

# GC Strategic Plan

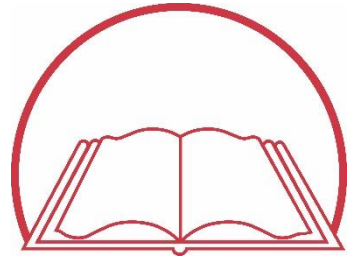
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2016-2020

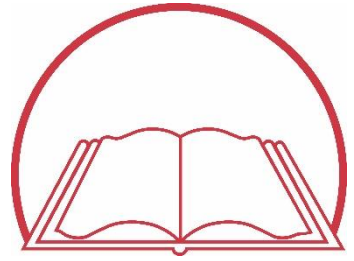
Prepared by: Brian Keith, Peter Buss Jr, Karen Stoeller, Charlotte Gyllenhaal, David Lindrooth, David Frazier, and Chuck Ebert, in consultation with the Clergy and Board of the General Church

# GC Mission

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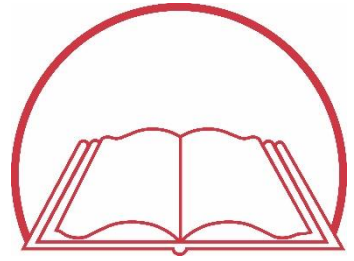
*To help people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming.*



# GC Values

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1. Turning to the **threefold-Word** as the source and foundation for all that we do.
2. Developing people's **faith in the Lord and trust in His providence**.
3. Applying principles from the Word to a **life of useful service**.
4. **Sharing the truths** the Lord has provided with the next generation and with all who are receptive.
5. **Supporting marriage** between a man and a woman, and honoring the unique and complementary nature of each sex.
6. **Embracing families** as an essential part of the Lord's plan of a heaven from the human race.
7. Helping people hear the call to a better way of living, through the process of **self-examination and repentance**.
8. Welcoming all who wish to explore these values to **participate in the life of the church**.



# Theme—Greater Engagement

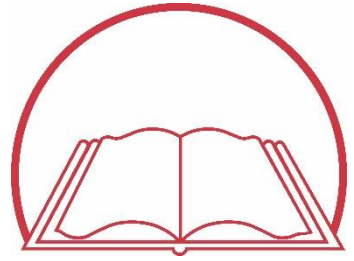
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The goal of any church planning is to see more people served, and serving. While we rejoice in the ways that the General Church is helping people around the world, and express gratitude for the many people who give of themselves to others by means of the church's activities, there is opportunity to invite even greater involvement.

This plan seeks to provide for greater engagement by:

- rallying around the uses of worship, education and outreach;
- communicating better;
- supporting employees more effectively;
- appropriately sharing planning expertise and resources with our church centers around the world;
- and understanding more deeply what could effectively address our organizational chafe-points.

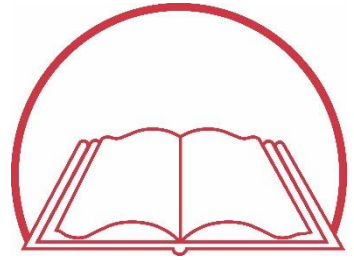
The goal is a more vibrant world-wide church that is effectively “helping people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming.”



# Major Strands

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1. **Education:** Educate and equip children and young people for regeneration and an eternal life of usefulness.
2. **Outreach:** Reach out with the truths of the New Church and welcome new people into the life of the church.
3. **Participation:** Provide avenues for greater participation in the life of the church.
4. **Communication:** Develop an overall communications plan to promote the purposes and values of the General Church and seek interactive counsel in bringing them to life.
5. **Professional Development:** Develop, engage, and retain highly qualified talent that has the capacity to advance the church's mission.
6. **International:** Support the development of the church internationally.



# Education strand—Current state

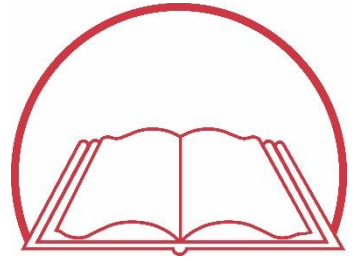
**Educate** and equip children and young people for regeneration and an eternal life of usefulness.

