked to people there, the more I came to understand grace. I learned that I don't have to prove myself to God or earn my way to heaven.

My life has changed. I am a new person, and God has blessed me since I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Is my life perfect? Far from it. I still make mistakes, but I know that I am God's. I know that He is in control of my life and my eternity, and I know that nothing can separate me from Him. He loves me, and I never have to question that. I could never ask for more.

### KRISTIN & STEPHANIE



*In June 2007, Kristin Brown and her 11-year old daughter, Stephanie, went on a mission trip and saw God do a miracle.*

This team from Darby Creek Community Church, in Columbus, OH, was based in Managua, Nicaragua and ministered mainly in the village of Sacuanjoche outside of Managua.

The first day that the team went into the village, the Lord led Stephanie and Kristin into the home of a woman and her daughter who had received a Christmas shoebox from the United States. As they talked to the woman, Stephanie realized that it was her friend back home who had sent the shoebox through Samaritan Purse's Operation Christmas Child ministry. Millions of these shoeboxes are sent all throughout the world. What are the chances that this girl would receive one from Stephanie's friend? This amazing "coincidence" opened up a door for the team to share the gospel with this woman, who then received Christ. Praise God for His amazing grace!

# MISSION USA

## NEW CHURCH PLANTS

### HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH: WARREN, MINNESOTA

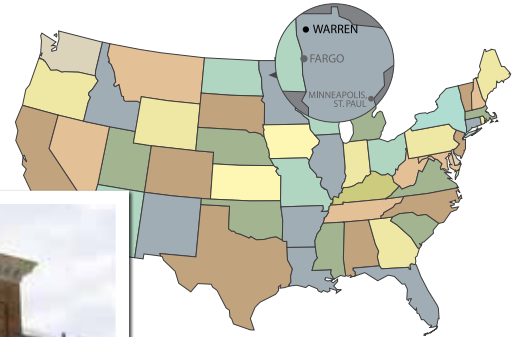
*In 2008, Pastor Eric Berglund led a team from Cottonwood Community Church (North Dakota) to plant Harvest Community Church in Warren, Minnesota.*

The first way God blessed the new church was by giving them a large building to meet in, for only \$1,000.

On January 9th 2008, the City of Warren offered their old opera house for sale by sealed bid. HCC's bid of \$1,000.00 was accepted and renovation began immediately. Volunteers removed years of clutter, installed new windows, removed the old 'drop' ceiling tiles, added insulation, removed some old walls and added offices.

Harvest Community Church's grand opening service on Sunday Sept. 7th was a huge success. Their goal was for 50-60 people for the first weekend and 100 in

attendance by May, 2009. The first Sunday's attendance was 106. God did more than they imagined. Not only is the church doing well, but they are hoping to plant another church in Bemidji, MN, next year.



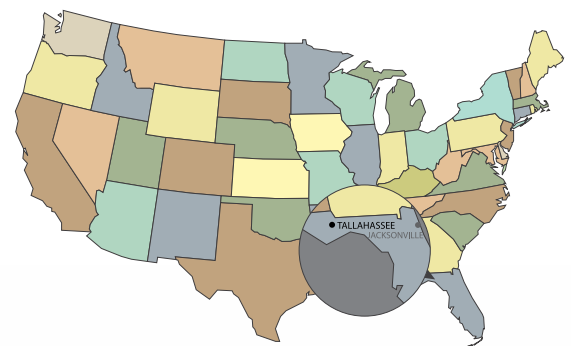
Harvest Community Church's new home: only \$1000.

### FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY: TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

*Seminole Christian Life on the Florida State University campus in Tallahassee, Florida, is a new church plant as of Fall of 2008.*

It was a blessing to have a summer project there in May, June, and July, but the kick-off service, with permanent pastor Ryan McKenna and the 9 person church plant team, was held on August 24th. The team praised God for the

success of the kick-off meeting. From this beginning, they have had 20-30 students in attendance on Sundays, and they have a group interested in creating a worship team, and serving however is needed. Praise God for His ability to build something great where there was nothing there before!



# INTERNATIONAL

## PLANTING A CHURCH IN SPAIN: DOMINIC MARRONE

*¡Saludos desde España! Greetings from Spain! We thank God for safe travels to Pamplona and for His grace in helping our family to adjust over the past month here. We are very thankful for your prayers and support in various ways.*

I (Dom) meet weekly with two different language partners. Please pray for these young men named, Antxon (Antonio) and David, whom I met through the university.

