

VISION *Anabaino*

PURSuing THE "GREATER THINGS" OF
CHRIST'S ASCENDED MINISTRY TODAY! (JN 14:12)

A PUBLICATION OF CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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Why Mission Anabaino?

by Rev. Preston Graham

More Than A Strategic Plan, Mission *Anabaino* Is A
Theological Vision In The Simplicity and Purity of
Devotion to Christ *Applied!*

In strategic terms, "mission *anabaino*" is "*mission church planting!*" As a practical plan, those who have studied the issue of church growth *and* church revitalization have concluded with Tim Keller that

The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the Body of Christ and 2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of existing churches. Nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, para-church ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes--will have the

consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.¹



Again in strategic terms, Keller's conclusion is based on studies supporting the simple conclusion that

new churches best reach new generations, new residents, new socio-cultural people groups and the unchurched. The reasons often noted are understandable if not always obvious to those who attend existing churches. It takes no more than five or so years before "cultural hegemony" begins to set in to the life of a church—when a particular kind of

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socio-cultural “flesh” becomes the unspoken, if not always discerned, dominant and unchallenged culture of a church. This can be expressed in all sorts of ways: in time of worship, worship length, the way a congregation responds to emotionalism or intellectualism (as feeling manipulated or enlivened by one or the other), degrees of scriptedness in worship, leadership styles, aesthetic surroundings, location, what life experiences and illustrations are expressed in otherwise expository sermons, strategies for Christian discipleship and on it goes—thousands of tiny customs and mores that reflect the natural “flesh” of one or another cultural expression that makes the gospel more or less accessible to a given people group. Church planting is good strategy if by the very fact that it is a new “flesh” whose viability is dependent on becoming more accessible and responsive to an under-reached group that feels alienated and perhaps even manipulated or oppressed by the cultural hegemony of an existing church.

Perhaps less obvious to some, it can also be shown in strategic terms that church planting is one of the very best ways to revitalize an established “mother” church. To be sure, new churches stimulate new and progressive ideas and strategies, serve as a breeding ground for leadership development, create contexts for critical self-examination in discriminating between the truly sacred “first things” of Christian faith and practice and the “second things” that can too easily overshadow the first things to the demise of spiritual vitality in a church. Churches, like all associations, are prone to stagnation and self-absorption once the fear of foreclosure is no longer an issue. A church committed to church planting, like all birth ordeals, require a loss of some comforts and preferences as part of giving life to another in ways that are commensurate with sanctification and spiritual renewal. To be sure, it would be a great mistake to pit church planting against church renewal or concern for existing churches. The kind of spiritual DNA that makes a church into a church planting movement is the same kind of Christ-centered and mission-minded DNA that breeds healthy Christians and churches.

And so “mission *anabaino*” in strategic terms is “mission church planting” and can easily be argued as the best thing to do for all practical purposes. *But here is the thing:* even if there was absolutely no evidence as to the practical advantages of church planting, we would do it anyway and with a wholehearted passion fit only for a devotion to Christ himself in the most personal of terms. This is because Mission *Anabaino* is mission “*I am ascending*” (the meaning of the Greek word “anabaino”) and in theological terms it is to participate in the real and personal advent of Christ vis-à-vis church planting! It is the way we make Christ first in everything, even in our mission strategy regardless of its perceived practical advantages or disadvantages! Mission *Anabaino* is just an extension of simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ *applied* to mission! A bold statement, to be sure, which awaits some Biblical justification—so here it is:

To be sure, a Christological foundation for Mission *Anabaino* as applied to church planting can readily be illustrated with a simple reading of Matthew’s version of the great commission (Mt. 28:18-20) in context with Matthew’s description of Christ’s ascension ministry (16:18-19). We see for instance how the missional call to “make disciples” is not just a call to share faith and make learners by “teaching them,” but by “baptizing them” into the “binding and loosing” ministry of Christ “on earth as in heaven.” Baptism in Acts and throughout the apostolic ministry is clearly portrayed as an entrance into a carefully designed community that is defined by faith formation (Christ’s presence as Prophet), sacramental worship (Christ’s presence as Priest) and shepherding care (Christ’s presence as King) all based on the apostolic foundation with Christ as the cornerstone such as to serve the mission and grace of the gospel. But with respect to the

¹ Tim Keller, *Why Plant Churches* (Feb 2002). Cf. D. McGavran and G. Hunter, *Church: Strategies that Work* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), C. Kirk Hadaway, *New Churches and Church Growth in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991).

meaning of the Greek word “*anabaino*” specifically (“I am ascending) and our theology of Christ applied to mission, it is John’s version of the great commission in context with Christ’s teaching concerning his ascension ministry that is perhaps most instructive.

In John’s gospel, the great commission reads like this: “Just as the father has sent me, so also I am sending you [plural]” (John 20:21). The “just as...so” way of framing the commission was, of course, meant to remember *how* the Father sent Christ. This was made perfectly clear in John’s introduction:

“the Word [Christ’s Divinity] became “flesh” [Christ’s humanity] and templed among us”

John 1:14

This passage loomed large in the counsel of Chalcedon’s understanding of the mystery concerning Christ’s divinity in relation to Christ’s humanity and resulted in its ancient formula that the two natures are at once “distinct but never separate!” But for the present purposes, the issue here is how the same mystery in biblical Christology is *applied* by Christ himself to OUR mandate today as a mission in “temple planting” as it were. It will inform even our theological understanding of the church as “temple” in so far as Christ’s divinity is at once distinct, but never separate from the human socio-cultural flesh of Christ’s body which is *now* located in every place and time that a temple- church exists as patterned after the apostolic foundation with Christ as the cornerstone! More specifically:

John was writing to Jewish Christians who were suffering under growing persecution and a sense of homelessness with the demise of the temple in around AD 70. John’s message to them was clear: you are not without the temple. Christ **is** your temple and Christ is **still** with you – not abstractly as an idea but actually **as the Word fleshed out today** after the pattern of Christ’s first advent even! Following then his introduction to Christ as our temple in John 1:14, John continues this theme throughout his narrative. In just the second chapter, we hear Jesus say such things as *destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* (John 2:19-20 speaking of the resurrection). But the real climax for John’s gospel was not the death and resurrection of Christ, but His ascension!

