

Works of Grace

GRACE COVENANT INTERNATIONAL

June 2025



Team Touches!



Fran O'Brien-White Buffalo Ministries led this little girl to Jesus at the Impact Center Church in Lawton, Oklahoma. The mission team consisted of: Josh Goolsby, Pastor Chrissie Collins, Micah Smith, Dede Smith, Ashley Gutierrez and Lynette Brown all from Lake Wales, Florida as well as Myka Schober-Liberty, MO and Janiece Clark, Rita Houston and Fran from St. Joseph, MO.

There is a Proverb that says: ***“We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.” (PR 16:9-NLT)***

It is certainly relative to life and we have found it to be true for our mission teams. You pray, prepare and make your plans in advance, then when you get on site the Holy Spirit calls an audible. More than once, I (Dallas Elder) have been on a mission to another nation or people group and attended their church service. Then I was asked to preach. Hadn't planned on that! The old saying is true: “You need to be ready to pray, preach or die at a moment's notice.” God flipped the script a bit for our Mission Team to the First Nations Peoples in Oklahoma to minister to the children through Vacation Bible School. Fran received an invitation from the pastor of a Comanche Church in Lawton, Oklahoma. They adjusted their schedule to attend

their Wednesday night service. Pastor Chrissie Collins led worship. Fran and rest of the team led out in prayer. The Presence of the Lord filled the house. It was a beautiful and precious time that brought healing and Kingdom connection. The Pastor said, “This is the first time that we’ve had non-native people join with us in our service for worship and prayer. We felt loved.” Yep, it wasn't part of the initial plan. The Lord prompted the pastor's heart. Fran and the team followed the Lord's leading. There was Kingdom impact through His touch through them. They also ministered through VBS events in churches in Anadarko and Lawton, Oklahoma. They demonstrated the Love of Jesus, engaged the children and led a number to faith in Christ. We are totally grateful for the service and sensitivity of this team. What a Mighty God we serve!

Hola! Team Mexico Served the Deaf.



Connie Elder brought supplies for a few crafts. There was the value of the fellowship and the shared project. There was also the value of learning new skills that can be useful in life. The deaf are often ignored and considered not worthy of engagement and investment in training. Christa and Connie shared in the women's Bible Study. Big Thanks to Kayla!

Missionary Kayla Lawmaster and her Team Leaders Mike and Sherri Sexton, hosted our GCI Mission Team of Connie Elder (Platte City, MO), Pastor Buddy Collins and Christa Goolsby of The Bridge Church-Lake Wales, FL. The team went to Ensenada, Mexico to serve the deaf community there.

"In May, Christa, Connie, and I had the privilege of serving with GCI Missions in Ensenada, Mexico. We ministered alongside an incredible team at the Deaf Church. Led by Pastor Carlos Suarez, supported by Danny Lopez (Leader of the Deaf Association-Ensenada) and missionaries Mike and Sherri Sexton, the deaf community welcomed us with open arms—and open hearts. Before going, I had often heard that the deaf are among the most overlooked and underserved communities. During this trip, that reality became strikingly clear. One powerful moment came during a conversation when someone reminded me, "You're not talking to them—you're talking to me." They were referring to how our attention so often shifts to the interpreter instead of the person signing. That simple correction stayed with me. It's not just about communication—it's about connection, dignity, and presence. Though the church services were quiet in sound, they were deeply powerful in Spirit. As worship and preaching flowed through the hands of interpreters, I was struck by the depth and clarity of the message. Pastor Carlos preached on Jesus' words from John 15. **We are called to bear much fruit—fruit that remains.** That Scripture came to life in front of my eyes. I saw it in Kayla, a young woman serving faithfully in the ministry, whose investment is not only producing fruit—but fruit that endures. Throughout the week, we had opportunities to share in life and fellowship with the deaf community. We spent time together, visited homes, and were simply present with those who couldn't leave their homes. Every moment was a reminder that God is at work in places that are often unheard—yet never unseen by Him. This trip left a lasting impact on me. I've come away with a greater awareness of how Jesus values every voice—spoken or signed—and how His Church is richer when every member is embraced and empowered." ~Pastor Buddy Collins

Team Mangus Touched Trinity!



GCI Missionaries to Ghana, Rob and Lori Mangus ministered at Trinity Church-St. Joseph, MO on Pentecost Sunday. Rob preached it up! There were powerful times of prayer and ministry following his message. Rob and Lori just landed back in Ghana in mid-June after some months of furlough in the US. Apostle Pam Brown is Lead-Pastor at Trinity. She serves on both of our GCI leadership boards.



Value Unconditional Upgrade!



We were delighted to celebrate with Value Unconditional as they held the ribbon cutting on their new leased space on May 22. It is strategically located near the North KC Patrol, the FBI and near their equine therapy. Their team is growing. From left to right: Leranda Brewer, Sofia Williams, Sara Moser, VU Director Geony Rucker, Apostle Pam Brown, Samantha Drake and Ashley Berry. VU serves trafficked and traumatized individuals in the Kansas City area. Cool fact: Martin T. Rucker, Geony's husband, is the new Chair of the Northland Chamber of Commerce. He recognized Geony and VU on this special day. Isn't God good!