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## Summary:

- We have great capability honed over decades which matches parents' ongoing desire to raise their kids with the Lord and spiritual values in mind. Yet...
- some of our schools are struggling based on a combination of finances, competitive choices, and size of student body;
- it's hard to be present in ways we wish for all families across our increasingly international church;
- we perceive an awareness gap in terms of the resources that are available.

In addition, New Church education appears to be held differently today than in the past. It is also associated exclusively with schools for many people, making it feel less applicable to people in non-school congregations.



# Education strand—Strategies

**Educate** and equip children and young people for regeneration and an eternal life of usefulness.

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## Strategy #1:

- Renew commitment to the use of New Church education by communicating relevance, and gathering people together to focus on it.

## Strategy #2:

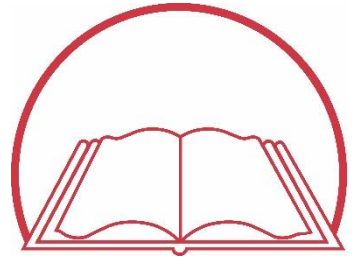
- Update and develop New Church educational materials, and make them more readily available.

## Professional Development:

- It is also vital that we invest in those who deliver New Church education (see Professional Development Strand)

GC Values that will drive our strategies:

- Sharing the truths the Lord has provided with the next generation.
- Embracing families as an essential part of the Lord's plan of a heaven from the human race.
- Turning to the Word as the source and foundation for all that we do.



# Education strand—FY17 tactics

**Educate** and equip children and young people for regeneration and an eternal life of usefulness.

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**Who?** GC Ed team, led by Peter Buss Jr.

## Strategy #1

- Lay groundwork for significant gathering of NC Educational Leaders in summer or fall of 2017
- Plan and execute two smaller gatherings—one for School administrators, and one for Sunday School leaders

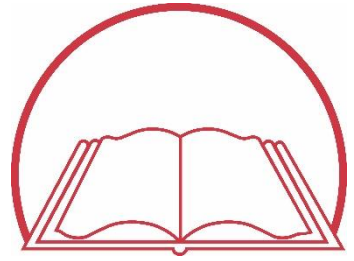
## Strategy #2

- Finish GC Ed website project

## Professional Development

- Partner with BAC Ed Department regarding teacher training.
- Develop New Church teacher credentials
- Provide training on New Church education for one or two head teachers in schools outside of N. America





# Education strand—Five years out

**Educate** and equip children and young people for regeneration and an eternal life of usefulness.

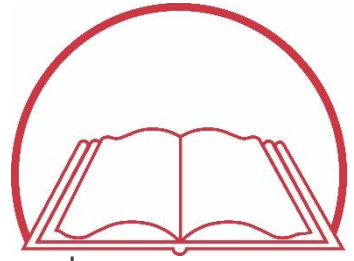
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If we are successful in focusing energy and resources on our educational strategies, within five years:

- More children and parents will be involved in our Sunday schools and will access religious education materials online.
- Our General Church schools will have stabilized, and in some cases, will have discovered new ways of serving.
- Professional teacher, as well as family or parent, gatherings will be happening on a regular basis, generating current research and presentations on the use of New Church education.
- Parents actively engaged in raising their children will not only choose greater association with the Church, but will invite friends to consider GC offerings for their own families.

Recommended measures:

- Utilization rate of online resources
- Number of gatherings and research generated
- Resources and curriculum provided for Sunday schools and GC schools



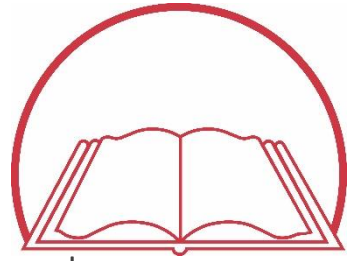
# Outreach strand—Current state

**Reach out** with the truths of the New Church and welcome new people into the life of the church.

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## Summary:

- During the past two church generations, we have collectively realized that it is our delight and duty to share the truths of the Second Coming beyond our own families, and have learned a lot over that time. That energy is a great asset, but there are some barriers.
- Lack of growth in many segments of the church leads to concerns about organizational health and disagreements in terms of appropriate strategic response.
- It has been historically difficult to draw new people into membership of the General Church in the culture of North America and Western Europe though there are significant signs of interest in the theology that grounds our organization.