Almost a third of John’s gospel (starting in John 14) focuses on Christ preparing the disciples for his ascension ministry as related to Christ’s temple advent today! His ministry is described as being **still** present on earth albeit spiritually by the Holy Spirit being incorporated into temple churches. For instance, about the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus in the mystery of Trinity can speak in the first person that *I will not leave you as orphans for I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and [also] you[pl] in me, and I in you [pl].* This is extraordinary language that speaks to the mystery of Christology itself applied to Christ’s present ministry on earth by the Holy Spirit even as he is with the Father in heaven! And Jesus further explains how in this coming, *I will make my home with you* (14:18-23, language that is clearly reminiscent of their temple home or the Old Testament concept of the “House of God”).

About then his ascension ministry, Christ told his disciples that they could expect to see “greater things even... because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12). Clearly, the “greater things” pertains to the great commission with respect to Christ’s **now** temple presences throughout the world in myriads of socio-geographical contexts and at the same time. To this point, a poignant moment was when Mary is tempted to cling to Christ’s resurrected body as if unwilling to let go of Christ’s first advent. In light of Christ’s forthcoming or Pentecostal advent, Christ gently rebukes her saying, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended... go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father’” (John 20:17) This then was the context for Christ’s great commission in vs. 21! In other words, don’t revert to a kind of memorial-only kind of spirituality with respect to *just* remembering the “good ole days” of my first advent. It is as if Christ were saying, “I am not really leaving you but am in fact preparing for the greater things of multiplying my temple presence on earth wherever you (plural) are sent after the same pattern that I was

sent by the father—as temple presence! As such, the same power that raised Christ’s first temple advent from the dead is here being applied to Christ’s spiritual presence in the temple church during his ascension ministry! Again, in the mystery of Christology applied, it is proclaimed that there would be a kind of spiritual cause and effect relation between the outward *signs* (as organized after the apostolic foundation) and the *things signified* (the saving, vivifying union with Christ) even if still in a now and not yet kind of fallible and infallible tension.

And so to state it simply: The reason why we embark upon “mission *anabaino*” is because we believe in “mission greater things” with respect to the advent of Christ today through temple (church) formation. Paul made it his ambition to plant churches wherever the church was not accessible to a given people group—albeit defined geographically or culturally (Rom. 15). We can say that every time a church designed upon the apostolic foundation with Christ as the cornerstone is planted, Christ is, in the mystery of Christology applied, “re-templed” among us as to again and again and again make the **one** Christ who is with the Father in heaven accessible to (or “at home with”) the myriads of “flesh” on earth! If Christ’s first incarnational coming was in the mystery of supernatural conception, his present coming after Pentecost is in the mystery of supernatural incorporation via His advent by the Holy Spirit built church. The church is according to Paul nothing short of “the body of Christ, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” It is the “household of God . . . a holy temple . . . a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” *but only* in so far as it is a community carefully designed, (yes, organized) upon the architectural pattern of the “apostolic foundation with Christ as the cornerstone” (cf. Eph. 1:22-23, 2:19-21, 1 Tim. 3:14-15). To plant a church is to participate in Christ’s advent today! And wherever there is the advent of Christ, there is a great manifestation of transformative grace unequalled in power in comparison to any other! From the vantage of Christology *applied*, I believe there really is no greater legacy that a Christian could desire than to participate in Christ’s advent today both through his continued advent in existing churches but most especially in church planting. This is why we embark on an ambitious vision called “Mission *Anabaino*!” I hope then you have or will read the stories of Mission *Anabaino* that are contained in this our inaugural publication. And I also ask that you would dare to consider “A Shameless Pitch For Mission *Anabaino*” that is also included in the back that will in more concrete terms explain the ambitious legacy that you could have in Mission *Anabaino* going forward.

CPC 135

by Rebekah Johnson

In addition to church planting and campus ministry, we have always been a church who seeks to do missions by being the sort of people that are attractive to those who are lost; attractive not because of our

building, music, or preaching, but because we are a community that loves with the kind of love that comes down from above. We love each other, we love New Haven, and most importantly, we love our savior! That love is expressed in our music, in our preaching, in our care of the building, in our mercy, in our prayers, in our governing, in our teaching . . . it is the heart of all we do for in it is Christ’s very presence among us. So in no way am I going to try to give you an exhaustive look at what Christ is doing here, but instead a few vignettes from members and recent alumni.



The sense of community as the tangible living body of Christ has been very clear since I have been in New Haven and CPC. This is perhaps manifested more clearly through my community group and the unity and accountability we share. It is still a challenge to reject the pressure for individualism inherent in our society (I imagine this will continue to be a challenge specially for me). Additionally, our community group is still far from a perfect “body” of Christ. But I have noticed that Christ has utilized his body to show me slowly that by isolating our challenges and experiences from the rest of the body of Christ we all lose the fullness of what God wants to teach us. A clear example is the stress I can feel at work at times, and how it can easily become the center of my life especially when I stop looking beyond work, and don’t get the broader perspective that my community can offer. - Abel Alcazar-Roman



I decided to buy a home in New Haven last winter and asked my small group and a few other CPC folks for help with the move. That morning, fifteen hardy friends showed up at my old apartment and helped me move everything into my new home within 45 minutes. Forty-five minutes! Amazing. We spent the rest of the afternoon in fellowship: hanging out, joking and laughing, eating New Haven pizza, hanging blinds, deepening old bonds and forming new friendships. As I watched the Church come alongside me, love on me, pray for me, and help me do what I could not do myself, I experienced a little bit of the "now but not yet" ministry and fellowship of Christ here on earth. -Leah Kelley

