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MULTIPLICATION

BMH Corporation Meeting

Sunday, July 24, 2016, at 7:30 a.m.
Grand Ballroom West
at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel
123 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario

Featuring Florant Varak, co-author
of the latest BMH Books release,
The Gospel and The Citizen

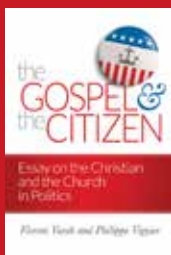
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communication in the Fellowship of Grace
Brethren Churches!

The meeting is in conjunction with the national
conference of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren
Churches, Margins|2016.

A ticket is required for the breakfast meeting.
The subsidized cost is \$16USD and the ticket
may be purchased at the fgbc.org/conference-register/selectoptions?meals

The corporation meeting will begin at
approximately 8:15 a.m.

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GraceConnect, founded in January 2004 as *FGBC World*, is published four times a year by the Brethren Missionary Herald Company (BMH), a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC). The publication's mission is to nurture Great Commission teamwork by connecting people and churches of the FGBC. Inclusion of an article or advertisement does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the Brethren Missionary Herald Company or the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

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Staff: Liz Cutler Gates, *managing editor*; Marijean Sanders, *editorial coordinator*; Gloria Starrett, *circulation*; Terry Julien, *graphic design*

Board of Directors, Brethren Missionary Herald Co.:

Tim Sprankle, *chair*; Bob Arenobine; Daron Butler; Dave Collins; Rick Fairman; Bill Gordon; John Rowe; Beau Stanley

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CELEBRATING MULTIPLICATION

Multiplication cannot happen without being connected and relationships are vitally important.



It's not summer without the annual family reunion known as national conference. This year, it will be held in Toronto, Canada, as the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches gathers at Margins|2016 to celebrate 20 years of church planting in the northern portion of North America.

In 1996, the conference was first held in Toronto to mark the beginning of a new church planting effort in Canada. It was not an easy task, but growth has been steady, as the GBCanada team has intentionally planted the seeds of the gospel in a land that is so similar to, yet so different than, the U.S.

Today, there are four churches, totaling five congregations or campuses, with two more in the planning stages. One

of those four churches is a mature congregation that has seen the benefit of being connected to a larger network – for encouragement, prayer, and united ministry – and is seeking membership in the FGBC at the upcoming conference.

As we planned this issue, we used the theme of multiplication – one of the values expressed by the FGBC leadership in the Identity Initiative discussions over the last several years. But multiplication can take place on so many levels. In these pages you'll read a little bit about some of those tiers – in the local church with one-on-one mentoring, nationally as five churches join the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, and internationally, with the development of the Charis Alliance.

Multiplication cannot happen without being connected and relationships are vitally important. It is simple to connect with others in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches by subscribing to the GraceConnect eNews at graceconnect.us/subscribe. Follow breaking news and find prayer requests on the GraceConnect Facebook page at facebook.com/graceconnectus/timeline or read developing stories at graceconnect.us.

And if you can, join the rest of the family at national conference – July 22-25. There's still time to register! (See visionconference.us.)



Liz Cutler Gates, lbgates@bmbhbooks.com, is the editor of Grace Connect. Since 2010, she has served as executive director of the Brethren Missionary Herald Company. She and her husband, Doug, live in Warsaw, Ind.

REPRODUCING FAITH

KEY COMPONENTS OF MULTIPLICATION

by Beau Stanley

Picture a community swimming pool with a stagnating membership that endeavors to train more and more lifeguards each month. Eventually, the lifeguards at the pool will become disengaged, and their skills will atrophy because the same workload is divided among more guards.

THERE IS NO DISCIPLE-MAKING ASSEMBLY LINE, AND THERE NEVER WILL BE.

It was a spring afternoon, and the cafeteria full of elementary school students was chaotic. Thanks to my friend Nate Harrison, an illustration I'd intended to make during my chapel talk at Westview Elementary School in Columbus, Ohio, had taken a kinesthetic twist.

