

# MISSION ANABAINO

CHURCH PLANTING & THEOLOGICAL COLLABORATIVE MISSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



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**A**nabaino (ah-nah-by'-no) is the Greek word for "I am ascending" used in John 20:17: Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Mission Anabaino (MA) finds its key foundational theme - carried out through church planting and theological collaborative missional partnerships - in the promise of the ascended Christ, "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father" (John 14: 12).



*Preston Graham*

Led by Preston Graham, MA grew out of the ministry of Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) in New Haven CT. Preston came to New Haven in

1993 as the church planter for CPC and continues to lead the church as senior pastor. MA has provided key funding and leadership for the launch of 20 churches since the MA ministry began. Seven of these churches are in Connecticut and the thirteen others are in cities as distant as Zambia, Ethiopia, and Haiti; as well as closer to home: Spokane WA, South Bend IN, and Cleveland OH.



MA is anchored in Christ's ascension ministry and its impact on the nature of the church, as Preston explains, "When we think about the history of the major salvation events in the life of Jesus, we always incorporate the incarnation, the death, the resurrection, and then we almost immediately move to Jesus coming again. Often we forget the ascension, yet the ascension is the very era we live in, this is what we participate in now. It really does get to the crux of what MA is all about. We are a movement that is developing a philosophy of ministry and strategy based on ascension Christology."

Mission Anabaino's five marks of a Total Christ Church (from the Mission Anabaino brochure, *Introducing Mission Anabaino*):

- **Gospel Centered (A Covenantal Spirituality):** The gospel is at once the message and power of holistic salvation. Every MA church seeks to live a gospel centered spirituality that affects everything - how

we suffer, how we feel about ourselves, how we relate to others, everything.

- **Missional Presence (A Temple Spirituality):** Christ's ascended human body is distinct, but never separate from the body of Christ, the church on earth as it is being engrafted into Christ by the Holy Spirit. We believe the local, Christ-centered, and apostolically designed churches are the very epicenter of Christ's saving presence on earth.

- **Confessional (Christ Our Prophet):** We aspire to hear God's voice in a robust appreciation and experience of biblical theology and expositional preaching. Whereas the Scripture is our only rule of faith and practice, we want to read and interpret the Scripture with the consensus of the Church that is passed down from every age and place through the use of Confessions of Faith.

- **Sacramental (Christ Our Priest):** We desire an emphasis on sacramental spirituality wherein Christ our Priest is "fleshed out" in a carefully designed, four-movement worship service. Sacramental spirituality is expressed both in doing sacraments weekly and being sacramental throughout the week. By participating in the local cultural manners specific to a socio-cultural neighborhood of each congregation, Christ's flesh is joined in mystic union to the flesh of the church, the "Body of Christ."

- **Communal (Christ Our King):** We seek a more intentional, studied, and worked-out

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**-Preston Graham**



# “THE VOICE OF GOD COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CLEARER AND MORE COMPELLING - 'THE HEART OF MAN PLANS HIS WAY, BUT THE LORD ESTABLISHES HIS STEPS.' (PROVERBS 16:9)”

**-Preston Graham**

strategy of community formation that is carefully built upon the apostolic foundation with Christ as the cornerstone. This community formation is manifest by an emphasis on life-on-life "one anothering" and holistic empowerment under the shepherding care of Christ's under-shepherds and servant leaders.

a neighborhood near Yale University. From the start, the group (about 8 in all) began to have a vision for a mission church in New Haven that would blend together the elements of the five marks. Years later, the five marks would become the guiding elements for MA.

church in southern New England for sending out church planters to "frontier" communities relatively unreached by the gospel.



Having moved there for Yale graduate study, Preston hadn't come to New Haven to plant a church. There was a wonderful pastorate waiting for him at a great church in his home town of Atlanta. As he remembers now, "The Holy Spirit kind of co-opted me... the voice of God could not have been clearer and more compelling - *The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps*" (Proverbs 16:9).