I recently became a father, and before this stage of my life I don't believe I understood how deep fatherly love was. There are moments when the intensity of my love for my daughter is so strong it alarms me. And it is almost incomprehensible to me that God would love me as much. (In fact, He loves me more). My desire to perform for God has so often (and does so often) crowd out the profound truth that Jesus Christ died for me because God felt much the same way about me as I do about my daughter, Hazel. I have never before felt so assured of my Father's love, attention, and care for me, my daughter and for all of us. - Jake Gramlich



God has clearly been at work in my life during the past year, and it seems He gets my attention best through adversity. First, my writing career suffered a major setback when a novel I’d been working on for the last three years was put on hold. My CPC Shoreline small group prayed, encouraged and cheered me on as I began work on another book which now awaits a major revision as the saga continues. Second, my mom passed away after three difficult years in a convalescent home. Circumstances surrounding her death led to a serious rift between my two sisters and my father and me. Pastor Graham’s wise council and support enabled me to do what I needed to do at the time and once again my CPC family helped me through the pain with their kind words and thoughtful actions. Third, when my father died less than six months after my mother, Pastor Graham and my friends at CPC came to celebrate his life and helped me experience a healing with my sisters I didn’t think was possible. So, I can truly attest to the ways in which CPC has been a haven for me through disappointment and broken-heartedness, and I’m eternally grateful for the love and care of so many during these sad times. - Joanne Donovan

Church Planting *By Mel Sensenig*

Having spent eight years in campus ministry prior to coming to Christ Presbyterian Church, New Haven, I was experiencing some ministry fatigue and looking for fresh vision and a deeper theological and missional basis for ministry. We started attending Christ Presbyterian near the end of my first semester at Yale Divinity school, and Cindy and I were immediately attracted to this vision for ministry, that put Christ at the center, the church next to the heart of Christ, and the mission to the world – and especially the city – as a crucial out working of that.



I distinctly remember one morning walking into the study center when the church was still meeting at the Neighborhood Music School. I saw the brochure on the vision for church planting in New England, and was immediately struck by several things: there was a tremendous mission field in the cities of the Northeast, and here was a church with the theological foundation and mission-minded determination to really make a difference. Cindy and I still look back to our three years in New Haven as the most formative years of our ministry life, as we grew by leaps and bounds in our theological understanding as well as our passion for ministry.

There was something that really clicked for me when I began to grasp the connection between Jesus Christ, the leaders and members he places in this church, and the structure, ministry and sacraments of the Church, united organically by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. This provided a ministry vision that continues to this day, a vision that we pursued in Providence, Rhode Island for nearly 8 years, and now have been pursuing in Reading, PA, the poorest city in the nation, for almost 7 years.

In Providence, we watched in amazement as God took a small core group (over the summer when I was preaching up there in preparation, there often were 15-20 people in attendance) and grew it into a church, that then planted a daughter church, Christ our Hope Presbyterian Church with pastor Tony Phelps, ministered to college students at Brown and Rhode Island School of Design through RUF, and then into their own building in the heart of downtown Providence.

When we came to Reading, we had no core group. Cindy and our four children were the charter members! Recently, Reading gained notoriety in the New York Times as the nation's poorest city. Yet in this city we have watched the work of Christ through the many members of his body, the church here at Christ Presbyterian Church, Reading, PA. Our core group members share a vision to reach the people of Reading,

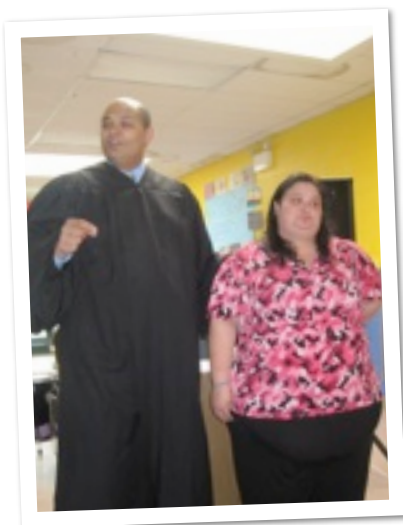
and the surrounding communities, with the message of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. They labor sacrificially to help run the ministries of CPC. Many volunteer team leaders and team members help in a variety of ways in Sunday morning worship. Our members also participate in outreach to the community. Twice a year we have a clothing giveaway that generally brings 50-150 people into the church, where they receive free, good quality used clothing, an invitation to church, and an explanation of the gospel, if they are willing to listen. This past summer we worked on a weeklong cleanup of a vacant lot in which children from the city,



including members of our congregation, can now play. We worked with community groups to beautify a local park, and were able to build relationships and publicize church ministries as a result. We have a Spanish Bible study that meets on Thursday nights, with a Spanish leader who is in seminary and desires to work toward ordination. With the help of a few area churches, we host a weekly Bible study and dinner for ex-convicts sponsored by a ministry in Reading called New Road Ministry, which seeks to connect ex-offenders to Christ and local churches. On Thanksgiving day, some members cooked a Thanksgiving meal at the church for those from our community and congregation who have no family to celebrate Thanksgiving with. This coming spring we will host groups of college students from Boston University and Gordon College, to do service and outreach over the spring break. In the summer of 2012, we are planning to host ministry teams from Westminster Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian for VBS and summer youth outreach. All of our members participate in the ongoing needs of ministry: cleaning and maintaining our church building, teaching Christian education classes, serving in the nursery, and helping in many other ways. On July 16, the Reading Eagle featured our church in two positive articles.



All this has come about, humanly speaking, because Christ Presbyterian Church in New Haven, and pastor Preston Graham and the session, were willing to risk a great deal and cast a vision for the active ministry of Christ by the Holy Spirit through his church to touch and change the hearts of needy cities like New Haven, Providence and Reading. Thank you so much for your faithfulness, and may God continue to bless you in your labors!