# Outreach strand—Strategies

**Reach out** with the truths of the New Church and welcome new people into the life of the church.

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## Strategy #3

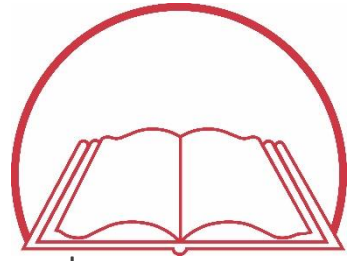
- Build traffic to newchurch.org to 800,000 unique visitors per year and improve methods of cultivating contacts to become active participants in the General Church.

## Strategy #4

- Assist congregations in developing a Small Group Growth model, and establish Journey Video as a self-sustaining video content delivery system for small groups.

GC Values that will drive our strategies:

- Sharing the truths the Lord has provided with all who are receptive.
- Developing people's faith in the Lord and trust in His providence.
- Helping people hear the call to a better way of living, through the process of self-examination and repentance.



# Outreach strand—FY17 tactics

**Reach out** with the truths of the New Church and welcome new people into the life of the church.

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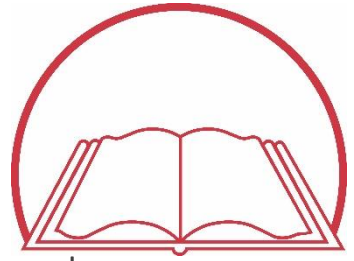
**Who?** GC Outreach team led by David Lindrooth

## Strategy #3

- Fundraise for web advertising and execute
- Develop content-driven “buzz” — choosing notable issues that are likely to be shared

## Strategy #4

- Support small groups in congregations and via Journey content and support resources



# Outreach strand—Five years out

**Reach out** with the truths of the New Church and welcome new people into the life of the church.

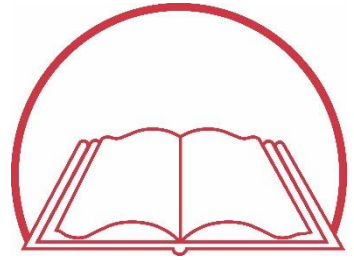
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If we are successful in focusing energy and resources on our outreach strategies, within five years:

- We will have 1,000,000 hits per year on newchurch.org and affiliated sites.
- We will have a 3-fold increase in meaningful contacts from the newchurch.org
- Based on responses to newchurch.org, we will have 40 or more small groups (via Sunroom Groups) that are not affiliated with particular General Church congregations.

Suggested measures:

- Unique visitors to newchurch.org
- Meaningful contacts from newchurch.org
- Number of small groups generated
- Number of materials and publications generated



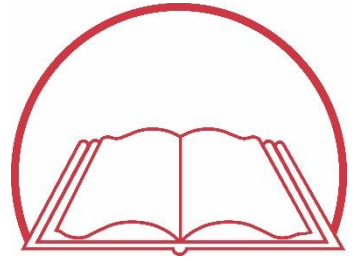
# Participation strand—Current state

Provide avenues for greater **involvement and participation** in the life of the church.

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## Summary:

- The General Church is a beloved organization that is struggling to keep the Lord relevant in the active lives of its people, specifically among young adults. There is a strong message of “useful service” causing many to give of their time and expertise to the church. Yet some who could engage are choosing to hold back for a variety of reasons. Some wish to see change and others are urging the church to stay the course. Differences in doctrinal interpretation can result in divisive conversations, most notably those concerning the roles of women. At times, this presents challenges to utilizing the service of dedicated lay people in church uses. Our doctrinal understanding and research capability could lead to greater responsibility across the church for increased participation in service to the Lord.



# Participation strand—Strategies

Provide avenues for greater **involvement and participation** in the life of the church.