I wanted to describe how the multiplication process works when one person makes two disciples, and those two make two disciples, and so on. Nate suggested that I have the kids act out the illustration. The plan was to start with one child, then have him select two others, then have each of them select two others, and so forth. As you can imagine, the illustration of multiplication was a big hit and caused no small amount of noise and commotion.

Reinforcing the importance of multiplication, with kids or adults, is a joy for me since multiplication has been one of my central focuses for some time at Grace Polaris Church. As pastor of training and spiritual growth at Grace Polaris Church (Mike Yoder, lead pastor), I have conceptual oversight of the spiritual progress of all believers at Grace.

This task is massive. Spiritual growth is not something that a church can commoditize because it is the result of relational interactions between people who are obeying what the Spirit is telling them through the Word of God. There is no disciple-making assembly line, and there never will be. The challenge this presents to any church is profound. How do you expand something that occurs irregularly in smaller settings in such a way that it becomes regular on a larger scale, such as within a local congregation? I believe the answer is multiplication.

The most direct biblical description we have of the multiplication process is the oft-quoted 2 Timothy 2:2. In this verse, Paul charges Timothy to take what he has learned from Paul "in the presence of many witnesses" and entrust it to "faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (ESV). Many have noted that there are four generations of disciples represented in this verse: 1) Paul; 2) Timothy; 3) "faithful men who will be able to teach"; and 4) "others also." Even though Paul speaks only of his ministry to Timothy here, and not of, say, his ministry to Titus, Apollos, or several other leaders, we still see many disciples emerge from the lineage in this verse. If Timothy entrusted his ministry to only two men, and those two men each entrusted their ministry to only two men, we would still be talking about a total of eight disciple makers, and this says nothing of their ministry generations down the road. For the mathematical amongst us, the disciple-making process is exponential when it is working properly. A small, relational endeavor will attain great scope with enough passage of time.

I feel like I've just scratched the surface of what God wants to show me about multiplication. If you are interested in pursuing the journey of multiplication with those of us who are passionate about it, let me suggest here some key components that I've gathered through research and personal experience.

Prayer

At a recent training event in Columbus, Ohio, veteran church planter David Watson shared an amazing insight from his organization's research into the habits of its most successful church planters. Researchers were not able to identify a common denominator in the profile of

the one hundred most fruitful until they examined these church planters' prayer lives. Upon investigation, the average amount of time each spent in prayer was six hours per day: three in individual prayer and three in team prayer.

For many of us in North America, such a commitment to prayer is nearly unfathomable. Indeed, Watson was not prescribing a certain time obligation to prayer. He was merely seeking to show that disciple-making movements do not happen without serious, and often extreme, commitments of people to humble themselves before God and seek His face.

I do not spend six hours in prayer per day, but I can point to at least two times of particularly fruitful ministry in my life that occurred alongside an increased commitment to prayer. Perhaps you have experienced the same. As we discuss key components of multiplication, the number one element must be prayer, for spiritual multiplication is a supernatural endeavor from beginning to end. If you are serious about making disciples, become a serious person of prayer.

Engagement with lost people

At the FGBC national conference in Palm Springs a handful of years ago, Keith Minier, pastor of Grace Fellowship in Pickerington, Ohio, made a comment during a breakout discussion that has stuck with me. He observed that for their church, their success in equipping believers was correlated with how missional they were at that point. I've come to believe that Keith was on to something very important with this idea.

To see ministry multiply, we must extend our training focus beyond our current flocks to the lost people our congregations

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A CHURCH CAN NEVER BE EFFECTIVE AT BUILDING UP BELIEVERS IN THE LONG TERM IF THE CHURCH LOSES FOCUS ON THE LOST.

can reach. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20), which is the believer's primary directive, includes both making converts (represented by "baptizing them" in Matt. 28:19) and helping those converts grow in Christlikeness (represented by "teaching them to observe" in Matt. 28:20). Training efforts become artificial and listless if they make little reference to the lost, because they address only a portion of the disciple-making process, and miss the "leading edge" of the process.

Some might argue that certain churches or leaders have a particular competency in building up those who are already believers and that concerns for multiplication among the lost are not as relevant in such situations. Here's the problem with this line of thinking: counter-intuitively, perhaps, a church can never be effective at building up believers in the long term if the church loses focus on the lost.

