



Metro Philadelphia Church Planting Partnership

"Saturating Metro Philadelphia, South Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania with the Gospel and Gospel-Centered Churches"

June 2009

Dear partners in church planting:

Witnessing the birth of a brand-new church is one of the very best aspects of my ministry. On Sunday evening, April 26th, Christ Liberation Fellowship of West Philadelphia was formally and officially declared to be a particular church in the Presbyterian Church in America. The pews were packed with joyful worshippers as two fine men were ordained to serve the congregation as Ruling Elders. Planter/Pastor Lance Lewis sat in the front row, as below, quietly reflecting on the fruit of his labor in the Lord. Congratulations to Lance, new Elders Tony and Carlos, and the members of this new church.



South Philadelphia, famous for its cheese steaks, sports stadiums, and Rocky Balboa lookalikes, is increasingly home for many immigrant people groups, including approximately 4,500 Indonesians. Eddie Soejanto came to south Philly from Indonesia with his family two years ago as a pastor, church planter, and missionary to his fellow countrymen. They live just three blocks from south Broad Street and hold worship services each Sunday in their packed house. Most Indonesians come to the United States to escape from religious persecution in a Moslem-dominated nation and to search for economic opportunity. Pastor Eddie is here to offer the new arrivals the hope and help of the Gospel of Christ. We are pleased to have him in our city, our Church Planting Partnership and as our friend in Jesus.

Northeast Philadelphia, famous for its many neighborhoods, "the Boulevard", and vast tracts of row homes, is now becoming a popular settling place for thousands of immigrants from Albania. Jason Stryd and Martin Katro are our missionaries and church planters among these Albanian-speaking people who have fled from poverty, corruption, isolationism and economic collapse in their homeland in pursuit of the American dream. The State Department has accommodated that dream by operating a special visa lottery enabling thousands of Albanians to come to the United States and settle in places like Philadelphia. Once here, they are frustrated by many obstacles to the realization of that dream and open to the Good News. Jason and Martin speak the language, understand the culture, and have already penetrated the community by their friendship, ESL training, immigration and job support, and their gentle presentations of the Gospel through word and deed.

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

West Valley

Emmaus, PA, Jim Powell
Suburban Town

Easton

Easton, PA, Mike Hollenbach
Small City, Urban

NEW JERSEY

New City

Atlantic City, NJ, Santo Garafolo
Urban, multi-ethnic

Gloucester County

Gloucester County, NJ, Phil Henry
Suburban Town

PHILADELPHIA METRO WEST

CrossPointe

Media, Delaware County
Jeff Brunsink

East Delco

Aldan-Clifton Heights, Dave Baggett
Multi-ethnic

Faith Mission

Malvern/East Goshen
Dave Swavely

PHILADELPHIA CITY

Agape Evangelistic

South Philadelphia, Eddie Soejanto
Indonesian-speaking immigrants

Albanian Mission

Northeast, Philadelphia, Jason Stryd
Albanian-speaking immigrants

All Nations Mission

SW Philadelphia, Bagudekia Alobeyo
African Immigrants

Bridge Community

Cheltenham, Angelo Juliano
urban, multi-ethnic

City

University City, Tuck Bartholomew
urban families, university students

Gospel Grace

Northeast, Philadelphia, Maranatha Chung
Chinese-speaking immigrants

Grace Point

Oak Lane, Philadelphia, Robert Kim
Korean/Asian/Anglo

liberti Roxborough

Roxborough, Geoff Bradford
young urbanites, college students

New City Mission

Philadelphia, Kin Lam
Chinese Immigrants

Northeast

Northeast, Philadelphia, Vinny Tauriello
Urban, multi-ethnic

Renewal West

Northwest suburbs, Paul Kim
2nd generation Korean, Asia, other

Rock of Israel

NE Philadelphia, Fred Klett
Russian Jewish and Muslim immigrants

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Bruce after ordination with Bob Smoot, September 1980

Almost 29 years ago, on September 21st 1980, I was ordained as a Minister of the Gospel through the Presbyterian Church in America at Chapelgate Church near Baltimore. After nearly three decades of non-stop ministry, the last few at high-speed, my Oversight Counsel is giving me a three-month summer sabbatical for prolonged rest, spiritual renewal and professional enrichment. During the month of June, as we celebrate our 35th year of marriage, Debbie and I will take extended vacation time, some with our youngest daughter Karrie, and some with just the two of us. In July I will travel alone to Cuernavaca, Mexico to study Spanish for three weeks. (*Voy a vivir con una familia Mexicana y hablar español todo el tiempo. Cuando regreso a casa, espero que hablar español muy bien.*) Early in August I will lead the mission team from my church, Covenant Doylestown, to Casa Hogar orphanage in Acapulco for a week of service, a week that is always enriching to me. Then, I will end the summer with various day trips, leisurely activities and general down-time. I am grateful to God for this gift of rest and thankful to my oversight group for their concern for my longevity in the ministry.

News from the four presbyteries in the Partnership:

Eastern Pennsylvania – Mike Hollenbach is headed to [Easton, Pennsylvania](#). After almost ten years of service as an Associate Pastor at [New Life Dresher](#), Mike will move later this year with his wife Judy and their children to the city which is known as the home of former professional boxer Larry Holmes, "The Easton Assassin".

New Jersey – [Phil and Polly Henry](#) are taking a step of faith by selling their house in Tuscan, Arizona and looking to buy a house in Gloucester County, New Jersey. Phil is still in need of financial support for his church planting mission. But he believes it is time to leap across the country and trust God for the remaining amount.

Philadelphia City – [Renewal Presbyterian Church](#) in west Philadelphia has decided to open a second site of worship in the western suburbs sometime early next year. Renewal was organized as a church in the spring of 2006. Growth of the congregation and its ministries has led them to what they are calling their "Chapter 2 Campaign: One Church, One Mission, Multiple Locations". The city site will worship in their newly-purchased building at [4633 Cedar Ave](#). The suburban site will be established somewhere near Plymouth Meeting.

Philadelphia Metro West – Church planter Jeff Brunsink and his wife Kim continue to fight through persistent health challenges to plant [CrossPoint Church](#) outside [Media, Pennsylvania](#). The church's motto is, "REAL PEOPLE living in a REAL WORLD living for a REAL GOD." Jeff leads a very casual, come-as-you-are style of worship, and delivers messages each Sunday that direct the Gospel toward ordinary people who face life's extraordinary challenges.

Praise God for:

- 35 years of God's grace in our marriage and family life.
- The organization of Christ Liberation Fellowship in West Philadelphia.
- Continuing momentum for church planting in metro Philadelphia.

Pray for:

- Rest, renewal and personal enrichment during my summer sabbatical.
- Mike and Judy Hollenbach, preparing to plant in Easton, PA.
- The Tauriellos and the Henrys as they move this summer to their respective fields.
(Northeast Philadelphia) (Gloucester County, NJ)



Celebrating 35 Years of Marriage

With gratitude for your prayers and support,

Bruce R. Finn
Church Planting Coordinator

PS – Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to: [Mission to North America, 1700 N Brown, Suite 101, Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8122, account # 41031175](#); or online debit/credit cards: <https://processor.pcanet.org/mna/donationsII/donation.cfm?MinistryTypeID=27> or [CLICK HERE](#). Please use my name or account number #41031175 for all contributions. Thank you.

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