CPC in the Hill

by Rev. Tolivar Wills

Imagine a 15-passenger van, filled with bouncing R&B music, and around 13 kids waving their hands in the air as they sing along to the song. This was the scene at our 2005 soccer camp, at the end of our 'day in the city', as we were heading back to our home base. Though the rest of the camp was an amazing experience, it was this encounter with the culture of the Hill community that I found myself wanting to be immersed as a minister of the gospel in this community. The week of camp in the inner city of New Haven working amongst the urban poor in 'the hood', enabled me to find a place and culture to be who I am while ministering in Jesus' name.

However, although finding a good fit for my ministry was significant, I believe that the real blessing occurred when Christ began to inhabit his people in the Hill via His ascended ministry. By being filled with the Holy Spirit as a worshipping community, Jesus begins to manifest Himself in a way that reflects the unique and diverse qualities of the Hill community; Jesus mediates His presence in a way that sounds, smells, sings, and relates in a 'Hillite' way to the people of the Hill. This reality reveals the cross-cultural nature of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and His ability to meet humanity in any setting that exists in the

world. Our church has begun to articulate this reality with the phrase "That He Might Walk Among Us"; hoping to express our longing for Christ to come to the Hill via Word, Sacrament, and the One-anothering of His church in a way that sounds, smells, feels, and tastes like our community.

So, what if Jesus does mediate His presence in the Hill?

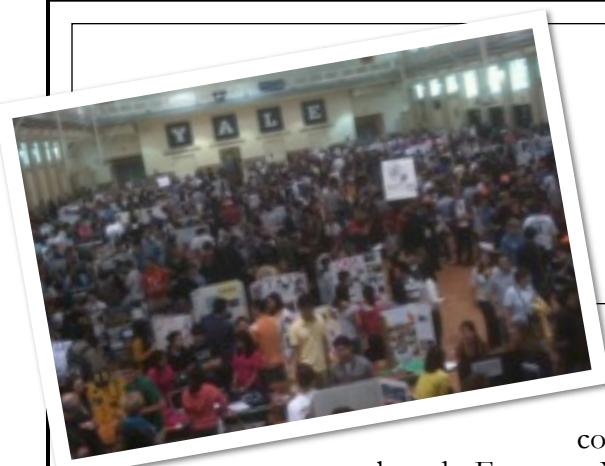
Considering the redemptive nature of Christ's ministry, we would expect Jesus to bring to bear the transformative power of the gospel on all of life in the Hill community. As such, we long to see the power of the resurrection bringing about the transformation of its souls, minds, families, agendas, and culture. A great example of the gospel's effect on lives has been in the Moye family. Thelbert and Jeanette, parents of four children, both had come from very tragic and traumatic upbringings as children themselves. Their families' lives were riddled with alcohol and drug addiction, mental illness, untimely deaths, and significant dysfunctional relationships. As a result, lacking key emotional support and any Christian influence in their lives, both Thelbert and Jeanette set out on a destructive path of drug and alcohol abuse, coupled with bad relationships and untimely pregnancies. As a result, extensive prison time, loss of children, and unbelievable pain became the tenor of their lives; in fact, when I met them in October 2009, they were on the verge of losing their marriage and family.



However, as the entire family began to participate in our weekly bible study, worshipped on Sunday's, attended prayer meetings, embraced Christ as Savior and Lord, served in the church, and finally became members, they have begun to experience a deep and holistic transformation. In addition to being such a servant for the Church, Jeanette has been able to finish a furthering education program, so she can obtain her GED and a certificate for being an administrative assistant. As well, she has been able to exercise some tough love towards Thelbert, which has empowered him to grow in his responsibilities as a father and provider for the family. Thelbert, struggling with an over 30-year drug addiction, with the help of his Lord, wife, and church family, has begun to actively invest in his own recovery, the life of the Church, and his family. As a result, we are beginning to see a couple, who had historically been at each other's throats, begin to work as a team and rekindle love lost. Finally, it goes without saying that as this couple has availed themselves to the presence of Christ their children have found the security and love that they have needed to flourish academically, emotionally, and relationally. The Jesus *'that is walking in their midst'* is transforming their lives and worlds, so that they and those around them can grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ!



Dear friends, it is this transformative process of the *Anabaino* ministry of Jesus that drew this pastor and his family to the Hill. It goes without saying, that these dramatic life changes of Christ are fueling our passion to enter into the life and struggles of the Hill. For at the end of the day, if we walk by faith in the power of His Gospel, then we and the people we walk with will surely find Him *'walking in their(our) midst'*, which will allow us to experience more of His transformative power. Thanks to everyone who makes this journey into His *Anabaino* ministry possible!



On Campus

by Rev. Kevin Nelson



Earlier this fall, I found myself reading one of those commonplace campus bulletin boards. Except at Yale, the information it was promoting was anything but ordinary: A former presidential candidate to speak here, a world-renowned scientist to lecturing there, a brilliant violinist performing at still another venue. Yale is an exhilarating, if not intimidating place to be. But, as I keep reminding our students, there is no more powerful figure on this campus than Jesus. He is at work here, and he is calling out his lost sheep. This is a place where he can be found.

This fall the pastors at CPC have been on campus every week, meeting with students and discipling them. We have started a series called *Christianity 301* which takes students beyond the basics, challenging them to go deeper with their faith. Our first class in this series has been “How to Read the New Testament, Academically and Faithfully.” It has been transformative for students who have had very little training in interpreting the Bible. We have addressed many of the challenges they have faced from academics as well as equipped them to lead others in Bible study.

Our graduate ministry is also thriving. We have roughly forty grad students who meet for prayer, study of God’s word, and fellowship. The group is growing and has been a great place for students to bring their friends and fellow students. We have had many still searching for faith come into this community and find Christ.

Ministering to Yale grad students is wonderful. They are just starting to see how their faith integrates with their specific field. So it becomes a community not simply of future lawyers, doctors, scientists and musicians, but a community of future leaders for Christ in all of these fields.

Grad students are typically here for a longer period of time than undergraduates and they have begun to see life beyond the campus. Many make the transition from a faith supported by campus ministries to a life long service to Christ and his Church.