Picture a community swimming pool with a stagnating membership that endeavors to train more and more lifeguards each month. Eventually, the lifeguards at the pool will become disengaged, and their skills will atrophy because the same workload is divided among more guards. For churches to train believers for service (Eph. 4:11–16), there must be growing opportunities to serve, and this comes naturally as churches engage and win the lost.

A broad understanding of "ministry"

While it is true that some of the most effective multiplying ministries around the globe have been decentralized in their leadership structure, it is not so much decentralization itself that seems to account for their success, but rather a commitment to placing ministry in the hands of all believers. Multiplication

thrives when we remember Paul's instructions that "[Christ] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:11,12 ESV; emphasis added). When a church functions this way, the number of people engaged in multiplying disciples is much higher than if the ministry remains in the hands of a few paid ministry leaders.

Furthermore, multiplication occurs best when the saints, equipped for ministry, come to understand their ministry as much broader than that which can be accomplished within the church walls. CE National's Ed Short makes a helpful distinction here by distinguishing "segment ministry," the ministry that a person might do in a particular time window, typically through a church program (e.g., serving in the two-year-olds' classroom on Sunday mornings), and "sphere-of-life ministry": the ministry that she accomplishes in the various relational settings in which the Lord has placed her (e.g., the family, the workplace, the neighborhood, clubs and hobby associations).

Many churches would do well to focus attention on equipping their congregations for this latter category, sphere-of-life ministry, for two reasons: 1) it has far greater potential for Kingdom impact than segment ministry given the sheer amount of time we spend in our spheres of life; and 2) segment ministry, while important, naturally usurps focus on sphere-of-life ministry since segment ministry is more predictable and easier to control—thus easier to promote.

Storytelling

Most everyone appreciates a good story, and much of the Bible is in story form. Storytelling is a powerful catalyst for mul-

tiplication because it has a unique way of helping vision and enthusiasm spread from the storyteller to the hearers of the story. By sharing what God has done in their lives and ministries lately, effective multipliers help others understand what success looks like, and they also compel others to get on board with the work of multiplication.

Storytelling can take place at the congregational level, with in-person or video testimonies, but it can also occur in the individual or small group level. For the DNA of storytelling to pervade a congregation, it is helpful to get everyone practicing. Consider starting group study times by asking members how God has been at work in their lives through the prior study. Help people get in the habit of summarizing Bible passages they have read and then sharing those summaries with others, including lost people. Help them prepare and share their salvation testimonies, or accounts of more recent events if they were saved a while ago. The possibilities are numerous.

As with anything worth pursuing, multiplication does not come easily, and it typically does not come quickly. If we are compelled, however, that God has ordained this means of making disciples, then it is worth waiting. God has given us the privilege of cooperating in this important endeavor. May He help us to learn from one another as teammates until multiplication culminates in the great harvest (Matt. 13:24–30; 36–43).

Editor's Note: Beau Stanley is pastor of training and spiritual growth at Grace Polaris Church (Mike Yoder, lead pastor), a Grace Brethren church on the north side of Columbus, Ohio. He also serves on the board of directors of the Brethren Missionary Herald Co.

FIVE CHURCHES SET TO JOIN FGBC

Five new congregations will be considered for membership in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches during national conference in Toronto, Ontario.

On the next few pages, meet these groups:

- Bow Island Community Church, Bow Island, Alberta
- Grace Ranch, Ashland, Ohio
- Impact Church, Coatesville, Pa.
- St. Antoine Bible Church, Detroit, Mich.
- Sterling Grace Brethren Church, Sterling, Alaska



“WE RECOGNIZE THAT MISSION FIELDS ARE NOT JUST OVERSEAS, BUT LOCAL AS WELL. WE DESIRE TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING GREATER THAN OURSELVES.”



Bow Island Community Church, Bow Island, Alberta

When Grace Brethren pastor Oliver Edwards interviewed for a position with an independent, non-denominational church, he stressed how his involvement in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches had helped his development as a leader and provided accountability and growth opportunities for him. They not only agreed to support his ongoing membership in the Association of Grace Brethren Ministers and his attendance at district and regional events, but they also began to explore what it would look like for the church to be a part of such an association.