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## Strategy #5:

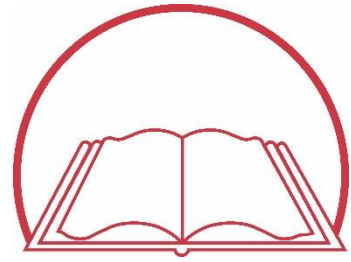
- Promote involvement of women through a task force charged with exploring respect for and utilization of feminine wisdom in church activities. After doctrinal and current-state exploration, develop a report on appropriate methods of enhancing the roles feminine wisdom and expertise may play in the Church.

## Strategy #6:

- Engage youth by starting a youth task force to counsel with members of the church on service to and by young people, including receiving input on plans for youth membership. Pilot-test at least one youth engagement program as a result.

GC Values that will drive our strategies:

- Welcoming all who wish to explore GC values to participate in the life of the church.
- Applying principles from the Word to a life of useful service.
- Sharing the truths the Lord has provided with the next generation and with all who are receptive.



# Participation strand—FY17 tactics

Provide avenues for greater **involvement and participation** in the life of the church.

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**Who?** Two task forces led by Bishops: Brian Keith—Youth Task Force; Peter Buss Jr—Women’s Participation Task Force

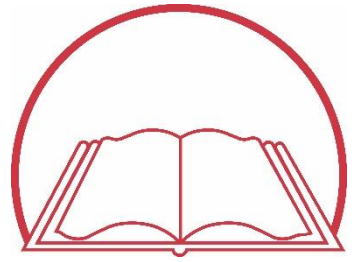
## **Strategy #5:** Women’s Participation Task Force

- Form a task force of 8-10 people, headed by the Episcopal office and including a diversity of background and outlook.
- Conduct research in Writings and recent papers, plus via surveys.
- After 1 year, the committee will produce a document with recommendations.

## **Strategy #6:** Youth Task Force

- Form a task force of 10-15 people under supervision of the Episcopal office, with at least 50% under age 40.
- Catalog activities already taking place
- Develop introductory membership
- Pilot young people’s programs for congregations





# Participation strand—Five years out

Provide avenues for greater **involvement and participation** in the life of the church.

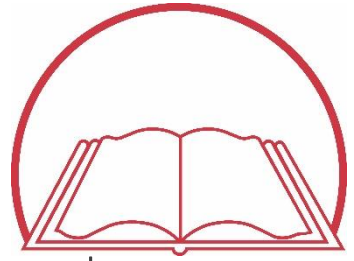
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If we are successful in focusing energy and resources on our participation strategies...

- Within one year the women's task force will complete its initial report, containing recommendations for specific activities that can enhance the roles of feminine wisdom in the Church, along with suggested measures to determine whether such activities are implemented. A follow-up report will be submitted after an additional year to assess the uptake and impact of these recommendations. Continued focus on recommendations will lead to a growing sense of confidence that the Church is an organization that overtly seeks to honor the unique and complimentary nature of each sex, as stated in its core values.
- After one year, the youth task force will submit an evaluation document on current and planned youth engagement activities, along with suggestions for new directions. A pathway to youth membership will be envisioned and becoming reality. A pilot test of a youth engagement program will be completed by a selected congregation. Given a successful pilot test, at least two other congregations will be supported in implementing the program. As a result of all these efforts, a greater number of young people will choose active involvement in the church.

Suggested measures:

- With both task forces, steps taken within timeframes recommended (e.g. survey completed, number of meetings, reports completed).



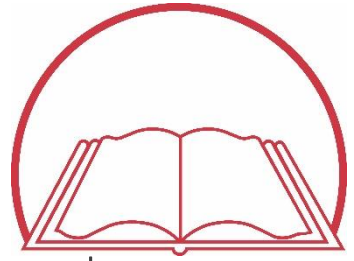
# Communication strand—Current state

Develop a **communications plan** to promote the purposes and values of the GC and invite counsel

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## Summary:

- Most participants within the General Church report affinity with the powerful truths of the Heavenly Doctrines. Yet the organization continues to struggle in terms of effectively communicating a collective vision based on shared values and sense of purpose, as well as the good things happening around the church. In addition, there is a propensity toward arguments, criticism and polarization. There is a perception by some that the General Church is needlessly out of step with culture and the organization overall is losing its way, while others strongly call for “keeping the faith” in the face of cultural demise. Social media can exacerbate negative PR and argumentation. Budget cuts in the last few years have resulted in minimal resources directed specifically to organizational communications.