There is a tremendous need for the gospel to be preached here among the university students. One verse that we have been claiming even before leaving the US is when the Lord God spoke to Joshua before he took possession of the Holy Land. *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* Joshua 1:9 NIV Today we are not believing God for land. We are believing Him for many souls to come into a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

May God encourage and strengthen you today! Un abrazo muy fuerte... a big hug - Dom, Damaris, Daniel and Deborah: )



Pictured left to right - Daniel, Dominic, Damaris and Deborah Marrone

## UPDATE FROM THE PHILIPPINES: HERSCHEL MARTINDALE

*Two years ago, I joined Mike Bergen on one of his trips to the Philippines (he has been working with the church there since 1990).*

While there, I met a young pastor who asked if I would consider coming to train young people in his church for leadership. I went home, prayed and felt God clearly leading me to come back and work with his church. I agreed to come every four months for a year. Mike and I agreed to work together to see what God might do.

On our first trip, we had 5 trainees for the Leadership class. On our 2nd trip, we had 15 trainees, on our next trip we had 20 trainees. On our trip last October, we are now working with 3 churches and had 75 trainees in our leadership class. The 3 churches that we work with are all in the extreme poverty area of Manila. Many families cannot even afford to send all their children to school. If a child cannot get an education, when they grow up most can only sell drugs or become a prostitute. We now assist 32



Herschel Martindale speaking in the Philippines

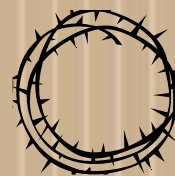
children from these churches to be able to attend school. I talk to the pastors several times every week. I ask them the hard questions, and challenge them to give regular accountability to the people in their churches that are being trained.

We need much prayer and financial assistance as we continue the work there. We would value your involvement and any questions that you might have about this ministry.

## FAST FACTS

- GCC Missionaries Involved: Herschel Martindale, Mike & Rita Bergen
- Independent Republic of over 7100 Islands with over 91 million people south of Taiwan and Japan
- Eighty percent Roman Catholic with only a small percent Evangelical
- Over 30 percent of the population live under the poverty level
- Over 500,000 women and 60,000 children are enslaved in the sex trade of Asia

If you have any interest, please contact Herschel Martindale at: [herschel@gccweb.org](mailto:herschel@gccweb.org).



# INSIDE GCC

## CONFERENCES & PUBLICATIONS

### ISM CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT



The 2nd International Student Ministry Workers' Conference will be held May 15-17, 2009. Internationals, and those who work with internationals, are encouraged to come to the conference, which will be held at Jordan's Place in Omaha, Nebraska.

For more information or to register, contact Jim Wiebelhaus at: [jwiebel@juno.com](mailto:jwiebel@juno.com).

## MEET THE PASTOR

### DAVE BOVENMYER



In August 1974, Dave was one of the first elders to be officially appointed in Great Commission churches. Since then, he has served as a pastor in Iowa, Michigan, and Maryland. He has also been the editor of several of the association's publications and has helped to write many of the Great Commission Leadership

Institute articles. Dave has been married to Dawn since 1975 and is the father of seven children. His oldest son, Daniel, was recently appointed an elder in Iowa City at Mars Hill Church.

Dave currently pastors in Ames, Iowa with a ministry emphasis in counseling, theological training, and administration.

Dave's Life Verses: Ephesians 3:16-19 and Romans 8:28-39

Advice from Dave: Constantly seek God's help and presence and to constantly work to come clean about your weaknesses, sins, and faults. Those are two keys to sanctification and growing in Christlikeness.

## CHANGED LIVES

### JOHN HOPLER - DIRECTOR, GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES



*It {the gospel} is changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very first day you heard and understood the truth about God's great kindness to sinners.  
Colossians 1:6*

In 1970 30 college age men and women got on a bus in the southwest U.S. to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with college students. This was the beginning of the Great

Commission church movement. Since then, thousands of individuals have had their lives forever changed by the grace and mercy of God in Christ. My wife and I are two of those individuals. We both came to Christ while students at Ohio State University in the 1970's.

This newsletter is written for one reason only—to give honor to Jesus Christ who has changed the lives of people in this movement of churches. And to think that we are just a small example of what God is doing in other churches and ministries across the globe! His gospel is, indeed, spreading throughout the entire world. To Him be all the glory!