The result is evident as Bow Island Community Bible Church in Bow Island, Alberta, Canada, is one of five congregations who will be considered for membership in the FGBC during national conference.

“We have come to understand that there are significant benefits to being in association with other churches for our sakes and the furtherance of the Gospel,” they wrote in their application. “We can do more together than we can alone.”

The Bow Island church began 15 years ago in a small group of people who met to pray and study their Bibles together; the church grew in number and ministry when they hired a lead pastor. Under his leadership, the church initiated several ministries that coincided with their passions, which included musical theatre and creation science advocacy.

That pastor had just resigned when the congregation approached Oliver Edwards, the lead church planter at Grasslands Church in nearby Medicine Hat, who was newly available. The church took him on as pastor in April of 2015.

Since then the church has undergone a season of vision recasting and focusing, purchased a new building, and are actively engaged in sharing the Gospel with their community and around the world. Their new meeting place, dubbed the Island of Hope Building, opens December 6.

In the last year, Bow Island has sent three young people out of its weekly congregation of about 40 to work at Christian summer camps and two individuals to work in mission fields in Mexico and Haiti on short-term mission trips. The church continues to work alongside Grasslands Church giving opportunities to budding Grasslands leaders to grow in their gifts.

“We recognize that mission fields are not just overseas, but local as well,” they write, noting they are looking forward to engaging with Grace Brethren national ministries. “We desire to work together and be a part of something greater than ourselves.”



facebook.com/bowislandchurch



bowislandchurch.ca



Grace Ranch, Ashland, Ohio

Two years ago, SEEDnet's Nathan Wells paid a visit to a former bull-riding colleague to tell him about the church-planting ministry among spiritually, emotionally, economically, and developmentally oppressed areas. As Nathan shared his story, a blacksmith overheard him and commented, “Sounds like you are like you're talking about me.”

Eventually, Nathan and Greg, the cowboy-blacksmith, began to meet for discipleship. That led to the development of a church that reaches the cowboy culture and beyond – Grace Ranch.

In the two years' time since, Grace Ranch has extended to 25 committed members, including a solid team of leaders: Andy Shank, Mark Ritzman, and Larry White, in addition to Nathan Wells. Grace Ranch continues to grow in its quality and quantity, practicing the disciplines of teaching, preaching, fellowship and worship, and serving throughout its congregation. They are also working to grow other SEEDnet churches.

Grace Ranch is working “hard to develop believers into growing disciples of Christ in their home, job, and society in such a way that they are a gospel witness wherever they are.”



seednetblog.wordpress.com

“WE ASKED IF WE COULD PRAY, AND GOD INSTANTLY TIED OUR HEARTS TOGETHER.”

Impact Church, Coatesville, Pa.

Often when a church forms, ministry grows out of the new gathering of believers. With Impact Church in Coatesville, Pa., it was the other way around.

Impact Church was born out of the mission of CPR-3 (now dubbed Breathe Partners), and Breathe Center, the local branch of the ministry in Coatesville.

“In 2013, I felt as though the Lord was calling me to plant a church,” explains Chandal Taylor, pastor at Impact. He was attending The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI for short) and noticed that they were also an urban church planting movement.

“I connected with the leaders of this organization, and they came behind me in my vision,” he explains. At the same time, Dan O’Deens of CPR-3 reached out to Taylor, wanting him to come alongside the CPR-3 movement and offering to coach him in the process.

“I felt it was a great marriage in vision, so we set out to incorporate (at the time) Breathe Church into the ‘Breathe Vision.’”

And so a new church was born. As an elder-lead, Bible-teaching church, Impact has a weekly attendance of around 30. Originally called Breathe Church, the name is formally changed to Impact Church to keep the two entities ethically and formally separate, although they still work in close cooperation.

And they have a reaching vision for their future as a part of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches: “We want to be a church that plants churches,” says Taylor. “We will make disciples that make disciples and believe in local and global missions. We love the camaraderie and fellowship as well as autonomy associated with [being a part of the Fellowship].”

 facebook.com/ImpactchurchPA

 impactmovement.net





St. Antoine Bible Church, Detroit, Mich.