RETURNING TO NEPAL

Antonio and Graciela Chavez have been missionaries in Nepal for 25 years (12 with GCI). After a few months back in Paraguay with family, in June they return to their mission work in Nepal (less than 5% Christian). They've planted two churches. They also serve special needs children and families demonstrating God's Love in practical ways pointing to Jesus, Pray for them!

"What's Your 40?"

By Dallas Elder

We use some numbers as life references, don't we. "Watch your six!" We are aimed at 12 o'clock. Six is to our back. Hence the military brother expression: "I've got your six." In other words, I've got your back. Then there is: "What's your 20?" It is an expression in police and CB (trucker) radio code which means, "What's your location?" I'm going to add one. "What's your 40?" And no, I'm not referring to the line in the old country trucker song by the Willis Brothers: "Give me forty acres and I'll turn this rig around." What's your 40?

It is a legitimate spiritual question. The Scripture places a significant emphasis on 40. Did you know that the number 40 is used over a 150 times in the Bible. It is full of 40s. Jerry Lee Lewis sang, "There's a whole lotta shakin' goin' on." In the Scripture, there're a whole lotta 40s goin' on. What is the significance of so many 40s? What are the 40s that come to your mind? Here is a brief survey of some Scripture instances.

It rained for 40 days and 40 nights as the world was flooded by God's judgement. Noah and his family were saved through the ark.

On two separate occasions, Moses fasted and sought the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights. He received the Covenant of the Law. He also sent spies to investigate the promised land for 40 days. Interestingly about Moses, for 40 years he was in Pharaoh's household. Then for 40 years he was a shepherd. Then God called him to deliver Israel out of Egypt. He led them for 40 years through the wilderness to the border in view of the Promise Land. Joshua led the new generation to take possession of the land. Moses died at 120.

The first three kings of the children of Israel, Saul, David and Solomon, each ruled for 40 years.

The Prophet Elijah went without food or water for 40 days as he sought the Lord just prior to passing his mantle Elisha.

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GCI Midyear Conference August 11-12

at LifePoint Church-Oakdale, CA
Make your plans now to attend!

IGNITE Ministry Conference September 24-27 Kansas City, MO

Spiritual encouragement and ministry equipping workshops to enable you to serve well.

Make your plans to attend!



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The Prophet Jonah powerfully warned Nineveh that its destruction would come because of its many sins, in 40 days. The King and all of Nineveh repented and God relented of the judgement.

The number 40 is used in days and years in the Bible. They are like chapters of life; some shorter, some longer. There are some conclusions that we can draw about their significance. It is a defined period of time God uses for His purpose. It can be a time of trial, testing and judgement. It can be waiting or wandering. It can be a time of preparation, purification and positioning. It's a measured stretch of road on your spiritual journey that brings you to a new location. It's a chapter of life where we gain insights into God and ourselves. We let go and we let God. It's a season of days or years that leads the faithful to their next phase of life and Kingdom assignment. The completion of the "40 season" sets the stage for transition into a new season and stretch of road on your Kingdom journey. What's your 40?

Jesus had His 40s. ***"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."*** (MT 4:1-2) The devil tempted Jesus, but Jesus thwarted his schemes. Jesus, the second Adam, did what the first Adam didn't when tempted in the Garden of Eden. Jesus refused the enemy's advances and tricks. He stayed committed and obedient to God's commands. He defended Himself with the Word of God. ***"Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."*** (MT 4:11) It was 40 days which included trials, testing, preparation, purification (remaining pure) and positioning to transition into His new Kingdom assignment. ***"Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside."*** (LK 4:14) The completion of the 40 days, transitioned Jesus from being a carpenter into His Kingdom calling and Divine Destiny. Jesus launched into His Kingdom ministry.

Then, there was this other 40 days for Jesus. ***"In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive."***

He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:1-11)

On one hand, you could say that this was Jesus' 40 days to transition to the Ascension and take His place at the right hand of the Father. However, when you take a good look, it was the Apostles' 40 days. It was their test of faith. It was unbelievable to them that there could be His tragic and traumatic death, then His resurrection back to life. Even though He instructed them beforehand, they still couldn't believe it. "Touch me with your hands. Give me something to eat. This is Me in the flesh! Stop disbelieving. You must believe." Each of them had to deal with their own denial and disowning of Jesus. They all ran away. In these 40 days, Jesus helped them to process the trauma, their abandonment and faith failure. He restores each of them. Through the days, He emphasized the absolute importance of being convinced of His Resurrection. It is the verifiable truth that He is the Savior and Son of God. He instructed them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was the disciples' 40 days with the Risen Christ. It was a test of faith. It was a time of preparation, purification and positioning. It led to their "transition" to receive the Holy Spirit and to launch as leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ.