

Report to the Fellowship Council

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Once again I am pleased to have an opportunity to share how Grace Brethren International Missions is seeking to assist the FGBC in reaching its three great goals of *growth by conversion*, *every church on mission*, and *more than enough leaders...* We consider it a privilege to serve a fellowship of churches which deeply shares these commitments with us.

By 2010, the FCBG will be experiencing significant growth by conversion.

A primary emphasis of GBIM is the evangelization of the nations. When understood in their biblical context, the nations refer to groups who share the same ethnic identity (defined by language, religion, caste, location or culture). Presently there are 15,962 identified “nations,” or “people groups” in the world. Close to 7,000 are considered “unreached,” which means that no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group. (see www.joshuaproject.org for more information.)

Although it is nearly impossible for us to know with certainty, our best information leads us to conclude that the FGBC is currently carrying on evangelist work among 110 people groups, located in 30 countries. GBIM seeks to fulfill the role of keeping the nations before the FGBC, creating awareness and facilitating evangelistic and church-planting ministries outside of our own people group. Praise God with us that the GBC continues to grow by conversions in many of these “nations.”

Most recently, we have also begun to draw attention to the “nations among us.” We doubt that a single member of a GBC in the US is totally isolated from the diverse people groups that God has providentially brought to our country. As immigrants, many of these men and women are open to friendship. They are seeking to understand and integrate themselves into their new country. Could it be that the greatest potential for U.S.-based conversion growth lies among these peoples? During the next few years we will be challenging US-based GBC to rediscover and aggressively evangelize the nations among us.

By 2010, every Grace Brethren Church will intentionally act as a community that is sent by God.

One of the most encouraging signs of spiritual vitality among our international family of churches is the emerging missions movement. At this time there are dozens of national workers who are being sent out as church-planters and

missionaries by their own churches and national organizations. GBIM is seeking to encourage this in three ways:

Through Charis Regional and International Encounters, which bring together visionary and effective leaders from each country where GBC's have been planted. Together they are wrestling with how to partner together in reaching the world for Christ.

Through Charis Associate Missionaries. These men and women are sent and supported by the GBC mission agencies of other countries. GBIM serves as a link that allows them to raise additional financial support through US-based churches. Often, we supply logistical and administrative support. Many of these national missionaries work closely with GBIM teams.

Through encouraging the development of Charis Missions Agencies. As mentioned above, the GBC's of other countries are now acting as intentional sending communities through deploying their own missionaries. GBIM provides counsel and training in this process. It is our goal that one day every Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches worldwide create and maintain its own indigenous missions sending agency.

By 2010, Grace Brethren Churches will train, equip and deploy more than enough leaders to significantly increase the size and influence of the FGBC.

We are working aggressively to partner with churches and leaders worldwide to provide leadership training for every church outside of North America by 2010. Through S.A.L.T. (the Strategic Alliance for Leadership Training), leadership training teams and systems are being developed to provide contextualized leadership training to anyone who seeks it. This is becoming a reality in Argentina, Brazil, the Philippines, and several other regions.

Two years ago, a number of key leaders for S.A.L.T. gathered at the International Missions Center in Winona Lake, Indiana, to assess progress toward this goal. We were all pleasantly surprised to see how far all had progressed since the 2002 meetings. While much remains to be done, we rejoice in the passion and commitment of a growing number of FGBC trainers who are investing their time and talents into this task.

Closing thoughts

On behalf of the 150 missionaries and staff of GBIM, we want to express our deep appreciation to our USA-based churches for their strong support of our ministries. In spite of great global uncertainties and the weakening dollar, your international missions agency continues to expand its global impact while enjoying strong financial support!