# Communication strand—Strategies

Develop a **communications plan** to promote the purposes and values of the GC and invite counsel

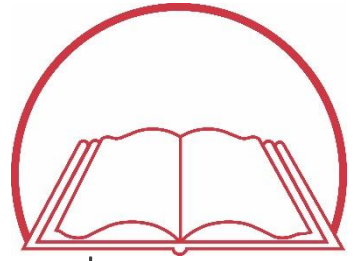
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## Strategy #7

- Create interactive forums between central administrative offices and the church as a whole, which provide greater information flow, opportunity for feedback, and appropriate inclusion in discourse on issues facing the church.

GC Values that will drive our strategies:

- Sharing the truths the Lord has provided with the next generation and with all who are receptive.
- Developing people's faith in the Lord and trust in His providence.
- Welcoming all who wish to explore GC values to participate in the life of the church.



# Communication strand—FY17 tactics

Develop a **communications plan** to promote the purposes and values of the GC and invite counsel

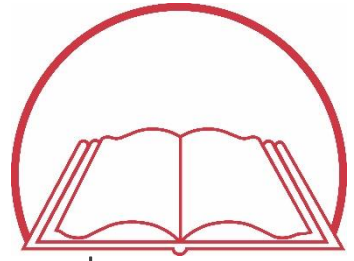
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**Who?** Brian Keith as lead; needs some staff, perhaps in Advancement

## Strategy #7

- Refine draft communications plan and hire staff to drive it. Initially, this would work in the Advancement office, but be responsible for church-wide non-solicitation communications.
- Provide for interactive counsel.

# Communication strand—Five years out



Develop a **communications plan** to promote the purposes and values of the GC and invite counsel

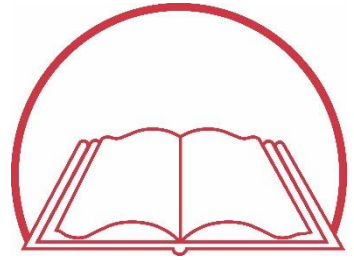
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If we are successful in focusing energy and resources on our communications strategies, within five years:

- More people will know what's happening within the church, and feel they have a voice in church affairs.
- New communication vehicles will exist, beyond New Church Life, aimed at different demographics with their platform preferences.
- A representative Bishop's Council will meet on a regular basis, providing two-way communication between the Bishop's office and the church.
- A Board-Clergy communications committee will continue to strengthen relationships between these two key bodies.

Suggested measures:

- Number of communication-oriented meetings held, messages sent, and response loops closed.



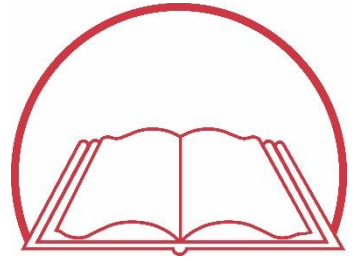
# PD strand—Current state

Develop, engage, and retain **highly qualified talent** that has the capacity to advance the church's mission.

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## Summary:

- Currently for many employees, learning and development is intermittent at best, after their hire date. While there are professional development mechanisms for employees in some parts of the organization, they are relatively uncoordinated—within the General Church itself, and also with the Academy. Significant portions of the employee base are left to their own devices if they seek to develop personally and/or professionally, which often does not happen. In addition, given our organizations' specialized skillsets across roles, there are few opportunities for employees to move promotionally or laterally within the organization. As a result of the current approach to learning and development and performance management, (or lack thereof), many employees report the feeling of “soldiering on” without excitement about their future options and overall employee morale is not optimal.
- While certain areas of the organization conduct formal performance reviews and performance evaluations, many do not. As a result, it is difficult to gauge organizational performance and identify areas for development. It is also true that there are people who take it upon themselves to continually improve, and there are intermittent seminars offered to some employees. Nevertheless, the overall investment in employee training remains low, and it is clear that much more could be done. Part of this initiative would be to standardize performance reviews and establish centralized mechanisms for delivering training and other development resources that significantly increase the opportunities for employees to become better at what they do.



