

# GLOBAL MINISTRIES

## Facilitating Mission Workers:

In my October report I shared: *“Through the six month reports our missionaries send in to us we have sought to assess the level of care each missionary receives from their parent mission organization, which we will utilize to determine the level of care they require from the GMC”*. I have shared in multiple places since I assumed this role in July that one of the major focuses of the Global Ministries Community will be in the area of missionary care. We continue to assess how the GMC can enhance the care we already provide and continue to pursue ways to equip churches to provide care as well. The way in which the GMC hopes to achieve this goal is through MCT’s (Missionary Care Teams) made up of people from the local body of EC Churches. In March, at the GMC meeting, we will have a missionary couple come to share their experience and expertise in the area of missionary care with hopes that the GMC can utilize this information to begin to strategize how we can make Missionary Care Teams a reality. Our desire is that the 25 missionary units and 1 missionary candidate partnering with the EC Church and part of the EC family never feel “alone” out there on the field; whether that field is here in PA or on the other side of the globe we want them to be cared for.

## Empowering International Churches:

### Japan

According to John WM. Mehn, in his book *Multiplying Churches in Japanese Soil* “the country of Japan has the tenth largest population in the world with 127 million people; however, the percentage of Christians in Japan is miniscule: under 1 percent.” It is this context in which the EC Church of Japan seeks to share the gospel and build the kingdom.

### 1. Grace Garden Church

Rev. Yoriyoshi Abe is the pastor of Grace Garden Church and ministers alongside his wife Emiko and his daughter Kanae. In his latest newsletter Yoriyoshi shares some of the challenges the church faces in reaching out into their community. He also shared this story from one of the Grace Garden Church members who, in the midst of living in a challenging culture, stood firm on her convictions as a follower of Jesus.

*According to a statistic, 98 million people all over Japan go to a shrine on New Year’s Day to pray for their fortune for the year. One of the members of Grace Garden Church, who became a believer almost a year ago, also went to a shrine with her family because that was her family’s tradition. But when she was offered the purification ritual at the shrine she declined it and said, “I don’t need it. That’s not my god.” Everyone who heard the story was encouraged by her faith. Like her, people who become Christian first in their family usually confront that kind of cultural/spiritual battle.*

### 2. Fuchinobe Community Church

If you receive the newsletter from Tomoyuki and Jessica Abe you may have heard about some of the exciting and challenging things God is doing in their lives. Tomo and Jessica have sensed God leading them to transition their family to continue their service and ministry in France. On March 10<sup>th</sup> FCC will hold their last Sunday service and will rejoin their mother church Sagamihara Grace Chapel which is about 20 minutes away from their current location. The EC Church of Japan will be sending Tomo to France as a missionary partner with an organization called OMF International (Overseas Missionary Fellowship...used to be China Inland Mission) which seeks to reach the Japanese Diaspora in Europe. In October, Tomo was approved by OMF to partner with them in France and will be pursuing this relationship as they make their move in April. As part of this transition back to Jessica’s native home, she will also begin a pastoral internship at an Evangelical Free Church in September.

As part of this transition, Tomo, Jessica and I have been in conversation on how the GMC can support them during this exciting and stretching time in their life as they step out in obedience to what God has called them to do in this new season. The GMC has requested churches to continue their full support of Tomo and Jessica through September until she would officially begin her job with the Evangelical Free Church. As I said, Tomo will be serving as a missionary through EC Church Japan with OMF International and will be in need of continued support just like any other missionary. However, since they are technically not under the GMC, and since Tomoyuki would be considered a missionary under the National Conference of EC Church Japan, I shared with them that churches in the USA may decide to discontinue their support and give it toward another missionary or to the EC Church Japan in general. The financial support Tomo and Jessica received was for them to serve as church planters for the EC Church of Japan. However, as of April 16<sup>th</sup> of this year that will no longer be the case, so churches would be justified in redirecting their support when they leave Japan for France. That is why I have specifically asked churches to continue their support through September even when

they leave Japan, so that their family can get adjusted to their new life in France, and so we (EC Church USA) can help shoulder some of the burden of our brother and sister as they seek to obey God.

### 3. Sagamihara Grace Chapel

Grace Chapel is the mother church of Fuchinobe Community Church and will prepare to receive FCC members following the last celebration service on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Grace Chapel continues to be pastored by the Bishop of the EC Church of Japan Nobuo Abe. Grace Chapel continues to hold its services, prayer meeting, and church school on a weekly basis.

#### Statistical report from Japan (avg. for the year)

Sagamihara Grace Chapel – 29 in Worship Service/ 3 in Prayer Meeting/ 10 in Church School

Fuchinobe Community Church – 21 in worship/ 11 in prayer meeting/ 4 in Church School

Grace Garden Church – 19 in Worship Service/ 2 in Church School

Kyodo Grace Church – 35 in Worship Service/ 12 in Afternoon Service/ 8 in Prayer Meeting/ 14 in Church School

**Totals: Worship: 104 Prayer Meeting: 22 Church School: 30**

#### India:

In April 2019, ECCI will hold its Annual Leaders' Conference. Originally Bishop Bruce Hill and I had planned to attend this conference. However, through correspondence with Kap Vaiphei, he also requested that we come in 2020 for the General Leaders Conference in which more leaders from the six presbyteries will attend and at which point a new General Director (Bishop) of ECCI will be elected. I decided not to attend the 2019 Conference for a number of reasons. One, as a shared ministry position my travel is limited and therefore could not justify traveling to India in 2019 and 2020 without having visited all the International Conferences at least once. Second, it seems more beneficial to attend the conference where the majority of the leaders from ECCI will gather. Third, I believe it will be important for the GMC to attend the conference in which the new Bishop will be elected and (fourth) where I will have the opportunity to begin building a relationship with the newest leader of ECCI. Therefore, we will plan to travel with a delegation to India in 2020 for their General Leaders Conference.

During Randy's tenure as GMA you may remember that we focused on "cross-pollinating" (taking leaders from other conferences on trips to build relationships with all of our international leaders) the EC Church worldwide. This April the GMC will be helping Kap Vaiphei (General Director of ECCI) attend and speak at the National Conference of ECC Japan.

#### Evangelical College of Theology

Here is an update regarding the work of ECT and Dr. Lalrosiem Songate:

*Here at ECT, we take the practical ministries of our students very seriously and we also monitor their involvements in their local churches during the weekends. Students staying in the campus are also assigned to participate in the Sunday School ministries of nearby local churches. We believe that theological education should not be just a raking of knowledge in the brain, but should lead to the practice of what is learned through ministry and evangelism.*

*We are thankful to have Rev. Dr. Ginneithang Ngaihte, a veteran missionary to Thailand and other Asian countries to teach Urban Mission to our M.Th. students during this current module. Rev. Dr. Ngaihte completed his doctoral study at Fuller School of World Missions, California. His intellectual knowledge, rich experience in missionary work, plus his commitment to world mission is indeed a tremendous resource to our students of missiology.*

- ECT is expecting Rev. Tony Jackson from the UK to visit during the latter part of February till early March. He will be a main speaker during the Spiritual Retreat and he will also minister to some of our local churches.
- ECT has been able to set up an E-Library in addition to the normal physical library. However, this has highlighted the need to incorporate a basic course on computer operation as many of our students have never touched a computer before. The students need to have a basic knowledge in order to make use of the E-Library.

#### Nepal:

This past January 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> was my first trip as the GMA. Rev. John Friedlund and I went to Nepal in order to accomplish these objectives:

- Attend 1<sup>st</sup> graduation of ministry leaders from the Evangelical Leadership Training Course

- Ordain a graduating pastor, elders and deacons
- Dedicate the establishment of the official ECCN Youth Department
- Baptisms

This trip came about rather quickly during the fall. I had not planned on traveling anywhere in January, but Janga made it clear that he really desired my presence for the very first graduation of the Evangelical Leadership Training Course. I felt it important to go to provide some legitimacy to the ELTC, honor the graduates, and put Janga's fears at ease with a new GMA transitioning into leadership.

While in Nepal I had the privilege of ordaining one pastor, as well as, a number of elders and deacons (all three of these leadership positions receive ordination). The conference was being led by some of the local pastors and the youth groups from the various ECCN churches. I was very impressed with the amount of young people involved and the amount of leadership they had in running the Conference. It is a positive sign for the next generation of ECCN to lead the church. Janga shared with me his desire to have GMC help sponsor the building of new churches for many of these congregations being represented. Unfortunately, many of them do not actually have any kind of building to worship in due to their inability to afford construction costs. Janga's vision is to provide, not only spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and prayer support, but also something tangible and physical in order to bless these new fellowships. The GMC will be discussing this request, among others, presented to me while in Nepal at the Community meeting in March.

I led a special dedication service for the establishment of the ECCN Youth Department and for that I got my name on a nice little stone that now stands outside Bethel Church in Nepal, and designates EC Center Nepal as a place where the youth can grow in their faith. After that service we went to the baptismal and I did 10 baptisms of mostly young people. I was also privileged to baptize 3 of Janga's orphan boys.