The students here are amazing. They are a vital mission field for Mission Anabaino. CPC is located across the street from Yale’s campus in a strategic location to reach students. The church is an easy walk for undergraduates and is just around the corner from the majority of graduate students. We have a great ambition to see this campus reached for Christ and are committed to keeping a faithful presence at Yale. And, in God’s wonderful providence, these students will continue the mission as they graduate, leaving here to take influential positions all around the globe.



NEW HAVEN IMPACT WEEK



THIS PAST JULY ABOUT 20 MEMBERS OF GRACE NORTH ATLANTA, LED BY FORMER CPC INTERN, REV. JOHN HARDIE, AND HIS FANTASTIC STAFF, JOINED CPC FOR NEW HAVEN IMPACT WEEK, WHICH CONSISTED OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING, VBS SOCCER CAMP FOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL KIDS IN THE HILL, RENOVATION WORK ON HOMES, THEOLOGY CAMP, AND NIGHTLY DINNERS AND DEVOTIONS.

Christ Pres. New Haven,

In 1739, Charles Wesley penned the lyrics to the song “O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing” in the first stanza he writes,”

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

A letter from Grace North Atlanta

In reflecting on the week that we spent among you I cannot help but enlist Wesley’s words in describing both my experience and the testimony of our team. When I hear that last line and listen of “the triumphs of his grace” it is impossible for me not to remember what God has done. Taken from Revelations 5:11 the words of Wesley’s poem celebrate the triumph of God’s tremendous grace in our lives and recalls to our hearts the ultimate vision of the Scriptures where in the end the multitudes of God’s chosen from every tongue tribe and nation give voice to His glory. Our experience among you bears testimony to the truth of that vision, to His love in Christ, and to His heart for the nations.

“In the Hill”

What a tremendous testimony to the diversity of the gospel. To me, perhaps for the first time, I caught a glimpse of the vision of restoration inherent within the power and call of the gospel. Not only was I able to witness the gospel breaking down social, economic, and racial barriers, but also was overcome by a vision for what could be. It is a vision that is big enough to include a spiritually transformed community, which cares deeply to meet the physical needs of their neighbors. I will never forget driving into the Hill for the first time and being overcome by a deep sense that God would bring restoration to the people and community. To me it was so clear in the haunting echo of the decaying facades of the homes that hinted only just at a former beauty and glory waiting to be restored. It is as if all of creation – all of the Hill – is waiting, waiting for its redeemer that it too may give witness to His glory.

“In the company of Wormwood”

And how could I forget the joy of watching high school and middle students wrestling with the truth of the Scriptures under constant fire from the tempter Screwtape and his assistant. I cannot wait to try something similar this coming summer with students here in Atlanta. It is a constant wonder to watch the Spirit of God reveal the truth to the younger generation. I came away from our times together incredibly encouraged and excited to see what God will do in the coming year. Please continue to pray with us that God would raise up students and leaders that will be passionately committed to Christ and that we would see the restoration of people and the world to their creator. I pray that the King of Kings would guard and keep you until we see each other again.

Your Brother in Christ,

Chris Sibben





Haiti

by Katie Levesque

I walked home from the Toyota dealer this morning—about two miles—after dropping my van off for service. I stopped on the way to grab a cup of coffee and do some early Christmas shopping. Nothing too heavy—after all, I was on foot.

As I trudged up the longish hill toward home, I thought about this article and what I wanted to share about the Haiti trip in June. It's hard to encapsulate such a rich experience, one that was tremendously rewarding and yet also troubling at the same time, but the ideas were starting to gel.



And then I started to sweat. This on a gorgeous 57-degree day, no less. I couldn't help thinking that, if I had been born in Haiti, I would have no van to drop off, no conveniently located Dunkin Donuts to caffeinate my journey, no megastore full of merchandise and, very likely, no money with which to buy Christmas gifts anyway. I would, however, very likely be sweating while walking. If I were a Haitian woman, a good portion of my energy and effort would be spent fetching water and carrying it home in a five-gallon bucket. (That's about 40 pounds of water, if you're wondering. On your head.) How long does five gallons of water last you? How much of it would you drink when you got home if you'd carried it two miles or more?

God is at work in Haiti in so many ways. First, and perhaps foremost in my mind, is the simple fact that human dignity endures despite conditions that most of us would consider completely unlivable. The Haitians I met were not bitter or hopeless. They were just poor. The *imago Dei* is in the Haitian people, and in this country where most people have so little, there is less of a tendency to value people based on what they have or accomplish. That lesson continues to resonate with me months after my return. How often do I forget the implications of *imago Dei* in my daily life? How many times *every day*?

Second, I saw Christ's ministry at work as people joined together toward common goals. When the material needs are so stark, the "what" is rather obvious: people should have clean water, sufficient food, health care, education—and many other things that we take for granted. What impressed me so much about the work of the Great Commission Alliance in Haiti was not so much the "what" as the



"how." Instead of swooping in and handing these things out, GCA has found ways to work within the community so that the face of the organization is Haitians helping other Haitians. GCA's Haitian employees decide who really needs a food bag this week or who could use a lead on a new job. The Haitian pastors connect those in need in their congregations and communities to the help that GCA is able to provide—and by doing so make it clear that the gospel aims to meet both spiritual needs and physical needs. This kind of knowledge was absolutely essential to support the work that our team did in Haiti. The language barrier was one thing, and we certainly would have been almost useless without our dedicated translators. But well beyond that, we needed local knowledge—is there more to this family's story than they're telling the doctor? what's going on with this woman at home?



I believe that the work we did in Haiti was helpful, that in a real way we were being the hands of Christ to the people we served. But we absolutely could not have done it alone. Working alongside GCA's employees, both American and Haitian, allowed us not only to maximize the impact of our labors in Christ's name but also to show that the work of Christ transcends the boundaries that would usually separate us.

