

GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING DAY

(by Bekele Shanko)

WHY GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING DAY?

The New Testament church was born in the second chapter of the book of Acts, a day that can be considered as the birthday of the global church. It was a special day and a part of God's eternal plan. The disciples of Jesus who received the power of the Holy Spirit, as well as the God-fearing Jews who had come to Jerusalem from all over the world to celebrate the day of Pentecost, had witnessed the birth of the church on that day. However, two significant things had happened prior to the church's birthday, during the 50 days between the Resurrection and Pentecost.

First, during the period of 40 days between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus presented himself to his disciples with many convincing proofs that he was alive. That means the death and resurrection of Jesus and repentance for the forgiveness of sins was proclaimed with clarity and conviction. Jesus also preached about the kingdom of God, turning the attention of his disciples to what was more important, unifying and eternal. Second, during the ten days after Jesus' ascension, the disciples prayed in unity and anticipation for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit.

As part of our commitment to celebrate the birth, the life and the ministry of the church on earth, what if the body of Christ were to intentionally use a day like the one in Acts 2 as a Global Day of Church Planting? This doesn't mean that we should only plant churches on that day. But if we were to set aside a day in which the body of Christ could prioritize and strategically think about church planting, it would give us a sense of unified vision, purpose and priority, as well as opportunities to collaborate with one another.

Therefore, the Global Church Planting Day is a vision to celebrate the birth of the Bride of Jesus by inspiring and equipping churches to start churches and groups in places and among peoples who do not have one. The 50 days between Resurrection and Pentecost could be used in the same way Jesus used to birth his church – 40 days of focusing on God's kingdom, preaching the Good News and training church planters, followed by 10 days of concerted global prayer. Then on the Global Church Planting Day, each church plants at least one church.

Circumstances may hinder some churches from starting new churches or missional communities on that day or week, but we pray and hope that many churches could. You can imagine how many churches could be planted around the world even if 10 percent of local churches were able to implement this vision. Moreover, to ensure growth, sustainability and multiplication of the newly started churches and groups, continuous evangelism, discipleship and coaching of church planters would need to continue beyond that special day.

WHEN IS THE NEXT GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING DAY?

The Global Church Planting Day of 2022 is on May 29, 2022. We know that the day of Pentecost for this year falls on June 5, 2022, and this day is variable from year to year. With strategic input from the World Evangelical Alliance, a decision was made to make the last Sunday of May each year a Global Church Planting Day.

This also perfectly coincides with the vision and activities of the GO Movement and the GO Decade to mobilize believers globally to share the Good News with people around us. In a sense, the Global Church Planting Day will be a culmination of all the evangelistic activities done in the month of May, and it will enable us to integrate evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

HOW DO WE LEVERAGE EXISTING PLATFORMS AND EVENTS?

As we pray, plan, and prepare to implement the vision of the Global Church Planting Day, we must recognize the many significant existing factors that can help accelerate the work we are going to do. These factors include:

- » The examples of unity, prayer, and expectation the disciples modeled for us in Acts 1: 12-26.
- » The importance of focusing on the kingdom of God, the teaching and the training that Jesus demonstrated during the 40 days after his resurrection (Acts 1: 1-3).
- » The growing unity and spirit of collaboration already taking place in the body of Christ.
- » Easter weekend, during which many congregations see increased church attendance that can be maximized toward starting new churches and groups.
- » The activities and results of the GO Movement and the body of Christ that mobilizes believers for evangelism during the month of May.
- » Global prayer movements that inspire, unite and connect millions of believers around the world to pray for world evangelization from Passover to Pentecost.

WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY STEPS WE NEED TO TAKE BETWEEN NOW AND THE GCPD?

Prior to April 10, 2022 – Every local church can develop plans to start at least one church. The plan may include identifying priority places and peoples in which new churches are needed; recruiting, training and supporting church planters, and mobilizing believers to pray and support the work of church planting.

April 10, 2022 –Launch the journey of 50 days and train church planters.

40 days after April 10 – Small groups and congregations study together a 40-day purpose-driven curriculum designed to unite our hearts and focus our attention.

Modeling and mobilizing prayer – Prayer Movement Networks, prayer groups and church congregations pray and mobilize prayer.

May 29, 2022 – Global Church Planting Day. This day can be used to celebrate the birth of the New Testament Church in Acts 2, to praise God for what he has done through the month of evangelism through the efforts of the GO Movement, and to launch new churches and groups.

Beyond May 29, 2022 – Church-planting-movement networks, local churches, and church denominations continue to train and coach church planters for sustainable church planting and multiplication.

WHO ARE IMPORTANT PARTNERS?

- The GO Movement
- World Evangelical Alliance
- Finishing The Task (FTT)
- GACX
- GCM
- JesusFilm
- Church denominations, mission agencies and local congregations

April 10, 2022: training of church planters begins

May 29, 2022: Next Global Church Planting Day