While the trip came about rather quickly, for the reasons I stated above, I was glad to make Nepal my first official visit as the new GMA. I had met Janga in 2013 and so I appreciated the opportunity to strengthen the relationship between us now as the GMA. Janga was also very thrilled that the very first trip of the new GMA internationally was to Nepal, he mentioned that a couple times...and he also mentioned he is glad the new GMA is his size. Janga is an excellent leader and has grand visions for ECCN. Unfortunately, those grand visions take a lot of resources that I fear the GMC will just not be able to give much support to. I know this was one of Randy's concerns as he was leaving. As ECCN expands, and will need more support, the GMC will struggle to keep up with the demand due to its shrinking support base. However, EC Center Nepal was a God sized vision that was shared with me when I was there in 2013 and in 2019 I performed ordinations and baptisms, dedicated a youth department, and held the first ever graduation of ELTC at EC Center Nepal, so I told him we will need to pray together on how God will fulfill His purposes.

### **ECCN 2018 statistics**

- No.1. New Converts 109
- No.2. New Baptisms 87

2 new churches were established in 2018  
 12 total Churches  
 10 total Fellowships

### **Nepal prayer and goal for 2019**

1. To have 5 more local church established
2. To have couple seminar in March or April fund we have already
3. New ELTC to begin in April
4. In April ECCN annual council

### **Mexico:**

Juan Zuñiga, the leader of the EC Church of Latin America, has shared that there are currently 11 churches and 3 missions operating in Mexico. The mission churches are being supervised or managed by Pastor Justino Bautista, Flaivo Ramirez, and Elias Martinez. Two of the missions' works are operating just north and south of the city of Monterrey in the central part of Mexico and Elias Martinez, the previous Director, manages the mission outreach in Veracruz which is in southern Mexico. Elias is also seeking to train another couple to eventually begin a mission work in the state of Oaxaca in the southern region of Mexico as well.

Recently an institute was opened to give training in pastoral ministry and eight couples already serving in ministry went through this training. I am currently in correspondence with Juan for a potential trip to Mexico sometime during the fall of 2019.

**Liberia:**

The 50th Annual Conference of the E. C. Church of Liberia was held from Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> through Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Annual Conference convened at the Daune M. Ray E. C. Church in Tiah's Town, Gbee District, Nimba County. The theme for the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was *Wear your Dream* taken from Judges 7:7-9. During the conference a new building, constructed by the National Council of the EC Church, was dedicated to the Lord for worship. Also additional 50 bags of cement and 5 bundles of zinc, nails, paints etc. were purchased for the reconstruction of Philip D.V. McClain E. C. Church and the UCA E. C. Church. The Conference ended with the baptism of 21 new converts and more than 200 conferees who recommitted themselves to the Lord and to the dream/vision of the E. C. Church of Liberia.

Rev. Abraham Powell, Bishop of the ECCOL, shared that he is launching a Bible purchase campaign for 2019. Rev. Powell is challenging people to purchase 20 Bibles (Old and New Testament of any size) this year and to distribute them to 10 people who cannot afford to purchase a Bible.

**Engaging the Church in the Great Commission:**

I shared previously that one of the goals for the GMC was to begin using social media as an avenue to nurture a global vision in our churches. In the domestic airport in Nepal, while waiting for our flight, I began a Facebook page for the GMC. I was able to use this page to update everyone on the trip while John and I were there. The goal is to use the page as a way to keep people updated on things that are taking place on the International Fields, as well as, with EC missionaries on a more regular basis. The challenge will be to keep fresh content on the page so people will utilize it. The same can be said for most media and technology endeavors, while we will look to utilize these platforms more regularly and to a greater extent the challenge will be investing the amount of time needed to do these things well and keep them fresh.

In addition to utilizing multi-media to engage local churches, we will seek to begin pursuing partnerships with other like-minded missions' organizations to develop ways we can better serve our missionaries, deepen our relationships with our international churches, and also help those sensing some kind of call to missions to be able to clarify and pursue their calling. These partnerships, I believe, will help the GMC provide assistance to our local churches to enable them to nurture this global vision. This will be an important element of the GMC going forward because we want to be able to offer support to someone who believes God is calling them to serve as a missionary somewhere, but need help in discerning that call, equipping and training them, and ultimately getting them to where God desires to use them in this world. God has not ceased in calling people into this type of work and we (EC Church USA) need to be sensitive to the Spirit calling these people in our churches, and the GMC wants to be able to help them step out in obedience to God and serve Him.

Respectfully submitted by,

**Rev. Ted Rathman**  
**Global Ministries Associate**