



GRACE NETWORK IN CANADA





Mission to North America
Presbyterian Church in America

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INSIDE MULTIPLY SPRING 2018

- GRACE NETWORK IN CANADA
CHURCH PLANTING AND CHURCH GROWTH

From the Coordinator

Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!" -Psalm 96:10



Here's a little quiz: Q: Where is the geographic center of North America? A: Rugby ND or Robinson ND or Center ND, depending upon whom you ask. All of these potential midpoints lift our eyes further north than most of us normally track. If the geographic center of North America is in North Dakota, then there must be a whole lot of Canada above us! There is. A lot of land, a lot of cities and towns, a lot of people groups who come to Canada from all over the world. A lot of space for Jesus and his gospel.

In my first eighteen months as Coordinator of Mission to North America, I have traveled extensively. Some of my favorite journeys have been to Canada, getting to know our church planters in the Grace Network. You will love getting to know them, too, in this

issue of *Multiply*. Most of them are from Canada. They are embedded in their communities for the long haul, to live and share the mercy of Jesus. Their churches are growing through evangelism. They take beautiful risks to multiply their congregations. We can rejoice with them, as God is at work. We should learn from their experiences in evangelism and mission. And, we should consider how to support them through our prayers and financial gifts.

Like the church in the US, the church in Canada has had seasons of bountiful gospel fruitfulness. Perhaps the Lord is growing things again in such a way? May he make it so, in Canada and the United States. May our nations declare that the Lord reigns. Amen.

Paul Hahn
MNA Coordinator

GRACE NETWORK IN CANADA

A DECADE AGO, PCA leaders from all across Canada gathered to develop a greater national strategy for reaching people for Christ. “The main question was: ‘How can we plant gospel-centered missional churches?’” said Pastor Connan Kublik. “There’s a great need in Canada. Of the 36 million people here, I believe 30 million need to be reached with the gospel.”



Connan Kublik (left) & Dan MacDonald

Out of that meeting, through the leadership of Prayer Current President and former MNA Church Planting Coordinator John Smed, along with Church Multiplication Ministries President Tom Wood, Grace Network was born and became the driving force for PCA church planting in Canada. Five years later, leadership was passed to Grace Toronto Pastor Dan MacDonald; then in May 2017, MacDonald and the Network Board asked Kublik to succeed him in the Grace Network lead role.

“Canada is a formerly predominantly Christian country that needs to once again be reached,” said Kublik. “We have some amazing people working in the network. All are pastoring and planting as well as volunteering to help others. It’s a kingdom-work mindset.” The Greater Toronto Area became the first primary focus of church planting for the Grace Network. It is the largest metro area in Canada, fourth largest in North America, and a very diverse city with about half of the population foreign-born.

While Grace Toronto originally began in the 1990s with Stephen Beck as pastor, the congregation dwindled after the Becks responded to a call to serve churches in Germany. Dan and Sue MacDonald undertook a restart in 2007. By God’s grace they grew steadily, and the church took on the lead role as the PCA base for growth in the Toronto area.



Grace Toronto Congregation

Three other churches were started with the support of Grace Network – New City Church led by Kublik in Hamilton, an hour south of downtown Toronto; New City Church in Newmarket led by Albert Kooy, 34 miles north of downtown Toronto; and New City Toronto, an English-speaking Chinese congregation led by Brian So.

Grace Toronto, an urban church mostly filled with singles, recently sent Associate Pastor Kyle Hackmann, along with about 60 members, to form Christ Church Toronto in the more family-centric east end of town. After starting services in the fall of 2017, Christ Church is a growing family-focused community of believers.



Christ Church Toronto

Grace Toronto also added a second congregation site on the west side of Toronto, known as Grace West, a congregation of

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—*Connan Kublik*

about 100 people. Through many steps over the years, God provided Grace Toronto with a beautiful historic church building well located for the congregation to serve their community. Renovations were completed at the end of 2017, and the church is currently fundraising to pay off the last of the renovation costs.

Two other churches in the Network were recently able to purchase buildings in good locations, through provisions from God and the persistence of their people’s prayer and support. “In general, and especially in Canada, it’s tough to convince a bank to loan money to a church for a mortgage. As a church plant, we don’t have the years of consistent long-term giving history that the banks require. God continues to provide businesses, anchor churches, and individual donors who make it possible to acquire the buildings,” said Kublik. “Buildings meet a critical need, providing a center for worship and church activities and community outreach, as well as sending the message to the community that the church is here to serve the community over the long haul.”

Kublik and church members spent many hours each week looking for a meeting space for New City Hamilton. They were able to secure space in a church building for use on Sunday afternoons, but in order to grow, they wanted to be able to gather on Sunday mornings.



Kublik reached out time after time to the owners of a choice building, but no one responded. A small group from the church did a prayer walk through the city and stopped to pray one block from that building, asking God for the space. They began renting space in the building shortly after. Six years later, during a presbytery meeting in the fall of 2016, Kublik got a text from the owners saying they had gotten an offer on the building, and that the church had 10 days to decide if they wanted to buy it.

