



IS THE GCC *Right* FOR YOU?



GREAT
COMMISSION
COLLECTIVE

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A Guide for Planters or Churches Considering Partnership

By Dave Harvey

Planting Churches. **Strengthening Leaders.** Those four words describe the life of a network pulsing with a gospel-loving heart to fulfill the Great Commission. We help churches plant churches while providing leadership, training, and care to strengthen the leaders of our churches. We believe God is glorified when healthy pastors and elders lead healthy churches to plant healthy churches together.

If you're considering the Great Commission Collective (GCC), it's important for you to know who we are and where we're going. You'll want to know our values, the attributes we desire to see in churches we plant, our shared beliefs, the commitments we make to our partner churches, and our expectations from those who affiliate with us. This paper seeks to answer each of these questions.

WHO WE ARE

Who we are is in our name; we are a **collective**. We are a collective of churches who are planting churches and strengthening leaders. As we live out the vision to plant churches and strengthen leaders, we believe that these seven cultural values demonstrate who we are as an organization.

THE GCC'S SEVEN CULTURAL VALUES

Gospel Integrity—We ensure the gospel is the theological center for our leadership, preaching, and church ministry.

Relational Connection—We provide intentional opportunities for church leaders to build deep and lasting friendships.

Intentional Care—We provide supplemental care through biblical counseling and crisis intervention for pastors and church leaders.

Deliberate Collaboration—We engage church leaders in the network's efforts by employing them in church planting, leadership training, and pastoral care.

Contextual Application—We create models and methods for church planting and training that scale and adjust to context and culture.

Healthy Plurality—We promote team leadership in elder-led churches as a matter of conviction, and we provide tools that equip elder teams to evaluate themselves and grow in health.

Kingdom Focus—We actively serve, learn from, and partner with ministries outside the GCC because our heart is for gospel expansion.



WHERE WE ARE GOING

GCC is purposefully a collective built on like-minded theology and relational unity. We are not a denomination or a franchise that promotes a particular brand. Affiliation with GCC is voluntary. The criteria for our network unity are by necessity broader and more inclusive while not compromising doctrinal convictions. There will be methodologies we share and encourage, and there will even be resources we create that outline helpful practices, but our common methodologies are not what keeps us together. Therefore, we are going toward:

- **Healthy Contextualization.** While we want doctrinal and relational unity, we will celebrate diverse and contextualized ministry. Our goal is to have churches that bear fruit in a variety of contexts. We want to support a culture of innovation, one that applies the truth of God's Word in creative ways.
- **Maturing Leaders.** We don't want every church to look the same. If we did, we'd have to sacrifice strong local leadership. Instead, we want to strengthen local leaders as they grow in maturity.
- **Critical Thinking.** Unless the Scriptures are explicit (i.e. preach the Word, do the work of an evangelist), we may suggest but won't prescribe particular ministry practices. Instead, we'll embrace a culture that critically examines our methods to learn from successes and failures.
- **Dynamic Kingdom Partnerships.** GCC yearns for things that are greater than we can accomplish alone. We need God's grace to accomplish our mission and we need your partnership to advance the gospel around the world.

If you haven't already done so, please read the white paper [Our Vision for Church Planting Networks](#).

OUR SHARED BELIEFS

This raises the question: If the GCC is not a brand, not a franchise or prescriptive, and doesn't have an exclusive mindset, what is it that unites the GCC member churches?

First, we have theological unity. Networks, like churches, must define what doctrines and practices are held with a closed hand or an open hand. The GCC board has answered these questions clearly through our [Statement of Faith](#), which provides the theological ground upon which we stand together. Any church planter being considered by the GCC and any church leadership team pursuing affiliation must wholly subscribe to the GCC statement of faith.

Second, the GCC has a "DNA" based on multiplying healthy leaders and churches.

This DNA is embedded in our seven cultural values and measured by our six attributes of a healthy church. We believe that every church should be about these things, so all of our training, coaching, and consultation is focused on helping you and your church leadership to grow and develop in these areas.



ATTRIBUTES OF A HEALTHY GCC CHURCH

1. BOLD PREACHING

Unapologetic exposition and application of the Word of God.

2. PURPOSEFUL DISCIPLESHIP

Maturing believers making disciples.

3. FERVENT PRAYER

Prayer that is dependent on God and expectant based on his character and promises.

4. PASSIONATE WORSHIP

Worship that engages our deepest affections for God and expresses the truth of his faithfulness and glory, and the redemptive work of Christ.

5. COURAGEOUS EVANGELISM

Proclamation that overcomes fear in order to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

6. STRATEGIC CHURCH PLANTING

Partnerships that multiply churches around the world.

Third, as a collective, we have a shared commitment to plant churches *together*. This is one of the primary reasons for the partnership between GCC and affiliated churches. To fulfill this biblical mission, we divide and share responsibilities and collaborate to assess, train, and support healthy church planters.

Responsible assessment starts with the local church. Our mission relies upon local churches to evaluate the planter's character, the health of his marriage, and the leadership qualities necessary for planting. Yet GCC also plays an important role by evaluating clarity and fidelity to our statement of faith, assessing the preaching gift, and examining other indicators of health and success.

We also offer church planter training (CPT) designed to prepare men and their wives who have been called to the rigors of planting and growing a church. We have started a coaching cohort process to continue their training and support after the launch. An important strategy for health in new GCC churches is that each planter that we send completes the planter assessment, our training process, and remains vitally connected through our cohorts. This conviction is included in our GCC partnership agreement.

Finally, our partnership is defined through a biennial partnership agreement. This document outlines the commitments, for both the GCC and church partners, that define our



affiliation. It is signed every other year as a way to provide both the church and the network a gracious opportunity to examine whether the partnership is mutually serving each ministry.

The partnership agreement not only formalizes our commitments to each other, but it also helps us to plan and budget for all of our network ministry, including planting support, conferences, and training. Our agreement includes a contingency for necessary separations and also spells out how a church (or the network) could wisely disconnect during the term should this become necessary.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

As a network, the GCC will flourish to the degree we see the beauty of unity and then sacrifice to have our churches embody it. We'll thrive to the degree we recognize that the true tendons that tie networks together are not polity particulars but trusting relationships. Without exception, networks must have creedal commitments. But the real glue, the supreme stickiness that makes us durable, is the grit of our mercy, goodness, integrity, Christlike character, and reciprocal love.

This is the kind of network into which we are inviting you to enjoy, with the hopeful expectation that you can affirm and embody these convictions. When you enter the Great Commission Collective, you're entering into a community—one that is aiming to build the kind of culture where ministry can flourish and where leaders flourish to the end. But, even more, you get a family. And, together, by the grace of God, GCC can serve you, your leaders and your church in these specific ways:

- **We foster and fund mission**—sending men to plant churches in North America and abroad.
- **We collaborate to build healthy and multiplying churches**—working together to train and care for leaders so that they align with our six attributes of a healthy church.
- **We live as a family**—bearing the blessings and challenges together as we fight to help each other finish well.
- **We train and care for leaders**—creating excellent content and relevant context for planter and leader training and providing supplemental care. At GCC, we fight to help each other finish well.
- **We provide an outlet for interdependence**—helping leaders apply the biblical call for churches to learn and grow in interdependence and connecting your local church to the larger mission; accomplishing together far more than any church can do alone.

I hope that's appealing to you. I've found this mission to be incredibly refreshing myself. If you're interested in taking the next step with us, you can go here to join the collective.