The mission churches supported by MA have been so-called "scratch plants," which means that the church planter moves into a community without a core group from a mother church. The church planter gathers a core group by involving himself and his family in the community and building organic connections with people. Involvement with community leaders, city councils, coaching youth sports, Rotary clubs, neighborhood groups, are all natural ways to connect with people. These everyday relationships with people give the church planter the opportunity to share the gospel and invite folks into the life of the Body of Christ.

The story behind CPC and Mission Anabaino really began in the summer of 1991, when three young families and a Yale graduate student took a ferry ride from Bridgeport CT to Port Jefferson NY. They had scheduled a meeting with a group of MNA church planters to discuss a possible church plant in New Haven. The meeting concluded with plans for a small Bible study to be led by Preston. A recent graduate of Gordon Cornwell Seminary, Preston had moved to New Haven to begin graduate study in American Religious History at Yale.



Preston was ordained in September 1992 and in October CPC held its first worship service. The name Christ Presbyterian Church was taken from Colossians 1:18, "That Christ might have first place in everything." CPC has become the anchor

MA uses the term "tent making" to describe the first year or two of a scratch church plant. The MA planter will have already raised his full salary such that money isn't the issue, but deep integration into the community is. This strategy follows the example of the Apostle Paul in connecting with people in the marketplace through his tent making. Paul came into contact with people by the natural interaction he had while conducting business. As described in the book of Acts, that was one of the avenues he used in launching the early churches. MA scratch church planters are following the same example today in building churches in Christ's ascension ministry.

The Bible study began meeting in 1991 and met every Thursday night for two years in



Christ Presbyterian Church in the Hill began in 2007 with a group of soccer moms. A three-year intercity summer mission project offering soccer camps led MA to test the waters and see if the Lord had prepared the soil to plant a church in the Hill community. Just blocks away from the university campus, the Hill is home to Yale Medical School and Yale New Haven Hospital. The majority of residential areas in the Hill are working class and minority families. Crime and poverty are high, with 41% of residents in the Hill living at or below poverty level. Lead CPC in the Hill Pastor Chip Anderson reflects, "It's hard to imagine sometimes so much poverty could exist that close to such wealth and the brightest of minds."



Pastor Chip Anderson, left wearing hat, with members and friends of CPC in the Hill congregation at a community festival. Church administrative assistant Maxine Harris, extreme left, has been with CPC in the Hill from its inception.



Maxine Harris

Chip is a former Greek and New Testament college professor. He also spent 20 years in social services prior to his call to the Hill. During those years in community action, Chip specialized in designing employment and day care programs. He is very comfortable in the company of the families he now pastors.



Church member Rick Varrone with children during a service at CPC in the Hill

Chip is known in the community as the "Pastor of the Hill." People who don't attend his church call him that, affirming his "tent making" presence in the community. He and his wife Lisa recently moved into the neighborhood. For them, it's important to actually live with the people they pastor, in his own words, "to love people, to listen and just be a part of their lives."

CPC in the Hill began worship services in 2014, led by pastor Tolivar Wills who now serves a PCA church in Atlanta GA. Led by Chip since 2014, the worship services

average 10-15 adults and 6-8 kids, but on any given Sunday between 12-24 kids can show up, many even coming without their parents. In the long run, Chip believes, "God will start moving families into the church because the church is a place of strengthening." There is indeed hope within the community, because Christ, through this church plant, is now present in the Hill.

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Curran Bishop

About 14 miles south of the Hill is the small shoreline town of Milford CT, where Pastor Curran Bishop is gathering a congregation in another MA scratch plant.

Curran's community looks far different from Chip's. Milford is a blue-collar beach town with only about 5% living below the poverty line.



Milford CT

While the Hill and Milford are very different in their demographics, income, and lifestyle, they are identical in their need for the gospel. Less than 4% of the population in Milford participates in a gospel-preaching church. Two pastors, in two church plants, exist only miles apart, with both needing to contextualize the gospel in two very different people groups.