“The elders went to prayer,” said Kublik. “We needed 2.4 million dollars right then in order to buy.” An organization offered to carry the mortgage for them, but they still needed a \$750,000 down payment. The congregation committed \$250,000 in 40 days. People who originally supported the church’s launch started calling and asking to make donations. God provided the funding needed to move in.

New City Newmarket was also finding it a challenge to locate a meeting space. A suitable building became available, and they began praying. A local businessman came alongside them and put down 51% of the cash purchase, which they also used as collateral for the remaining mortgage. Donors contributed the down payment and money toward renovations. “The way God has provided space and funds for these churches has been amazing. Several churches are praying even now for God’s provision of a place for them to gather, as well as the needed funds. We look forward to seeing how God will work,” said Kublik.



Kevin Rogers is pastor of Redeemer Community Church, a congregation 15 hours east of Toronto, in Moncton, New Brunswick. His church got creative in their search for space and met in both a hockey rink and farmers market before finding the Congregational church building where they currently meet.



L to R: Chris Pignatiello, Church Planter Intern at Trinity Grace Church in Toronto; Kevin Rogers; and Kyle Hackmann

Additional pastoral candidate leadership further strengthens mission churches. Ben Jolliffe leads Resurrection Church, a mission church in Ottawa. Mike Chhangur serves as a pastoral intern with Jolliffe. He is finishing seminary and planning to be assessed this spring for church planting. Internships provide an organic way to offer practical experience to pastoral and church



John Smed with Ben Jolliffe (right)

planter candidates, while bringing support to the pastoral staff.

Grace Network is currently developing a curriculum for interns, to train and mentor them into the vision, mission, and competencies to plant churches. “We have already seen good fruit, especially with campus ministry workers and Americans who have come to help plant. We need to call many more of the local young men and women in our country to be trained in gospel ministry,” said Kublik. For ten years now, Grace Network has begun about one church per year. “Our prayer is to move that to two or three a year over the next 10 years. To do that we are going to need to focus on bringing up the next generation of leaders and church planters,” said Kublik. “We are praying that we can develop a church planting ecosystem in Canada that includes churches, internships, and people who are committed to the financial support of church planting.” Grace Toronto currently has four interns, New City Hamilton has two, and other churches are looking for additional intern candidates.

In the future, Grace Network plans to focus more on Quebec, with its high percentage of French-speaking people. The provinces

of Quebec and New Brunswick are home to the majority of French speakers in Canada and have the country’s lowest percentage of evangelicals. PCA pastor Jean Zoellner has served in Montreal since 1984, establishing the Église Réformée St-Jean Church in Montreal and serving as a key leader in Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ), a Reformed denomination established to advance the gospel in Quebec. Zoellner now serves primarily in leadership at Farel Institute in Montreal, established to offer theological training for pastors.

Luke Bert, a graduate of Reformed Seminary in Jackson MS, is currently serving on the faculty of a small, church-based seminary, SEMBEQ, which largely serves Baptist



Luke Bert

churches. “As a Network, our focus has been Gospel Coalition friendly churches rather

“OUR FOCUS HAS BEEN GOSPEL COALITION FRIENDLY CHURCHES, RATHER THAN JUST PCA CHURCHES, ALLOWING US TO WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO DON’T HAVE PRESBYTERIAN DISTINCTIVES BUT THAT DO HAVE GOSPEL DISTINCTIVES THAT DEFINITELY LINE UP WITH US.”

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GRACE NETWORK (CONTINUED)

than just PCA churches, allowing us to work with people who don't have Presbyterian distinctives but that do have gospel distinctives that definitely line up with us," said Kublik.

"We are on the frontier here and many are being creative. Planting is about forming daughter churches, but also requires sometimes working with other groups," said Kublik. Paul VandenBrink, a Reformed minister who was working in a rural church



Grace Valley Church

on the outskirts of the town of Dundas, had been considering a call to church planting for some time. He met with Grace Network, was assessed, and now leads Grace Valley Church, a thriving church community of 130 people.

Another example is Trinity Grace Church, a declining congregation who asked PCA pastor Albert Chung to take over the church and building. The church is now healthy, growing, and planning to join the PCA. In Kitchener/Waterloo, a metropolitan area in southern Ontario known as "Canada's Silicon Valley," there is a church plant with a Reformed understanding, KW Redeemer Church led by Paul Dunk. Dunk is now working toward ordination and training up elders.

Pastor Brian So started New City Toronto through a partnership between two Chinese Baptist congregations. The PCA provided a pastor, the two congregations provided a substantial part of the financial support, and a new church was formed. They are seeing a high number of seekers come to Christ.

ESL outreach has furthered the growth of New City Hamilton. Along with a thriving ESL program, the church has a refugee care initiative and orphan care ministry. They are seeing a real gospel interest from their ESL programs. A Muslim refugee family who attends the ESL classes professes to be Christians now.

There is much work to do in Canada. Kublik believes that though the call is great, God is even greater, "We have seen such beautiful growth here in Canada. So many Canadians are unchurched, that in many ways we are starting from scratch in our efforts, and raising up and training our own leaders. We pray for growth in Canadians giving generously in order to bring more churches into their own country. Major giving by US churches has given us the seed money to start new churches. Interns free up our pastors to plan for new churches to spread the gospel, and we are training up new pastors who can take those new churches and run with them."

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