# PD strand—Strategies

Develop, engage, and retain **highly qualified talent** that has the capacity to advance the church's mission.

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## Strategy #8

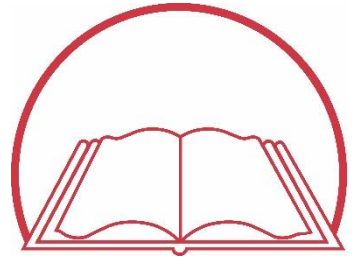
- Establish an employee learning center (GC Employee University) to provide learning opportunities, build and improve employee capabilities, improve organizational performance, and provide career development and growth opportunities for all employees.

## Strategy #9

- Refresh and maintain a total compensation program that is equitable and consistent. Conduct research and study that provides information on required job competencies that can be used to evaluate and reward performance and provide a basis for determining and assessing required training needs.

GC Values that will drive our strategies:

- Applying principles from the Word to a life of useful service.
- Welcoming all who wish to explore GC values to participate in the life of the church.
- Developing people's faith in the Lord and trust in His providence.



# PD strand—FY17 tactics

Develop, engage, and retain **highly qualified talent** that has the capacity to advance the church's mission.

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**Who?** Karen Stoeller as lead, working with Bishop's office, GC Ed, and GC Outreach

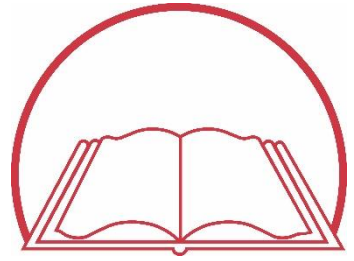
## Strategy #8

- Prepare fundraising requests; move forward to implement based on funding successes
- Acquire Learning Management System
- Analyze and scope whether to 'build or buy' programs
- Revamp Development Review system
- Coordinate what is already happening throughout the system

## Strategy #9

- Develop compensation study objectives and verify with leadership
- Determine funding strategy and sources
- Execute





# PD strand—Five years out

Develop, engage, and retain **highly qualified talent** that has the capacity to advance the church's mission.

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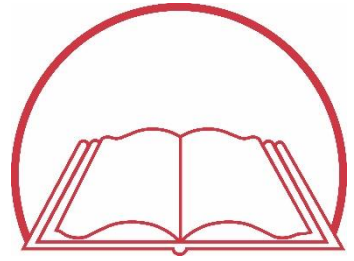
If we are successful in focusing energy and resources on our PD strategies, within five years we will:

- Conduct a comprehensive compensation study that identifies required job competencies, proposes appropriate job structures and pay strategies for all organizational jobs/positions.
- Finalize a concept paper for establishing the learning center.
- Market the learning center concept to key stakeholders in the organization to solicit ideas and garner support.
- Determine the level of funding needed to determine financial support available from the GC organizations. Create a funding plan and make request for matching funds from family foundations and other donors.
- Provide employee assessment opportunities to identify individual needs and inform learning program design.
- Identify and 'pilot' core programs; assess changes needed and continue to build out learning offerings.
- Establish a dashboard of measurements, evaluate the success of the programs and provide quarterly reports to leadership and the GC Board.

As a result, we will see a more engaged workforce that feels inspired to give of their talents and energy to the important work of the church. A greater number of people will be served more effectively.

Suggested measures:

- Number of employees engaged in PD programs
- Evaluation of compensation against agreed-upon comparators; recommendations for compensation adjustments.



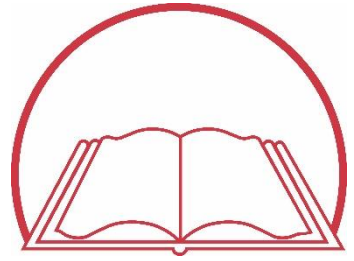
# International Church—Current state

Support the development of the church **internationally**.