One of my favorite parts of the Haiti trip was our evenings on the porch after our work for the day was done. The neighborhood kids would be out of the steps, waiting for us to play with them, and we'd stay up well past dark talking with

each other and the children. Late in the week someone pulled out an iPod, and we had some great dance parties on that porch. Where else might you find a Yale-New Haven Hospital doctor dancing alongside a shoeless Haitian child? The only answer I can think of is heaven. When we do Christ's work together, we get a glimpse of the promise of heaven. I need more of that in my life. And while I hope to go back to Haiti and participate in that particular work again, I don't need to go anywhere to experience the transcendent pleasure and privilege of working alongside brothers and sisters in Christ to help Christ's kingdom come.

When I got home from my walk this morning, I used the bathroom, had a big glass of water, and then sat down in the living room. Flush toilets, running water, a couch to flop onto—these are luxuries that few Haitians even see very often, let alone dream of possessing themselves. I can't tell you why, in God's Providence, I have been blessed with so much while so many others, in Haiti and throughout the world, have not even the fundamentals of health and survival: clean water, sufficient food, adequate sanitation and shelter, basic health care. But I can tell you that God is in Haiti: his *imago Dei* is in his people, his church is at work with the ministry of word and deed, and his kingdom is coming as people do Christ's work together.

People need Christ. People need each other. There is no shame in embracing either of these realities—and following the implications, wherever they lead us with our time, our resources, our hearts, and our prayers. If only we Americans would do so more readily and fully, perhaps we could find another, more transcendent kind of blessing despite the blinding presence of our material riches.



Danbury – Christ the Shepherd Church

by Rev. David Hutchinson

Greater Danbury was blessed by Christ Presbyterian Church through the decision to plant a PCA church here. If the experts are correct when they liken church planting in New England to plowing concrete, and if it's doubly difficult and dangerous to attempt a church plant during an economic recession – then the church plant had better have a great organization behind it. Our church had Christ Presbyterian Church in New Haven.

The strongest legacy given to us by CPC was a simple, “What is the Gospel?” emphasis. The rest of it did not matter if we did not understand the Gospel and desire to communicate that Good News to believer and unbeliever as the only message that mattered. This was part of our DNA from the very beginning, thanks to CPC.

But CPC gave us more than that; indeed it is still giving us more. Leadership from the elders, prayers and encouragement, resources, wisdom.... all part of the legacy of a church that rose up to plant a PCA church an hour away.

Christ the Shepherd has seen Kingdom Growth via conversions and transfers of membership. We have seen people grow deeper in their faith. We have been used to serve our city as a partner church with one of the premier mercy ministries in New England. We were used by the Lord to help bring Bethany Christian Services to Connecticut.



There have been fundraisers for Haiti in the wake of the earthquake, and outreach events involving a former major league baseball player. We have hosted Bible-based marriage conferences as well as a seminar for parents of teens. Our youth group has been ministering at a local retirement home for years.

One of the exciting things currently happening at Christ the Shepherd is the deepening relationship between our church and our sister church, Christian Community Church, a Brazilian PCA congregation. We help each other in many ways and are exploring more and more ways to work together to love our city and share God's love with them.

As we move forward, it is comforting to know that we are not alone. We are loved and cared-for and impacted by Christ Presbyterian Church.





Goatville by Craig Luekens

CPC Goatville hopes to be a place where the “goats” of the world feel safe to worship in a way not defined by the traditional “sheep” of Christendom. Goatville was born out of the simple observation that the gospel is not accessible to all the flesh of our city as well as the simple desire to begin filling that void. Urbanites in New Haven whose flesh is seen at Goatville range from the alternative rock hipster to young professional and everything in between. What we share is twofold: a desire for the Total Christ in a flesh not yet incarnated in New Haven; and, a united history of “pendulum swings” in Christianity, where we’ve experienced churches who do *either* preaching, *or* sacraments, *or* community very well, but never all together. Aware of this, we hope to incarnate the total Christ in an authentic way. And yet, we know that even trying to be “authentic” has become its own gospel, as if being true to ourselves could solve all our problems. Therefore, while we value the urban authentic movement (or whatever you want to call it!), we want to speak into it in a way that communicates and embodies the overwhelming grace of the gospel. We are a community of grace because Christ makes up for our sin as our “lamb without blemish,” a lamb that was once foreshadowed as coming from “the sheep and the goats” (Ex. 12:5).

Having begun as a home small group Bible study, we decided we wanted to encounter and celebrate New Haven as we explored beginning a full worship service. With that goal, we sponsored three concert tastings – one beer tasting, one wine, and one coffee - in different venues around New Haven – one concert hall/ bar, one co-working space, and one art gallery – with local performers of music from indie folk to rock and classical improv. This was our opportunity to express our love for the city and explore what the flesh of Goatville could become. Think exploratory research, but a lot more fun! We are still working on integrating what we learned and experienced into our worshipping community, but those ventures set the tone for what type of community we want to be – a community that celebrates and reflects the voice and flesh of our city, and is grounded in the Word of God.

We believe God shows no partiality with regard to town-gown, rich-poor, black-white-brown, red-blue, male-female, boss-employee... *for in Christ, there is no distinction!* (Rom. 3:22). Therefore, there will be no sacred cows in Goatville, as we strive to make the gospel accessible to the community and flesh that enjoyed the concert tastings. We have begun publicly worshipping and are growing as a community in Christ. In addition to worship, we continue to meet during the week to pray and discuss our theological beliefs, and have made a number of meals for the families with new babies (we’ve had 5 pregnant women involved with Goatville thus far. Two



babies have come, three to go!) As we continue, it is our ambition to be grounded in the radical grace of the gospel as it both embodies and transforms us, our city, and our world!