**[OUR FOCUS IS] TO LOVE PEOPLE, TO LISTEN AND JUST BE A PART OF THEIR LIVES...**

**-Chip Anderson**

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## CHURCH PLANTING & MISSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS *(continued)*

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**-Jeff Hutchinson**

Jeff Hutchinson, Coordinator of Mission Anabaino Development, explains, "We do contextualization because by God's design it is the only way Christ may be known in this world. God Himself is not revealed fully if only worshiped in one language or in one context." For MA, contextualization is not only a practical and necessary way to do ministry, the arc of redemptive history in light of the present Ascension of Christ requires it. "Here is not Greek and Jew,

circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is, and in all" (Colossians 3:11).

Mission Anabaino is about the "greater works" Christ envisioned for His Church in His ascension ministry. MA is looking for churches to join their network. MA believes there are many healthy churches that have a heart for church planting but can't do it themselves. If, however, they teamed

up, doors would open that would empower churches in church planting in frontier regions. MA is developing a new structure, providing for each participating church to share in the oversight and the governing of the church planting network, as Preston notes, "We are trying to help the under-resourced middle-sized churches and also help the under-resourced cities and towns get church plants."

Other Mission Anabaino Churches appear in the photos below. For a complete list of congregations & more information, visit [Anabaino.org](http://Anabaino.org)



Members and friends of CPC Fairfield CT, led by church planting pastor Andrew Holbrook. Photo by Allison Matlack



Church planting pastor Mike Brunjes, striped shirt left, with members & friends of CPC Wallingford CT



Joe Fisher is church planting pastor for Trinity Grace Church in Suffield CT



CPC Wallingford's first Spring Celebration, a Saturday afternoon event that brought church and community families together to enjoy a beautiful Spring day earlier in 2019.

MNA serves PCA churches and presbyteries as they advance God's Kingdom in North America by planting, growing, and multiplying biblically healthy churches through the development of intentional evangelism and outreach ministries. For a list of MNA staff, visit our website at [www.pcamna.org](http://www.pcamna.org). Material in *Multiply* may be reproduced with permission. Address comments to: Fred Marsh, Managing Editor. Writing and design provided by Big Bridge, Asheville, NC ([thebigbridge.com](http://thebigbridge.com)). *Multiply* is published by MNA. **TU:U!!!** Find us at [facebook.com/pcamna](https://facebook.com/pcamna), [twitter.com/pcamna](https://twitter.com/pcamna) & [linkedin.com/company/mission-to-north-america](https://linkedin.com/company/mission-to-north-america)

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# From the Coordinator

**"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." -Psalm 34:18**



You may be surprised to discover that I am a graduate of Yale University, Class of 1984, with a BA in Economics. In a way, my four years as an undergrad in Connecticut studying finance lack congruence with the rest of my story, which has been spent in campus ministry and church planting in Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, Tennessee, and Georgia. But the Yale years were huge in my life, a season of failure

and brokenness that opened up a yearning in me for much more of the grace of Jesus, a yearning that has grown across the next three and a half decades. It is the broken who have Jesus draw near to us (Psalm 34:18); he heals us and binds up our wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

I have only been back to New Haven twice since I graduated from Yale thirty-five years ago, and both times it was to make visits to Christ Presbyterian Church, planted right on the edge of Yale's campus. My last visit was just a couple of months ago, and I was

overwhelmed with joy to see what Jesus is doing in New Haven, and more broadly through Mission Anabaino in Southern Connecticut and beyond. Please read these stories to hear how the Lord is at work, to draw near and to bless through his church.

I have often told Preston Graham, founding pastor of Christ Presbyterian and of Mission Anabaino, that if I won the lottery, the first million off the top would be coming their way! (No, I don't play the lottery! I am convinced it isn't wise or good. But you get my point!) Maybe you didn't just come into a great financial windfall, but where has Jesus blessed you with excess, that you might give it to church planting movements like this one, so that the gospel of Jesus further runs and is glorified? Please consider partnering with us through your prayers and gifts. You can check out [pcamna.org](http://pcamna.org) to learn more. If you partner with us already, we are so grateful to the Lord for you and we thank you so much!

Paul Hahn  
MNA Coordinator