Almost four years ago, several leaders of SEEDnet, the Grace Brethren church-planting organization that is committed to establishing congregations in underserved areas, shared a heart for the ten most dangerous cities in the United States. High on that list was Detroit, Mich.

On one of their first trips to the Motor City, they were led to the St. Antoine Apartments, a high-rise project near downtown. St. Antoine reaches out to the poor, the drug addicted, and those facing spiritual, emotional, economical, or developmental oppression.

On that trip, the group met Derek. It was a cold winter day, and he was outside, changing the breaks on his car. "We asked if we could pray," they report, "and God instantly tied our hearts together. Now Derek is a teacher/evangelist in our church."

Pastor Andy Shank equips and encourages the church to push forward in church planting, while Mark Ritzman works with several men to shepherd and teach. Members dedicate their time to both the outreach and women's ministries, and now they are all happy to take one step closer to becoming an official member of Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

A strong future focus of St. Antoine is how the Grace Brethren should continue to reach African Americans in the United States. The congregation is highly encouraged by the opportunities the FGBC presents and is helping plant two other churches. In all locations, they keep their teaching and encouragement in the context of reaching people for Jesus Christ.

 seednetblog.wordpress.com

Sterling Grace Brethren Church, Sterling, Alaska

Founded by three Grace Brethren families, Sterling, Alaska, Grace Brethren Church wants to embrace what the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches stands for and be connected to its ministries nationally and internationally.

The church began in 2013 through the work of Vision Alaska as several leaders from other Grace Brethren congregations came together to help equip and teach. At the beginning of 2015, a second Bible study at the Sterling Senior Center was added, and Sunday morning services started in July 2015. The church continues to grow and has plans to initiate a program to minister to boys and young men this year.

Dr. Roger E. Holl, who is also the director of Vision Alaska, leads the congregation. As such, Sterling Grace works with this ministry to disciple leaders and grow new churches throughout the diverse regions of Alaska, including Seward, Homer, and Bethel.

The leadership at Sterling Grace has many goals in mind with the common mission of FGBC. All of these goals are geared toward raising the number of FGBC churches in Alaska. By establishing connections both nationally and internationally, Sterling Grace prays and hopes to accomplish as much, as a proud and collective member of FGBC!

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INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND IDENTITY SLATED FOR ADOPTION



“After a three-year process involving thousands of Grace Brethren leaders from more than 20 countries, the Charis Alliance has been launched and the Charis Commitment to Common Identity was unanimously approved by delegates in Bangkok this past fall,” Bartley Sawatsky, executive director (moderator) of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC), noted in a letter to pastors and church leaders earlier this year.

Sawatsky stressed that this historic document is significant because it:

- 1 “Centers on Jesus. The lead sentence affirms, ‘We declare that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God, is the only Savior and Lord. He is the center of our shared experience of true biblical unity.’”
- 2 Engages young leaders.
- 3 Provides an identity that connects the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches with other evangelical groups while still identifying our unique history and understanding of the Bible.
- 4 Creates an identity for the first-ever global expression of the Grace Brethren movement.”

In January, the Fellowship Council reviewed the Charis Commitment to Common Identity. As a result, they will recommend at national conference that the document is endorsed as the identity statement of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches and be used by member churches, the

Association of Grace Brethren Ministers, FGBC national and cooperating organizations, and districts to train leaders and to communicate and explain our movement.

The Council will also recommend to the conference delegates that the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches become a charter member of the Charis Alliance and endorse the commitments to Common Identity and Mission. The Council will also recommend that the FGBC accept the benefits and responsibilities of membership and select three delegates to the Alliance by August 2016.

This item will be considered at the business meeting during Margins | 2016, the national conference of the FGBC in Toronto, Canada, July 22-25. For more information, see fgbc.org/page/charisalliance.

A video, vimeo.com/fgbc/whatischaris, also provides an excellent explanation of the Charis Alliance.



fgbc.org/page/charisalliance



vimeo.com/fgbc/whatischaris

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