We have adopted the name of our geographical starting location – Goatville - and ran with it theologically in order to express the flesh of Christ that is being manifested among us. Goatville is the name acquired by a portion of what is today known as the East Rock neighborhood in the 1880s because of the number of goats who broke free from their fences (as goats tend to do) and wandered the neighborhood. We've come to love the name, not only for its quirky sound, but for the imagery it evokes, the rural within the urban, the outsider brought within. In fact, the building we're meeting in now (the home of the 135 site), which for a while bore the nickname "the gate house," did so because it stood at the intersection of rural and urban New Haven. The Goatville service is seeking to bring those who feel outside of the church community into her midst in a way that expresses who they are.

See <http://cpcgoatville.tumblr.com> for a small taste of what we have been up to.

A Shameless Pitch for Mission Anabaino

by Rev. Preston Graham

Out of the simplicity and purity of your devotion to Christ *applied*, would you be inspired to just "go for it" with us in our ambition to participate in planting "Total Christ" or "Five Mark" churches—in what we are inspired to call Mission *Anabaino*? *What IS Mission Anabaino in concrete terms? Mission Anabaino is Mission 10-10-10.*

That is:

TEN CHURCHES IN GREATER NEW HAVEN...

TEN CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD STARTING WITH HAITI...

ALL IN TEN YEARS!

In dollar amounts, we are asking God for **3.5 million dollars** wherein 100% of the amount raised will be dedicated to planting what we are calling "Total Christ" or "Five Mark" churches -- ten in Greater New Haven, ten throughout the world, in ten years! And this we hope is only the beginning! Before I briefly describe what we mean by a "Total Christ" or "Five Mark" church, I should perhaps first address some of the questions that Mission Anabaino generates:

1) Is this doable? Ok, and to be absolutely clear, we really are ambitious here for something that is impossible for us! To be sure, you could argue with respect to New England standards that our multi-site church of around 250 or so is *relatively* large. But if our congregation is viewed demographically and with dollar signs posted on our chests (I know, quite a crass way to speak of the bride of Christ!), even if we were to include the network of CPC grads that are now all over the world, a campaign for 3.5 million ASAP is all but impossible! But then again, what is impossible with man is not impossible with God. And this is our hope of faith. (Not to be confused with hope of presumption -- we will do nothing save what God first provides for us to do.)

And so yes, we DO believe that 10-10-10 is doable and perhaps even then some because we really do believe in Mission *Anabaino*, NOT merely as a good strategic plan in practical terms, but as God's divine plan based on HIS theological vision of Christology applied to mission (see front page article, "Why Mission *Anabaino*?"). And whereas we embark on a walk by faith rather than a walk by sight (humanly speaking), we can offer this "sight" based case in point from our own history that illustrates God's bountiful provision thus far.

Consider this: The amount of money we are seeking is almost exactly the same amount that God just raised up for us in LESS than TEN years above and beyond even our operating cost in order to retire our full mortgage debt for our center city presence @ 135 Whitney Avenue in New Haven. But more to the point, this money was raised while heavily committed to church planting and missions from the very beginning. In other words, God raised up the 3.5 million to pay down our mortgage while from the earliest years of ministry in New Haven we vowed to make church planting a vital strand of our spiritual DNA. We were always about being more than a church plant, but a church planting movement. For instance early on we committed ourselves to planting daughter churches as early and as frequently as we could including a fulfilled commitment to plant our first daughter church before we initiated a building campaign. Up till now, we have been able to plant two daughter churches and also be involved in many more through participation in a church planting movement in New England (cf. article by church planter Mel Sensenig on page 6), we were also able to launch a multi-site church in New Haven of currently three congregations (cf. "CPC 135," p. 4; "CPC Goatville," p. 15; and "CPC In The Hill", p.7) and launch and sustain a university ministry at Yale (cf. University Ministry on page 9). And again, this was the context wherein God raised upon an additional 3.5 million to pay in full for a project that has us now strategically located in center city New Haven adjacent to Yale University from where we can launch Mission *Anabaino* as God provides!

2) How do you define a potential "site" for church planting? A potential site is any site that we feel is without reasonable access to what we describe as a "Total Christ" or "Five Mark" church as carefully designed upon the apostolic foundation with Christ as the cornerstone. A site then could be defined either geographically or culturally. Though we will always seek to be as multi-cultural as possible in any given location, we have also seen that there is a limit to how "blended" of a culture one site can become such that to not plant additional churches is to either unintentionally "oppress" a given culture and/or not be capable of reaching certain people groups that need Total Christ! Moreover, with a high view of the incarnational nature of Christ's ascension "flesh" as mediated in/with/through the local body of Christ, we hold to a high view of "local" as then applied to how we theologically define the body of Christ.

3) Why "ten" more churches in greater New Haven? Up to the present, we have been either directly or indirectly involved in planting churches in places where a church planting movement was needed to begin outside of our existing New Haven context. But we have yet to see anything close to a more "saturated" presence of Total Christ in any region of New England. By saturated, we mean where at least most of the people groups defined either geographically or culturally have reasonable access to a Total Christ church. We are eager to present a vision for a multi-site church that is self-conscious in distinguishing the eternal-divine "Word" aspects of Christ as Head over the church from the temporal-human "flesh" aspects of Christ as the body of Christ.

4) Where will you plant the ten churches "throughout the world?" "Throughout the world" will be strategic sites that could be located in other states or countries that do not have access to a Total Christ church. These sites could be places where CPC alumni live, perhaps a college town given our expertise, or destitute places in need of churches. As of now, we have, for several years, been involved in a church planting network in Mirebalais, Haiti and are working with a site pastor there toward the planting of churches in various regions that are presently inaccessible to his ministry. Our relationship with the church movement in Mirebalais has included medical missions and seminary education for indigenous pastors/church planters that God is raising up there. Our first sight is targeting one of the pastors/church planters that is participating in this seminary.