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## Summary:

- The General Church has long been an organization that attracts international interest. People from around the world who come in contact with the Heavenly Doctrines wish to be a part of this organization because of what it stands for.
- There is a baseline of organizational support for the development of the church internationally. This consists of central office visits, ministerial training, grants for translation and land purchase, operational grants for schools, and some stipend support for pastors. In many areas, receptivity to the message of the New Church appears high, while investment in infrastructure and availability of local resources remains low—especially within the last decade of lower GC endowment levels. In addition, technology and connectivity issues persist in some areas, hampering the ease of communication.
- The other five strands within this plan have applications across the church. Educational resources, for example, are increasingly produced with international audiences in mind, professional development of employees applies worldwide, and small group models work in many cultures. Yet there is great potential value in working with our international church leaders to coordinate training, draw effectively on available resources, and prioritize efforts that will lead to long-term sustainability.



# International Church—Strategies

Support the development of the church *internationally*.

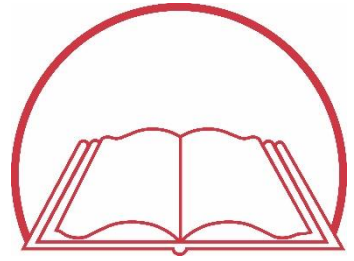
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## Strategy #10

- Support the development of the church internationally by sharing expertise, training, and resources in evidence in all other strands, and leading toward long-term sustainability.

GC Values that will drive our strategies:

- Developing people's faith in the Lord and trust in His providence.
- Sharing the truths the Lord has provided with the next generation and with all who are receptive.
- Welcoming all who wish to explore GC values to participate in the life of the church.



# International Church—FY17 tactics

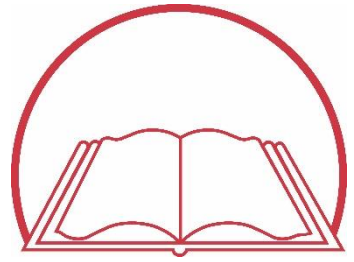
Support the development of the church *internationally*.

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**Who?** Dave Frazier as lead, working with Peter Buss Jr. and David Lindrooth

## Strategy #10

- “Bring-forward” of other strands
  - Education: Invest in head teacher training in NC education
  - Outreach: Pilot small group training and support with a couple of W. African congregations
  - Communications and PD: Offer English training as a means toward further integration of clergy. Continue Technology Fund investment to facilitate electronic communications
- International-specific tactics:
  - Coordinate with national leadership to zero in on one or two key strategies per country, and rally around funding/implementation
  - Provide translation support



# International Church—Five years out

Support the development of the church **internationally**.

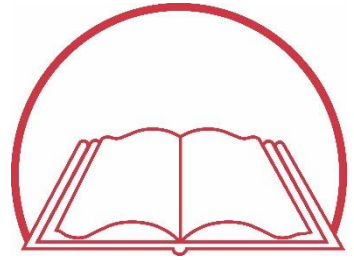
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If we are successful in focusing energy and resources on our international strategy, within five years:

- The General Church in Asia will have completed a regional center in Seoul which will serve as a “base-camp” for the growth of the church in that area. It will house training, worship, and translation activities.
- The General Church in several West African nations and Kenya will be showing steady growth in terms of established congregations. This will be the result of a limited number of key priorities that we agree to rally around, with the dual goal of serving more people and generating some local funding.
- The South African Corporation of the General Church will have transitioned to a sustainable financial model, theological students will have completed their studies and be serving existing and/or new congregations, lay participation will be even stronger than at present, and racial integration within the church will continue to build.
- Schools in existence will be strengthened in terms of their New Church credentials, and congregations will draw effectively on GC Ed Sunday school and curricular resources.
- Pastors serving outside of North America will consistently report on good things happening in their areas.

Suggested measures:

- Country-specific priorities set, and progress reported.
- Percentage of locally generated funds relative to overall operational costs.



# GC Vision—Summary

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In five years, the General Church will be a place where

- People feel increasingly invited to engage in the life of the church and contribute to its welfare.
- Parents experience a rich array of offerings for their children.
- New people are finding a home in the General Church, having been introduced to the New Church faith through [newchurch.org](http://newchurch.org), by personal invitation, or engagement with a small group.
- Members feel informed and that they have a voice in church affairs.
- An engaged workforce feels increasingly inspired to give of their talents and energy to the important work of the church.
- Church centers around the world are reporting stability and growth.
- There is a greater oneness of spiritual purpose.