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**CHURCH PLANTING AND REVITALIZATION  
COMMITTEE REPORT**  
37th General Assembly

Members of the Church Planting and Revitalization Committee are RE Frank Carter (Mid-Atlantic), and TE Jeff Moore (Rivers and Lakes). The Committee met on October 12 and 23, 2016, November 3, 2016 (via phone conference), February 15, 2017 (via phone conference), and April 10, 2017 (via phone conference).



*Jeff Moore  
Chairman*

**The Work of the Committee**

The EPC has given to the Church Planting and Revitalization Committee (CPR) two responsibilities:

- 1) To coordinate, encourage and provide resources for church planting and church development efforts of presbyteries and churches.
- 2) To coordinate, encourage and provide resources for church revitalization efforts of presbyteries and churches.

**1. CHURCH PLANTING**

Tom Ricks (Greentree-Kirkwood, MO) leads the Church Planting Team (CPT) that includes John Bueno (Omaha, NE), Matt Brown (Resurrection-Brooklyn, NY), Jack Cathey (Lake Forest Huntersville, NC), Bart Garrett (Christ Church-East Bay, CA), Jim Holland (St. Patrick Collierville, TN), Mike Moses (Lake Forest-Huntersville, NC), Tom Melton (retired Greenwood-Englewood, CO), Richard Rieves, Shawn Robinson (Clayton Community-Clayton, CA), and Rufus Smith (Hope Church-Memphis, TN).

2016 was a year of continued growth in church planting for the EPC. God is expanding our new church development in several ways.

- Rufus Smith, Richard Rieves and John Bueno joined our church planting leadership team giving us greater wisdom, experience and diversity.
- Cedar Springs EPC in Knoxville and Cherry Hills EPC in Denver both launched significant church planting initiatives in their own communities and beyond.
- New church plants began in several presbyteries across the country.
- The Gulf Coast Church Planting Network launched their first church plant in the city of New Orleans.

In 2010 there were 7 active church plants and approximately 200 EPC churches in the US. This meant EPC church plants made up 2.8% of the EPC. In 2016 we knew of at least 24 active EPC church plants and 580 EPC churches. Growing our percentage of church plants to 4.1%. At the start of 2017 we have at least 33 active EPC church plants! Church planting expert Thom Rainer says a healthy church planting denomination is planting churches at a rate of 3.5-4.5% of its total church population. The EPC is becoming a healthy church planting denomination!

In 2017 we have a handful of important goals.

1. Survey every EPC church to determine their level of participation in EPC church planting as a parent, partner or patron. We hope to have this data by GA in June.
2. Determine the early steps we need to take to expand EPC church planting in multi-ethnic settings and underserved neighborhoods. (Success in this goal will be measured by whether or not we launch at least two new EPC church plants that meet these criteria by 2018.)
3. Create and implement better tools to capture and collate EPC church planting data such as conversions, budgets, growth and particularization. This will enable us to better identify and measure the success of our investment in church planting and our strategy for church planting.
4. Launch our initial cohort-training model for current church planters in order for them to have ongoing community and learning opportunities without leaving their church plant site.

## **2. CHURCH REVITALIZATION**

### **THE GO CENTER**

The ministry of the GO Center continues to expand and strengthen its impact throughout the EPC. Ken Priddy, Bob Stauffer and Bill Rasch continue to serve on the GO Center Team as trainer/consultants that provide on-site, online and phone training and consultation. Bill Senyard has been added, growing the training/consulting personnel to four across the country. Others serving on the team for planning and support are Jeff Moore, Ed McCallum and Frank Carter.

### **Two Personnel Initiatives:**

Two key personnel initiatives were undertaken in the past year. First, the development of Vision Team coaches and, second, the identifying of GO Center Coordinators within our presbyteries. G.O.1, the primary revitalization process, calls for the forming of a Vision Team that will lead a church's effort to implement the GO Process. Each of these Vision Teams will now have a Vision Team Coach to come along side for encouragement, reinforcement of the process, and help in maintaining a steady pace of implementation progress. To date, 32 Vision Team coaches have been trained for service. To strengthen the link between the GO Center and our EPC presbyteries, a GO Center Coordinator will serve as the conduit in between, providing two-way communication and promoting the ministry of the GO Center within the respective presbytery while referring pastors and leaders to the GO Center as opportunity warrants. To date, GO Center Coordinators have been identified for 9 of our presbyteries as follows: Pacific (Northwest & South), West, Rivers & Lakes, Central South, Southeast, Florida, Alleghenies, Mid-Atlantic, East

### **Key Ministry Training Tools:**

**Church Revitalization:**G.O.1 Building Your Church's Great Commission Matrix  
G.O.2 Expanding Your Church's Great Commission Matrix  
G.O.3 Extending Your Church's Great Commission Matrix  
GO Business: The Great Commission @ Work

**Leadership Development:**

*The Leadership Ladder: Developing Missional Leaders in the Church*  
*The Leadership Ladder Workbook*

**Great Commission Pastor Development:**

*X52: Six Great Commission Skills for the Pastor-Leader*  
Offered as On-Line Training with Coaching

NOTE: Skills Developed through **X52** include:

Skill 1 Discerning & Developing Vision

Skill 2 Casting Vision & Creating Ownership

Skill 3 Setting Objectives & Establishing Accountability

Skill 4 Managing Ministry Time

Skill 5 Working with Staff & Leaders

Skill 6 Leaving a Gospel Footprint

**Discipleship:**

*The Gospel App – Life Applications for Stressed People*

Formatted in ten 90-minute sessions that teach regular Christians how to receive and apply the real Gospel in their real lives in the real world.

*Take Heart*

Formatted in six 30-minute videos that target millennials, providing an entry level bridge to the Gospel App.

**Current Training Activity:**

Since General Assembly 2016, the GO Center has presented 36 G.O.1 Training Seminars, usually attended by leaders from two or more EPC churches. Two GO Clusters completed their training while two new GO Clusters were launched in October with 18 leaders participating. Leaders are currently signing up for the first X-52 Cluster to be launched in July. Churches are currently being identified to host the first GO Business Training Seminars that will be held in the fall.

**In Development:**

Interest in revitalization from EPC Hispanic churches and the national churches of Mexico and Peru have created the need to translate the G.O.1 Training Manual into Spanish. That project is currently in progress.

3. **BART HESS AWARD**

The Church Planting and Revitalization team has the privilege to recommend annually to the Assembly the recipient of the Bart Hess Award. The Church Planting and Revitalization Committee of the EPC names the Closer to God Church of Kearney, NJ as the recipient of the 2017 Bart Hess Award.

The Closer to God Church is a Portuguese speaking church with simultaneous translation into English. They are made up of people with Brazilian, Mexican, Portuguese, American, and Dominican descent. The church was birthed on July 3, 2011, where the opening hymn was “Nearer My God to Thee.” Pastor Valdir Reis is their founding pastor. On April 5, 2012, they became an EPC member church in the Presbytery of the East. In April 2015, the church purchased a defunct church property as their new home and in November 2015, they began worship in their new space.

Their vision is Walking with God, Working for God and Worshiping God. They accomplish this vision through prayer-drenched activities that include: evangelization of their local community, providing professional courses to the community, medical care, legal assistance and counselling for immigrant families, ministry to the poor through a food bank, supporting presbytery mission projects, and assisting in the planting of new churches in the Newark area. They serve the immigrant community in their city as well as prisoners in evangelical Gospel ministry.

**Recommendations to the General Assembly**

None.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Moore  
Chairman

June 2017