5) How will you allocate the money given? The plan for Haiti is rather simple. It takes an estimated 100k to build a church in Haiti. Churches in Haiti are such as to serve as schools, medical clinics etc. Along with the Haitian seminarians eager to pastor churches, it can be said that if you build it, they come! Our present goal is to target 100k per church plant in Haiti and other places like it. In terms of New Haven, the focus is more in the support of church planters. We are presently committing to approximately 100k per church plant to be allocated over a 3 year period. Given the many opportunities in New Haven relative to sites still within reasonable access to a Total Christ church, we will target the right men less the specific site. The church planter's first year will be served as a planting intern including a survey of potential sites that fit the planter and then Bible studies within that community leading to core group development. The next two years will be focused on initiating worship and growth. The plan is to build up to three sites in three years and continue those sites until all ten sites are planted. Funds, as needed, will also be allocated toward the organization that will be required for materials development, recruitment, training, site development, etc.

6) You keep talking about "Total Christ" or the "Five Mark" Church. Could you briefly describe what you mean by this? First, we are in the process of developing publishable materials that will hopefully provide a more complete depiction of the Total Christ church and Christian spirituality. We are also hoping to develop materials that can be used for training and can be readily adapted to various church planting contexts. But with that said and briefly, the basic idea of Total Christ is as follows:

"Total Christ" is derived from a concept once popularized by Augustine in the 5th century. In reference to John 1:14, Augustine once penned:

The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us; to that flesh is joined the church, and there is made the total Christ, head and body (St. Augustine, On the Epistle of John).

The basic idea is this: As in Ephesians 1:22-23 we believe the fullness of Christ is never experienced apart from participation in Christ as both head and body, as both divine Word and Human Flesh, as the guarantor of an eternal covenant being mediated in/with/through the temple Church. In an era where it seems Christianity is in a constant reactionary pendulum swing from either high gospel or high church, we seek to be both (by high church we mean not high liturgy vs. low liturgy, but the idea that the church as designed by Christ upon the apostolic foundation is ordinarily an essential element of the gospel). We believe there was never a time in all of redemptive history when our salvation was not BOTH a result of Covenant (divine Word) and Temple (become Flesh). These two trajectories are both consummated in Christ and are now being expressed through both "high gospel" and "high church" respectively. Moreover, as our Covenant Head being mediated in/with/through the temple church, we want not part of Christ but total Christ, Christ then as Prophet, Priest and King. Again, there are movements that react against a strong "teaching" focused ministry (Prophet) by becoming more contemplative (Priest) or communal (King), and vice versa. We seek for a more balanced spirituality and emphasis in our churches and Christian lives. With this then as the backdrop, the following are the essential Five Marks for a healthy Christian life and church:

- 1) *A Gospel (Grace) Centered Church* (cf. Eph 2:1-10): The Church designed by Christ will be a place that is safe to be morally flawed and where people are being set free from the fear of condemnation or rejection both from God and one another because of the transformative grace of the gospel. More than a ticket into heaven or the "abc's" of the Christian life, the gospel of God's grace in Christ is the "A to Z's" of the Christian life as to inform every relationship and even the culture of a gospel centered church.
- 2) *A Missional Church* (cf. John 20:21, Mt 28, Rom 1:16-7, 15:20ff, etc.): The church designed by Christ will see itself as existing most ultimately for the sake of God's glory in Christ for every culture and place. As Ezekiel says close to 64 times in his prophecy, *it is not (ultimately) for your sake that I will act,*

declares the Lord GOD... but for the sake of my Holy name! (Ezek. 32:22). The missional church and life is intentional about making the gospel of grace in Christ accessible to more and more people as per the great commission (Mt. 28:16ff). But more even than this, the church, just *being* “total Christ,” is missional by her very nature! The church BEING the church in a way that is accessible to the socio-cultural “fleshes” of the world IS evangelistic. Conversion involves more than a “sinners prayer” but entrance through baptism into Christ’s “fullness that fills all in all” via the church (Eph 1:23).

- 3) *The Faith Confessing Church and Life:* (1 Tim. 3:15, Col. 3:16, Acts 20:27, Acts 17:2) The Church designed by Christ transcends political, socio-cultural or economic worldviews and statuses because its identity is fundamentally a shared confession of faith together. “Dogma” as such ‘IS the drama’² even as this translates into a hunger to know and study God’s word in the process of forming a living faith. Expository preaching and theological study are all done communally with the church of every place and age (less individualistically) such as to experience Christ as our *Prophet!*
- 4) *The Sacramental Church and Life:* (Heb. 12:22ff, 1 Cor. 11) The Church on earth designed by Christ will see itself as joining with the church of heaven into a festal gathering of Christ’s presence for the ultimate glory of God among the nations. Worship, as such, is more than something we do. It is something God is doing in/with/through Christ’s sacramental advent by the Holy Spirit that unites to our flesh as the temple-church of God. Baptism once as to enter a person into Christ’s presence (a converting sacrament) and the Lord’s Supper weekly as to renew and persevere a person in Christ’s presence (a renewal rite) define the very culture of the sacramental church such that we don’t just “go” to church on Sunday, but we join with and participate together in church with Christ as our Great and High *Priest!*
- 5) *The Shepherding Church and Life:* (1 Peter 5; Heb 13:7, 13; 1 Tim 3) The Church designed by Christ will take grace-centered shepherding seriously as to be carefully regulated in a way that expresses the doctrines of grace and is regulated by the apostolic foundation (design) itself. Shepherd elders and pastors are themselves under the authority of the church and as such are not self-appointed, but carefully tested and approved by the consensus of the church with respect to being in succession to the apostles’ way of life and teaching. (Acts 8:17, 1 Tim 5:22, 2 Tim.1:6). In this way, we participate in the “binding and loosing” ministry of Christ as *King*.

If you would like to participate in reaching that 3.5 million dollar goal, please send a check made out to Christ Presbyterian Church (or just CPC) with “Mission Anabaino” in the memo line or donate online by visiting our website, www.cpcnewhaven.org, following the “Online Donation” link in the upper left, and choosing “Mission Anabaino” in the Donation Applied dropdown box. All donations are tax exempt.

6)

² Sayers, Dorothy. *Creed or Chaos?* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1939)